

 BERWICK COLLEGE POLICY	TITLE	<b>BULLYING PREVENTION &amp; RESPONSE</b>		
	VERSION/YEAR	6/2022		
	PUBLISHED LOCATIONS	COMPASS, WEBSITE, STAFF BULLETIN		
	ISSUE DATE	MAY 2022		
	REVIEW DATE	FEBRUARY 2024		
	REVIEWED BY	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL STAFF/COLLEGE COUNCIL	RATIFIED BY	COLLEGE COUNCIL
PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that Berwick College policies and procedures accurately reflect the College operations, values, service standards, educational philosophy and goals and meet all legislative, compliance and duty of care requirements.</li> <li>The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires Victorian schools to have a policy which provides students with a safe learning environment where the risk of harm is minimised and they feel physically and emotionally secure.</li> </ul>			
BACKGROUND:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berwick College seeks to provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted and ensure that all students and staff members will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.</li> </ul>			
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">DET Bullying Prevention and Response Policy</a></li> <li><a href="#">DET STUDENT Engagement and Inclusion Guidance</a></li> <li>Staff Handbook</li> <li><a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/culture.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/culture.aspx</a></li> <li><a href="#">Multicultural Victoria Act 2011</a>, Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001</li> <li>Berwick College Duty of Care, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policies</li> <li>Berwick College Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy</li> </ul>			

#### RATIONALE:

Berwick College is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated and will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the College community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

#### AIMS:

Berwick College aims to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Berwick College community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Berwick College will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Berwick College 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 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 targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Berwick College.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Berwick College aims to:

- provide a consistent and proportionate response
- find a constructive solution for everyone

- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Berwick College 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 Berwick College aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Berwick College 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 Engagement and Wellbeing Policy.

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.

## **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://Bully Stoppers (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 the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and/or this Bullying Prevention and Response Policy where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

*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. Berwick College will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

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.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

**What will Berwick College do?** Berwick College 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 our ICARE value of empathy and acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Berwick College 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.

Berwick College will do its best to:

- Provide a safe environment for staff, students and parents
- Communicate the College's policy to parents, teachers, students and the community
- Provide a supportive environment, which encourages positive relationships between peers, staff and parents
- Provide curriculum material and discussion that focuses on appropriate social skills and behaviour. Lessons will be delivered by guest speakers and Health classes
- Assist students to develop skills for resolving conflict and dealing with bullying incidents
- Encourage teachers to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- Participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school and implement School Wide Positive Behaviour strategies
- Maintain a pastoral care system that enables students to develop a feeling of connectedness, belonging and trust. All reports/complaints of bullying are taken seriously and will be investigated in a timely manner
- Document incidents of bullying as a pastoral note on Compass
- Provide peer mediation which will deal with minor disputes between students, whereas the Assistant Principals, Student Learning Leaders and Wellbeing Team will deal with more serious situations
- Provide regular updates to parents about the management of incidents in relation to their child within the bounds of the privacy legislation.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#). In extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour the Berwick College Principal reserves the right to expel a student whose behaviour contravenes the College's policies. Such cases may also be referred to the DET Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, local police or the Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer if appropriate. In line with DET legislation, corporal punishment is not permitted at the College.

The College has a four-stage approach to address bullying.

#### **\*Stage 1. Prevention**

- Provide clear communication to staff relating to bullying and the strategies that counter-act bullying behaviours including delivering Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials to embed a culture of safe and respectful relationships
- Increase community awareness and gain feedback relating to bullying, its characteristics and the College's programs and response
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and

problem solving

- Twice a year administer a student bullying survey and act upon the results including analysing data to identify patterns of bullying behaviour and potential 'hot spots' for bullying in the College environment
- Each classroom teacher to review the College's policy on bullying prevention at the start of each year
- Staff members, students and peer support delegates to promote the College ICARE values and implement School Wide Positive Behaviour Strategies
- Provide activities to students at recess and lunch breaks.

#### **\*Stage 2. Early Intervention**

- Promote students reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others
- Classroom teachers are to regularly remind students to report incidents, and that reporting is not "dobbing"
- Encourage parents to contact the College if they become aware of a problem.

#### **\*Stage 3. Intervention/Response**

- Both bully and victim, identified through the bullying survey or following investigation of a report to the College by a witness, will be offered counselling and support
- If bullying is ongoing, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the Berwick College's student code of expectations.

#### **\*Stage 4. Post incident**

- **Consequences** may involve:
  - Peer mediation
  - Student welfare mediation
  - Exclusion from class
  - Exclusion from yard
  - External or internal suspension
  - Withdrawal of privileges
  - Community conference
  - Referral for counselling from an appropriate external professional agency for both victim and bully
  - Police involvement
  - Expulsion
- **Ongoing monitoring** of identified bullies
- **Rewards** such as a green chronicle for positive behaviour.

#### **INCIDENT RESPONSE - Reporting concerns to Berwick College.**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our 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 or another trusted adult 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 Berwick College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher or Student Learning Leader. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including learning support staff and wellbeing staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Berwick College should contact a Student Learning Leader or Principal Class Officer by phone on 8768 1000 or email [Berwick.sc@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:Berwick.sc@education.vic.gov.au)

#### **Responses to bullying behaviours**

When the Student Learning Leader or Sub School Coordinator 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 teachers, wellbeing team or principal class officers.

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, Berwick College will consider:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved
- 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 Student Learning Leader or Sub School Coordinator may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

**Staff members are required to follow Child Safety Responding & Reporting Obligations policy and:**

1. record the details of the allegations on Compass *and*
2. inform the relevant Student Learning Leader, Sub School Coordinator or a Principal Class Officer.

The Student Learning Leader or Sub School Coordinator is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Student Learning Leader or Sub School Coordinator 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
- 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
- offer wellbeing support
- 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 Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.

Berwick College 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.

The Student Learning Leader or Sub School Coordinator is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

**In addition staff members are required to:**

- Act as role models in their manner of relating to other members of the College community
- Observe signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty
- Arrive to class on time to eliminate the opportunity for bullying
- Should not ignore incidents of bullying in the classroom or the broader College environment
- Take steps to support both victim and bully and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- Ensure the Four Stage interventions are consistently followed in response to reported incidents of bullying

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Berwick College should contact their child's homegroup teacher or Student Learning Leader by phone on 8768 100 or email the College at [berwick.sc@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:berwick.sc@education.vic.gov.au) who will direct their enquiry to the relevant staff member

**Berwick College recommends that Parents/Caregivers:**

- Watch for signs of distress in their child e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches,

- missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising
- Take an active interest in their child’s social life and acquaintances, including online activity
- Encourage their child to report incidents of bullying to a teacher. If possible get students to report and deal with the problem themselves. They can gain respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement
- Inform the College (Home Group Teacher, Learning Team Leader or Wellbeing Team) if bullying is suspected, even if their child is directly/indirectly involved
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- Do not encourage their child to retaliate
- Communicate to their child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation
- Be willing to attend interviews at the College if their child is involved in any bullying incident and to work with the College to find effective solutions.

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.

**What students can do to stop bullies and to support their peers:**

- If you feel confident, ask the bully to stop it in a firm and assertive manner
- If you witness bullying, talk to your parents or a teacher. Ask them for their advice.
- Reassure the person being bullied. Make sure they are fine and then tell a teacher. This will help to build up their confidence
- Stay cool and walk calmly away
- Talk to a teacher, your parents or friends that you trust
- Go to a safe area within the College and report it to a teacher
- Remember the DOB stands for “Don’t Obey Bullies”. If you do anything to support bullying either by giving encouragement to the bully or not reporting the incident then you help to keep it going.

Our College 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](#)
- **Victoria Police - Youth Resource Officer (Appendix A):** a policing youth framework that increases the capacity of police to deal with police and youth issues; meeting the needs of modern policing, operational police, the local community and government located at each local police station.

**EVALUATION:**

- This policy will be reviewed every two 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
- Bi-annual student bullying surveys
- School Wide Positive Behaviour data analysis
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with the Berwick College community and College Council.



“ Victoria Police is committed to providing intelligent and confident policing, focused on the development of partnerships and a community capacity that empowers individuals to build a safer Victoria. ”



## Victoria Police Youth Affairs Office

**The Youth Affairs Office assists with training, research and policy issues within the area of youth.**

The Office provides a co-ordination role for Local and State Governments and the community to provide support in the delivery of specialist operations department community programs and initiatives for the youth of Victoria.

The Youth Affairs Office incorporates the High Challenge Program, Blue Light State Coordination, Derby Hill Blue Light Youth Camps, Police Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC), Victoria Police Youth Corps (VPYC) and Youth Resource Officers.

The Office also co-ordinates the Police Youth Officer of the Year Award and the Silk Miller Scholarships for Victoria Police.

**The Youth Affairs Office is located at the Victoria Police Centre, Melbourne**

## Contact Your Local Youth Resource Officer

### Youth Affairs Office

Victoria Police Centre  
Level 9, Flinders Tower,  
637 Flinders Street  
Melbourne 3005  
T. 03 9247 6195  
F. 03 9247 6939

## Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer



VICTORIA POLICE



## Aims of Victoria Police

**Victoria Police is committed to providing "intelligent and confident policing, focused on the development of partnerships and a community capacity that empowers individuals to build a safer Victoria".**

Victoria Police wants better outcomes for children and young people. We believe that this can be achieved through Police working in partnership with key youth organisations within our community. This will enable a whole of community approach to identify and address local police/youth issues, by collaboratively developing systems which suit the local environment and the young people.

We need to address all the factors that influence young people. This includes community, culture, employment and education to improve community health and well-being to provide establish better pathways and opportunities for our young people.

This will provide young people with greater opportunities to achieve their potential.

## Objectives

**In addition, the role seeks to fulfill the following objectives:**

- ~ To provide a policing youth framework that increases the capacity of police to deal with police/youth issues, whilst addressing the needs of effective operational policing in partnership with the local community and government agencies.
- ~ To engage all sectors of the community which develops the capacity of local communities to deal with youth issues.

## Aims of Police Youth Resource Officer Model

**The key aims of the Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer model is to:**

- ~ Provide a service which best suits the needs of the organisation, local police and young people;
- ~ Work with local partners in identifying local youth issues and developing strategies with appropriate performance measures for success;
- ~ Work with local communities and partners to develop systems, support and services to provide young people with positive pathways for developing to their full potential;
- ~ Support and increase the capacity of local operational police to identify and address youth issues;
- ~ Provide an equitable policing service to both rural and metropolitan Victoria.

## What is a Police Youth Resource Officer?

**A Police Youth Resource Officer is a police member who specialises in child and youth related issues affecting our community.**

They are a facilitator, co-coordinator and referral service provider of local youth services for police, youth and the community.

## What is the role of a Police Youth Resource Officer?

**The key aims of this role are to:**

- ~ Create and maintain a District Youth Profile
- ~ Represent Victoria Police at a local level and undertake a leadership role in the community in relation to issues relating to policing and young people;
- ~ Work in partnership with local communities to identify and target needs to develop strategies to support positive pathways for young people;
- ~ Identify Youth Stakeholders both internally and externally to plan an integrated response to youth issues;
- ~ Establish early intervention and crime prevention strategies for young people;
- ~ Contribute to the education of police members and to support and increase their capacity to identify and address local youth issues;
- ~ Develop local policing strategies that increase the capacity to identify and effectively deal with youth issues.

**The Youth Resource Officer is supported and managed by the District Inspector.**

There is at least one Youth Resource Officer in each Local Government Area to support and respond to youth issues.