

MACKILLOP EDUCATION

VIC-EDU-P-009 Anti-Bullying Policy

May 2022



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VIC-EDU-P-009 Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Policy Scope

This policy addresses how MacKillop Education aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. MacKillop Education recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviour that do not meet the definition of bullying, which are also unacceptable. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with the MacKillop Education Trauma-Informed Practice Behaviour Support Manual.

This policy applies to MacKillop Education students, and describes the responsibilities of MacKillop Education students, staff and volunteers, and parents, guardians and carers.

2. Policy Outline

Context

MacKillop Education is a specialist school. The School provides an individualised education program for young people who are disengaged, or, at risk of disengaging, from learning. Our model, Reframing Learning and Teaching Environments (ReLATE) is a framework that supports our trauma-informed practice. Relationships are foundational to our practice.

Bullying is a serious issue and one that is addressed at MacKillop Education. The *VIC-EDU-P-009 Anti-Bullying Policy*, however, should be applied with a deep understanding of our student cohort. Student behaviours are complex and may be a result of trauma re-enactment. A sensitive and discerning response is required.

Our values of respect, hope, justice, compassion, and collaboration inform the quality of relationships we establish and all that we do to ensure our learning community is a place of welcome and safety. MacKillop Education celebrates diversity, and we are committed to inclusion, so that every student, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender identity or personal circumstances, including barriers to learning, can access education and experience success.

Purpose

This policy:

- Provides a definition of bullying to ensure a shared understanding amongst MacKillop Education community members
- Clearly indicates that bullying will not be tolerated
- Outlines MacKillop Education's commitment to the creation of a positive and inclusive school culture and the prevention of bullying behaviour
- Describes how allegations of bullying will be investigated and the responses to bullying incidents implemented.

Policy statement

Respectful relationships are central to the work of MacKillop Education. Respectful relationships ensure that the value of each person is celebrated, and that the learning community is a place of belonging, safety, and growth.

MacKillop Education does not tolerate bullying in any form.

MacKillop Education will address the prevention of and response to incidents of bullying by:

- Creating a positive, inclusive and safe learning environment for all students
- Implementing educational activities to inform the community about bullying and its related effects, and to support the social and emotional development of students
- Encouraging all MacKillop Education community members to be vigilant and to report bullying behaviour
- Implementing procedures that sensitively and immediately respond to incidents of reported bullying
- Providing support for all those involved in a bullying incident (targets, bystanders and students engaged in bullying behaviour).

When responding to bullying behaviour, MacKillop Education aims to:

- Find a constructive solution for all involved
- Stop the bullying behaviour
- Repair the relationships between the students involved
- Support the social and emotional growth of the students involved

Definitions

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
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

- direct physical bullying - e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- direct verbal bullying - e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- 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 which aim to humiliate and distress someone. For example, via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Additional examples of different forms of bullying are provided in Appendix I.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- **Mutual conflict:** In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power.
- **Social rejection or dislike:** Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specifically and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
- **Single-episode acts:** Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying.

Other examples of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours

Harassment – treating a person unfavourably because of a personal characteristic such as disability, gender identity, physical features, race.

Sexual harassment – unwelcome sexual behaviour that causes a person to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, where a reasonable person could have anticipated that reaction in the circumstances. Sexual harassment includes:

- An unwelcome sexual advance
- An unwelcome request for sexual favours
- Any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature

Violence – the use of physical force to injure, abuse, damage or destroy.

3. Procedure

Bullying Prevention

Prevention of bullying is a shared responsibility of the MacKillop Education community. MacKillop Education will communicate expectations with respect to student behaviour with students, staff and parents/guardians/carers. Bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

MacKillop Education has several programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and support respectful relationships. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by:

- Modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.
- Offering a wide range of programs, curriculum related activities and materials that encourage respectful relationships
- Promoting student voice and empowerment in classrooms, and through the use of Student Forums, to discuss matters associated with bullying, safety and wellbeing
- Responding to incidents of unexpected behaviour as opportunities for personal growth and managing these as outlined in the *VIC-EDU-M-001 Trauma-Informed Practice Behaviour Support Manual*

Incident Response

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, and bystanders who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible. Students may discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents, guardians or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in or have witnessed bullying behaviour at MacKillop Education should contact the Key Teacher or the Principal.

MacKillop Education will respond to all reported incidents of bullying, perceived or actual. The reported incidents will be taken seriously and responded to promptly, fairly, and sensitively. The first step in responding to the bullying allegation is to ensure the safety of the target.

Investigations

A 'no blame' approach will be adopted when a bullying allegation is received. The individual/s making the allegation will meet with the Education and Wellbeing Coordinator or other member of the Local Leadership Team (LLT). Discussion and consultation will take place and a decision will be made as to whether an investigation should be conducted.

The situation may be an example of unpleasant behaviour that requires school intervention and management. In this case, the circumstances will be case noted and targeted interventions to support the development of socially appropriate behaviour may be implemented. The behaviour of the students involved will also be monitored.

If an investigation is required, this will be conducted as outlined in the Anti-Bullying Investigation and Response Pathway (Appendix II). The investigation will be conducted by a member of the LLT in a timely and sensitive manner, that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.

The Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool will be completed by the LLT member conducting the investigation.

Responses to bullying behaviours

The records of the investigation will be considered by the LLT. Regardless of whether the bullying allegation is confirmed, MacKillop Education will monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate period. Classroom activities will also be used to reinforce MacKillop Education's expectations for student behaviour.

If bullying behaviour is identified, the LLT will decide on the most appropriate response. The following factors will be considered:

- The age and maturity of the students involved
- The severity and frequency of the bullying, and its impact on the target student/s
- Whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- Whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour
 - have displayed similar behaviour before
 - demonstrate insight or remorse for their behaviour
- The alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

Responses to bullying behaviours may include:

- Counselling support, including referral to the school psychologist or an external provider:

- For the target to discuss strategies which may include how to deal with bullying behaviours
- For those engaged in bullying behaviour to discuss the seriousness of the behaviour, changes in behaviour and support that may be needed
- Targeted or individual interventions to support the development of socially appropriate behaviour for those engaging in bullying behaviour
- Restorative Practice Meeting or mediation with all or some of the students involved
- Discussion with the student and their parent/carer at a Student Support Group meeting
- Continued monitoring of the student's behaviour and offering appropriate support.

Parents/guardians/carers of the students involved will be provided with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

4. Responsibilities

Compliance, monitoring, and review

MacKillop Education will:

- Review and evaluate the school's *VIC-EDU-P-009 Anti-Bullying Policy*, *VIC-EDU-P-006 IT Acceptable Use Policy* and the *VIC-EDU-F-004 IT Acceptable Use Student Agreement* every 3 years to ensure they are up to date, practical and effective
- Use the Anti-Bullying Response Pathway to address issues of bullying as soon as they arise
- Provide staff with training, skills and strategies to recognise and address bullying
- Provide parents/guardians/carers with information regarding MacKillop Education's Anti-Bullying Policy and bullying prevention programs.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers of students involved when responding to incidents of bullying.

MacKillop Education staff will:

- Model and encourage behaviour that enables the development of respectful relationships
- Use processes and procedures to promote student voice and that are inclusive of all students
- Support young people and their parents/guardians/carers to report any incidences of bullying
- Accurately and factually document incidents of bullying and the implemented responses
- Provide support to students involved in bullying incidents.

MacKillop Education students will be encouraged and supported to:

- Follow the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures
- Use positive language and behaviour towards all others
- Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident
- Refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.

Parents/guardians/carers are asked to:

- Be aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy and the strategies being implemented in the school and to actively discuss these with their children.
- Reinforce the school messages regarding the proper use of technology
- Contact the Principal or the Education & Wellbeing Coordinator if they have any concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at MacKillop Education
- Report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to MacKillop Education.

Records management

System/Tool	Record
Family Journey	Allegations of bullying incidents
Synergetic – case notes	Observations of student behaviour
Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool	Notes made during the investigation into bullying allegations
SSG meeting minutes	Ongoing monitoring of behaviour of students involved in bullying incidents

Reporting

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to the Victoria Police Youth Liaison Officer.

MacKillop Education will annually review the incidents of bullying reported in Family Journey. A report will be produced which summarises the frequency and nature of bullying incidents and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

5. Related legislation, policy, guidelines, and resources

MacKillop Education

VIC-EDU-F-004 IT Acceptable Use Student Agreement

VIC-EDU-M-001 Trauma-informed Practice Behaviour Support Manual

VIC-EDU-P-001 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

VIC-EDU-P-006 IT Acceptable Use Policy

References

Privacy Compliance Manual (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CEVN) (CEVN website)

Department of Education and Training (Vic) 2021. Bullying Prevention and Response Policy

Department of Education and Training (Vic) 2021. Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies

Department of Education and Training (Vic) 2021. Mobile Phones- Student Use

Resources

Bully Stoppers – a resource containing information and advice for the school community, including students, parents, guardians, carers and school staff.

Bullying. No Way! – a website for Australian schools, managed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group (SSSC) which has representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent schooling sectors.

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV). (2016). Child Safety Commitment Statement

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2014). Whole School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2018). Introduction to the Principle of Inclusion: Child Safety in Catholic Schools in Victoria

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2018). Positive Behaviour Guidelines

Education Services Australia - Student Wellbeing Hub

eSafety Commissioner – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

eSmart – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - Anti-bullying Policy template

Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards

6. Appendices

Appendix I Forms of Bullying

Appendix II Anti-Bullying Investigation and Response Pathway

7. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Executive Principal
Approval Date	9 August 2022
Recommended to Approval Authority by	MacKillop Education Leadership Team
Next Review Date	August 2024
Version	1

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	MacKillop Education Leadership Team 07/2019
Amendment Authority and Date	MacKillop Education Leadership Team, 27/05/2022
Notes	Major review and rewrite of policy, including reformatting

Forms of bullying include:

Physical bullying: pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

Verbal bullying: put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

Gesture bullying: non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a target.

Extortion bullying: physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.

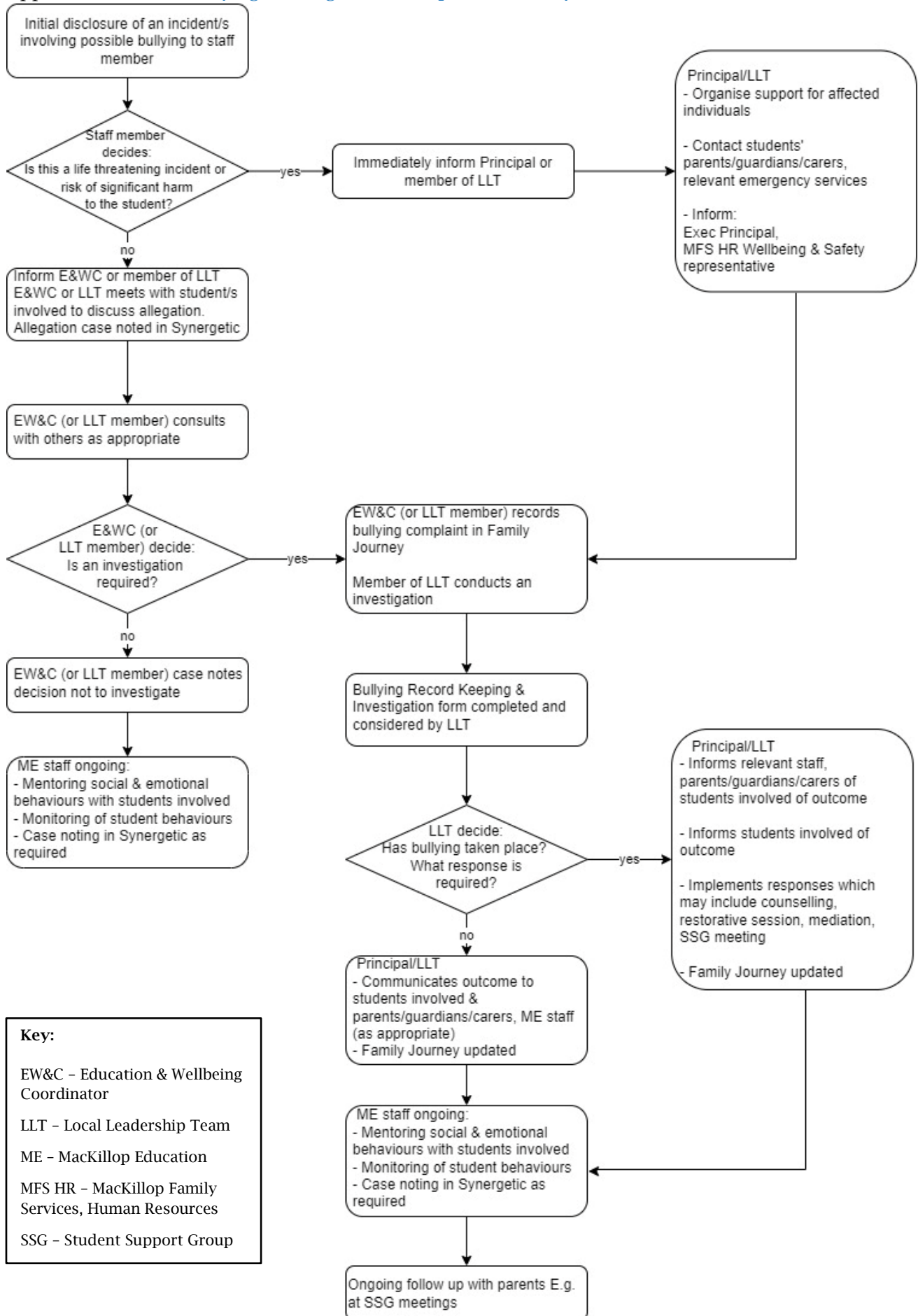
Exclusion bullying: deliberately being left out of activities is a most hurtful form of bullying.

Visual bullying: offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

Sexual bullying: touching, sexually orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.

Cyber-bullying: the use of various forms of electronic media to spread text and visual messages to cause hurt, embarrassment, intimidation.

Appendix II Anti-Bullying Investigation & Response Pathway



Key:

- EW&C – Education & Wellbeing Coordinator
- LLT – Local Leadership Team
- ME – MacKillop Education
- MFS HR – MacKillop Family Services, Human Resources
- SSG – Student Support Group