

FRANKSTON SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTAL SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

Frankston Special Developmental School (SDS) is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- make clear that all forms of bullying and harassment at Frankston SDS will not be tolerated
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs of bullying &/or harassment behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour

When responding to bullying behaviour, Frankston SDS aims to:

- find constructive and positive solutions for everyone
- work at building respectful relationships: student to student, staff to student, staff to staff
- implement restorative justice procedures that work on restoring relationships between those involved should bullying occur

Frankston SDS acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's policies, including *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and *Statement of Values and School Philosophy and Child Safe Policy*.

POLICY

Definitions

Bullying and harassment occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, where the bully or bullies have more power than the victim due to their age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying and harassment may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct physical bullying* – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect bullying* – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile phone, tablets, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written or include use of images, video and/or audio.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT PREVENTION

FSDS has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying & harassment prevention at FSDS is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We are a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support school. Our three expectations are:
 - Respect the Environment: we look after our things and the places we go
 - Respect Yourself: we make good choices and do our best
 - **Respect Others: we work and play together**
- We explicitly teach behavioural expectations
- We reward positive behaviour through our Dolphin Dollar reward scheme
- We adopt a targeted approach to address more extreme behaviour through an individual positive behaviour plan
- We record all Tier 3 behavioural incidents on Sentral using the STAR format. This written report is signed by the Principal and sent home to the family
- One of our three teaching and learning priorities are the development of social competencies. All students at FSDS have an individual learning plan that develops skills in students' ability to work and play with each other

- Students have access to welfare and therapy staff for individualised consultation if required

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to FSDS

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, teacher assistants, principal and assistant principal and therapy staff.

Family members who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at FSDS should contact the school.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to investigate the matter thoroughly.

A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

Responses to bullying behaviours

A number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, FSDS will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the cognitive capacity of the student/s involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

FSDS may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student
- Implement restorative practice to assist in the repair of relationships

- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Prepare an alternative timetable, restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary

FSDS understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that responses are timely. Data will be collected through:

- assessment of school based STAR incident data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Links	FSDS Welfare Manual, Policy: Student Engagement and Wellbeing, Digital Technology, Statement of Values and School Philosophy
Author	Assistant Principal
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References	DET Bullying Prevention Policy