



# Bullying Prevention Policy

To be read in conjunction with the *Bendigo Senior Secondary College Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy* and the *Bendigo Senior Secondary College Rights & Responsibilities*.

## 1. Policy Statement

Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC) is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. BSSC believes that all students have the right to learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and secure.

## 2. Purpose

2.1 To define various types of bullying behavior and make it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable at BSSC and will not be tolerated.

2.2 To outline the expectation that everybody in the college community is to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report instances of bullying to staff.

2.3 To ensure that all reported instances of bullying are followed up consistently, fairly and appropriately and that support is given to victims, perpetrators and witnesses.

2.4 To provide information about where all members of the college community can access support or further information about bullying.

## 3. Definitions

3.1 There are some specific types of bullying behaviour that could be directed towards students or staff:

- **Verbal and written abuse** – such as targeted name calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- **Violence** – including threats of violence
- **Sexual harassment** – unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- **Homophobia** and other hostile behaviour relating to gender and sexuality
- **Discrimination including racial discrimination** – treating people differently because of their identity or disability
- **Cyberbullying** – either online or via mobile phone.

3.2 There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

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Endorsed by College Council: Not required

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- **Mutual conflict** – which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- **Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression towards many different people, is not bullying
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

*Please note students can always access support through their Advisor, classroom teacher, Learning and Engagement Coordinator or a member of the Wellbeing Team if they are involved in any of the above.*

## 4. Guidelines

4.1 BSSC will not tolerate any form of bullying.

4.2 A college-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying in a consistent and systematic way, with a focus on the safety and wellbeing of all college members. The policy will be clearly communicated to all college community members and will be available via the BSSC website.

4.3 All complaints of bullying will be taken seriously and treated sensitively.

4.4 Respectful behaviours will be explicitly taught to our college community through our Respectful Relationships program (click [here](#) for more details).

## 5. Responses to bullying and intervention strategies

5.1 It is expected that all staff members intervene if they witness bullying behaviour; it is expected that all students or parents contact a BSSC member of staff if they witness bullying behaviour.

5.2 All reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon in a timely manner. All incidents will be clearly documented in our Compass portal.

5.3 Intervention strategies include, but are not limited to: mediation; restorative conversations; student support group meetings; traditional disciplinary approaches, including withdrawal of privileges and/or suspension; and in extreme or illegal cases, the police will be requested to become involved.

5.4 The type of intervention that occurs will be dependent on the type, severity and extent of the bullying behaviour.

5.4.1 In all cases, the purpose of the intervention will be to have the bullying behaviour cease and all parties to feel safe and supported. All parties will always be made very clear about BSSC expectations and our zero-tolerance approach to bullying behaviour.

5.4.2 For minor, first-time incidents, the intervening staff member should collect statements from all involved parties. S/he can then mediate between the involved parties. If it is felt that the bullying behaviour will not continue and that all parties are feeling safe and supported, the incident will be documented on Compass (for all involved parties) and no further action will be taken. If the incident cannot be resolved, it will then be referred to the relevant Learning and Engagement Coordinator (LEC) of the perpetrator or victim (see 5.4.3 for details on further intervention).

5.4.3 For more serious or subsequent incidents, the intervening staff member should report the incident to the relevant LEC of the perpetrator or victim. The LEC will collect statements from all involved parties and the incident will be documented on Compass (for all involved parties).

5.4.3.1 Where there is a clear victim, this person will be offered support and strategies on how to avoid another repeat of the incident. With their permission, their parent/carer will be contacted

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(permission will not be necessary if there are concerns for the safety of the victim). The victim will be kept informed about the follow up occurring with the perpetrator.

5.4.3.2 Where there is a clear perpetrator, this person will be offered support and strategies on how to avoid another repeat of the incident. Their parent/carer will be contacted and given details of the incident and informed of the disciplinary measures that will be taken. The follow up will depend on the extent and severity of the bullying behaviour.

5.4.3.3 Where there isn't a clear victim or perpetrator and there is evidence of the bullying coming from both parties, both parties will be offered support and strategies on how to avoid another repeat of the incident. Parents/carers will be contacted and given details of the incident and informed of the disciplinary measures that will be taken. The follow up will depend on the extent and severity of the bullying behaviour.

5.4.3.4 Any evidence that is collected as proof of the bullying behaviour will be kept on the student's file, with the exception of evidence of a sexual/illegal nature, which will be kept secure in the restricted access college safe room and collected by Victoria Police. For information on responding to serious or online incidents, click [here](#).

5.5.3.5 If the incident is considered to be a critical incident involving an assault, serious threat or intimidation, the Principal will contact the Student Critical Incident Unit on (03) 9589 6266 and Victoria Police.

## 6. Complaints

If at any time, a member of the college community has concerns with any element of this policy or with the way a bullying matter has been handled, they can raise their concern with a member of the BSSC Leadership Team, including the Principal.

## 7. Relevant links and supports

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Student Engagement Guidance](#)
- DET's [Bullying Prevention Policy guidance](#)
- DET's [Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand](#)
- DET's [Respectful Relationships Program](#)
- DET's [Vulnerable Students](#)

Supporting links:

- [Kids Help Line](#) - 1800 55 1800
- [Lifeline](#) - 13 11 14
- [Bully Free World: Special Needs Anti-bullying Toolkit](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission - [Human rights in the school classroom](#)
- [Safe Schools Coalition Victoria](#)
- [Racism. No way!](#) anti-racism education for Australian schools

## 8. Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently as needed, or as new DET guidelines are implemented.

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