



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the General Office on 9466 0900.

Policy Title	Bullying Prevention Policy		
Date approved by Principal and School Council	14/09/2021	Review Date:	14/09/2023
Revision No:	1 2	Revision Date:	02/05/2022 14/06/2022
Consultation	Parents/Students Newsletter School Council	Date of Consultation	22/06/2022 14/06/2022

PURPOSE

Reservoir High School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Reservoir High School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Reservoir High School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Reservoir High School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and understands the importance of reporting 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 targets, bystanders, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Reservoir High School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Reservoir High School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Reservoir High School 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 addresses how Reservoir High School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Reservoir High School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Behaviour Management Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy available through our school website and can be accessed through the following link: [Policies – Reservoir High School \(reservoirhs.vic.edu.au\)](https://reservoirhs.vic.edu.au/policies)

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies to bullying behaviour between students that occurs outside of school hours, where the behaviour impacts on student wellbeing and safety at school.

POLICY

Definitions:

Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records)

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying has three main features:

- it involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- it is ongoing and repeated, and
- it involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- Cyberbullying – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

For further information about bullying, refer to: [Bully Stoppers \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Behaviour Management Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy.

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 nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Reservoir High School will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Behaviour Management Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment.

Discrimination is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our school and there may be serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group. Further information about discrimination and harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy

BULLYING PREVENTION

Reservoir High School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging, and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Reservoir High School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- we have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
- we strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- We participate in the Respectful Relationships Initiative, which aim to imbed a culture of respect and equality across our school.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multi cultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion.
- teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour
- a range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts

- in the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- the Peer Support Program and the Peer Mediation program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way
- students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed
- we participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence
- all Year 7 students will participate in programs that explicitly target awareness and reduction of bullying behaviours
- school awards will highlight inclusive, positive and respectful behaviour
- leadership will follow up on data from student opinion surveys that reflect on student wellbeing and safety
- staff will participate in professional development focused on positive student engagement and wellbeing, with specific reference to the impacts of bullying
- all students will participate in whole school assemblies, building respect for the achievement of fellow students while celebrating the diversity of the school community
- all students will be provided with individual and confidential computer and network logins and passwords and students will be regularly reminded of the importance of maintaining password confidentiality. Processes will be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer network
- we promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear a peer being bullied.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy which can be accessed through our school website on the following link: [Policies – Reservoir High School \(reservoirhs.vic.edu.au\)](https://reservoirhs.vic.edu.au/policies)

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Reservoir High School

Bullying is not tolerated at our school. We ensure bullying behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

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.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Reservoir High School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to a Year Level Coordinator. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, a Principal Class member, school nurse, doctor and mental health practitioner.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Reservoir High School should contact the relevant year level co-ordinator sub school leader or alternatively a member of the Principal Team.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass; and
2. inform the relevant staff overseeing student management.

The Year Level Coordinator is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Year Level Co-ordinator may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- ask the students involved to write a statement about the bullying incident
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Year Level Co-ordinator in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. 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

When the Year Level Co-ordinator has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with Sub School Leader, Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

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, Reservoir High School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved, cultural and religious background
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour,

The Year Level Co-ordinator may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- offer wellbeing support, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider to:
 - the target student or students
 - the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
 - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student(s).

- facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied
- facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process
- facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s)
- implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying
- facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour
- provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including connect affected students with an older Student Mentor, resilience programs
- monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- implement year group or whole school targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, for example Year 7 Respect Ambassador Program, Year 7 Peer Support Program, Year 10 Shape your Destiny Program, Whole School Respectful Relationship Program and RU OK Day
- implement proportionate disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, 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.

Reservoir High School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

Each Sub School is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways.

- available publicly on our school's website and Compass
- included in staff induction processes
- included in our staff handbook
- discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- included as annual reference in school newsletter
- discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and are available through our school website and can be accessed through the following link:

[Policies – Reservoir High School \(reservoirhs.vic.edu.au\)](https://reservoirhs.vic.edu.au/policies)

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Our school also follows Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying including:

- [Bullying Prevention and Response](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support Policy](#)

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [ReachOut Australia](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

EVALUATION & REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- Bully Stoppers Data Collection tool
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups and school council.

Principal Signature:



Date: 23rd June 2023

Appendix 1

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

Students

All students are responsible for respecting the rights of others to learn, teach and feel safe within the school. This is demonstrated through safe, fair and kind behaviours.

Reporting for students

- Students are expected to report bullying behaviour, either as a target or bystander
- Students should report bullying to the teacher of the class in which the bullying takes place. It is important that students do not assume that the teacher has seen or heard the bullying
- For bullying outside of the classroom, students first point to report it to is the appropriate Year Level Coordinator/Sub School member if Year Level Coordinator isn't available. If reported to a trusted staff member they will accompany the student to the relevant sub school. Where there is an immediate risk of physical injury or danger, the bullying should be reported to the closest yard duty teacher who will follow up with the relevant subschool
- If the bullying behaviour does not cease the student should continue to report until the issue is satisfactorily addressed. This may sometimes mean the student tells a different member of staff what is happening. At school there are many people to turn to for assistance – teachers, teacher assistants, coordinators, assistant principal and principal, office staff, student wellbeing, school nurse, mental health practitioner. The target can also approach Student Leaders who will assist the target to report to a staff member
- At home, a student should let a family member or trusted adult know about the bullying.

Strategies for students.

- Students are encouraged to stand up for themselves by being assertive. Examples of this are: 'Standing tall', making direct eye contact with the student engaging in bullying behaviour, speaking in a firm way to the student engaging in bullying behaviour or saying what they want to happen, and how. E.g.' I want you to leave me alone right now.' 'I am leaving now.' 'I am not listening anymore'
- Students who feel unsafe or threatened should remain as calm and confident as possible. They should remove themselves from the situation and make sure the incident is immediately reported or have a friend help them to report it. Do not respond in anger. Do not incite others to fight the student engaging in bullying behaviour. Inciting others to retaliate may result in serious consequences
- In the case of cyberbullying having blocked the student engaging in bullying behaviour, it is important to collect evidence. Do not respond to people engaging in cyberbullying behaviour or encourage others to do so. Use the social networking site's reporting procedures to notify about inappropriate use of the site
- Talk about your concerns with a parent, supportive adult or teacher. Kids Helpline Ph No. 1800 55 1800 is a confidential phone and online service available to young people to discuss a range of concerns

Parents

- Reservoir High recognises the critical role of parents in noticing that their child may be being bullied and in working with the school to effectively deal with the problem

Reporting for parents

- Parents should support and encourage students to report instances of bullying. Be aware that students may avoid reporting
- Parents should report to the school concerns or instances of bullying behaviour that they become aware of. Early parental reporting can assist with prevention, intervention and mediation

Strategies for parents

- Observe your child and note any behaviour changes that might indicate bullying
- Ask about bullying and listen with concern
- Encourage the young person to be assertive, not aggressive
- Support your child to report to the school
- Phone or meet with the Year Level Coordinator to discuss your concerns
- In the case of cyberbullying, guide your child to block the person engaging in bullying behaviour, to keep evidence of the cyberbullying and to refrain from retaliating

Work with the young person and the school to resolve the problem

Staff:

- All staff are responsible for ensuring that the school environment is safe and secure and that any bullying or harassment is reported and acted on immediately. This involves following the appropriate student management procedures including reporting all instances of bullying behaviour to the relevant sub-school coordinator and recording the incident on Compass

All instances of bullying need to be taken seriously, including low-level behaviours. All staff should be alert to and take appropriate action in response to bullying behaviours in the classroom as well as in the broader school environment.

Classroom teachers:

Classroom teacher procedures

- First time or low level bullying in the classroom needs to be addressed by the classroom teacher
- The teacher should listen to the student's concerns and not minimise these concerns. Avoid blaming the target. Remain objective by seeking the other side of the story from the alleged student engaging in bullying behaviour. Asking students to write their account of the bullying is helpful for clarity. Speak to other students who may have witnessed the incidents
- If the bullying is lower level, the classroom teacher can ask students to be involved in a restorative conversation, with the focus on:
 - the target being able to speak safely about the issues
 - the student engaging in bullying behaviour being informed about the distress caused by the bullying behaviour
 - restoring expectations of a safe, kind and respectful learning environment
 - classroom teachers should accurately document all bullying incidents via Compass as a General Observation including actions taken
- Teachers may seek assistance from Year Level Coordinator in such conversations
- Classroom teachers should accurately document all bullying incidents including actions taken, and forward documentation to the relevant year level coordinator
- Classroom teachers should continue to carefully monitor students involved following bullying and report to Year level coordinator any further incidents. Year Level Coordinator will record and follow through and oversee process from initial report.

Classroom teacher strategies.

- Establish and maintain clear expectations for a safe, kind and fair learning environment
- Intervene early
- Address low level niggling, undermining comments, repeated jokes at one student's expense and 'Just joking' excuses
- Include 'bullying' topics in the curriculum where possible
- Seating plan if needed.

Year Level Coordinators procedures

- Year level coordinators will respond to, investigate and manage repeat allegations or repeat instances of bullying; more serious incidents of bullying; bullying outside of the classroom and cross year level bullying
- Year level coordinators will document all reports of bullying on the Compass, including those passed on by classroom teachers, so as to track repeated behaviours
- Students identified by others as engaging in bullying behaviour will be informed of allegations
- Targets will be informed of actions taken by year level coordinator to address the bullying
- Parents of both targets and students engaging in bullying behaviour will be contacted in all cases where bullying has been determined to have occurred
- Year level Coordinators will facilitate a restorative meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied
- Year Level Coordinators may facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process
- Year level coordinators will put in place ongoing support including regular check-ins with target and student engaging in bullying behaviour until the issue is deemed resolved
- Depending on the outcomes of the above, a year level coordinator may email specific staff to make them aware of instances of bullying and request they take additional preventative measures in their classrooms
- If bullying continues targets and students engaging in bullying behaviour will be offered counselling support which will be communicated to the parents. This may include support from School Nurse, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Mental Health Practitioner or referral to SSS service
- If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Engagement Policy, including ongoing consultation as appropriate with Principal team in cases of unresolved bullying
- Cyberbullying may be responded to by denial of access to the school's network and computers for a period of time.