

Bullying prevention and response procedure

This is a mandated procedure under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this procedure must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) (staff login required) page.

1. Overview

This procedure outlines the Department for Education's (the department) requirements and recommended practices to prevent and respond to [student](#) bullying in schools.

It should be read and implemented in conjunction with the department's [behaviour support policy \(PDF 603 KB\)](#) and other [related policies](#).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all school leaders and staff and non-department staff in schools.

Preschools are out of scope and are not required to have a local bullying prevention and response policy. Early childhood education and care services outline how they support the safe inclusion of all children through site 'interactions with children policy and procedures'. See the [Behaviour support and interactions with children in preschools](#) (staff login required) page for more information.

This procedure applies to the prevention of and response to student bullying in schools. Bullying is recognised as being on a [continuum](#) in a social context that includes other [harmful behaviour](#). The [behaviour support policy \(PDF 603 KB\)](#) addresses prevention of and response to other harmful behaviour.

This procedure applies to all prevention and response for incidents of bullying that occurs:

- at the site when a duty of care applies
- off-site when a duty of care applies (eg during official school activities such as camps or excursions)
- off-site and/or outside of school hours/school activities in instances where there is a reasonable connection between the bullying behaviour and the school. For example, cyberbullying at the weekend or bullying on the way to or from school, where the students involved attend the same school and extends to supporting culture, diversity and [safe inclusion](#) within sites.



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4. Detail

This procedure should be read and implemented in conjunction with the [behaviour support policy \(PDF 603 KB\)](#).

The 'behaviour support policy':

- explains how staff can support safe and positive behaviour
- sets out the core functions of behaviour support (promote, teach, work with others, respond, intervene, repair and restore relationships, and create safety and wellbeing).

Bullying is a behaviour that is covered by the 'behaviour support policy'.

4.1. Local bullying prevention and response policy requirements for schools

All schools must have a local bullying prevention and response policy that is in use across the school. It must:

- be publicly accessible including on the school's website
- use the national definition of bullying, endorsed by the Education Council
- describe the strategies used by the school to prevent bullying ensuring particular focus on actions that support [priority cohorts](#)
- outline what practices are used by the school to identify and address bullying behaviour
- explain how students and their parents or carers can report bullying
- state how the school will respond to any reported or observed incidents of bullying
- specify that the school will initiate a response to any reported or observed bullying within 2 [school days](#) of becoming aware of the behaviour (see [initiate a response](#))
- be reviewed and confirmed annually for effectiveness and updated at least every 3 years, or as directed by the department, to ensure alignment with the [National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools](#) and departmental requirements.

4.2. Definitions for bullying

4.2.1. National definition of bullying for Australian schools

The first step in bullying prevention and response, is to have a shared understanding within the whole-school community of what bullying is. The national definition of bullying for Australian schools says:

'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.'

National definition of bullying for Australian Schools – developed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group and endorsed by the Education Council (2018).

See [Appendix 1 – Features and types of bullying and other harmful behaviour](#) for more information.

4.3. Preventing and responding to bullying

Bullying is recognised as a complex social issue that impacts students both within and beyond school settings. Schools are uniquely positioned to implement prevention strategies, respond early to concerns and take appropriate action where bullying behaviours occur.

Effective prevention and response strategies in schools are informed by the 'South Australian bullying prevention explanatory model' which describes the drivers and influencing factors that contribute to bullying behaviour and identifies effective approaches schools can use to address bullying (see [Appendix 2](#)).

4.3.1. Promote

Schools must actively promote, model, recognise, acknowledge and support positive behaviour to ensure a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment.

It is required that schools:

- demonstrate and reinforce behaviours that reflect the school's values, actively support diversity, respect and belonging for all students and community members including those in priority cohorts to create a welcoming and inclusive school
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities to create and maintain a safe and supportive school and can access and implement bullying prevention tools and resources tailored to meet the needs of all students
- establish and communicate explicit behaviour expectations that emphasise inclusion, respect, safety and diversity
- encourage consistent, positive language among staff, students, parents and carers that reinforces positive behaviours and respectful relationships
- create and communicate accessible pathways for students to safely report concerns, including bullying. All students should be aware of how to raise issues and know they will be believed and supported and that their needs will be respected
- share school values, positive behaviour expectations and bullying prevention resources with parents and carers, partnering with them to maintain a supportive and inclusive school culture
- ensure the school's local behaviour support policy and bullying prevention and response policy are

published and easy to access on the school website and in other prominent ways.

It is recommended that schools:

- display school values and behaviour expectations across the site (eg signage, classroom displays, communications with parents and carers), involving students from diverse backgrounds in their design and review to ensure representation and relevance
- design and maintain physical spaces that support inclusion and positive social interactions for all students (eg collaborative learning zones, designated safe areas)
- promote among the school community an understanding of the drivers and influencing factors that contribute to bullying behaviour.

4.3.2. Teach

Schools must explicitly teach respectful behaviours and expectations about bullying in the classroom in ways that recognise students' learning abilities.

It is required that schools:

- build staff skills to respond to bullying through professional development and resources to enable them to recognise, prevent and respond effectively to bullying, including cyberbullying. This should include information and strategies for supporting students from priority cohorts to ensure all responses are inclusive and culturally responsive
- explicitly teach students how to recognise, prevent, respond to and report bullying, including cyberbullying across all year levels. Ensure information, resources and instruction are culturally responsive and accessible to all students.

It is recommended that schools:

- integrate explicit instruction of positive behaviour, respectful relationships and social-emotional skills into the curriculum. Guide students in developing healthy relationships in person and online, ensuring content is relevant to all students, and reinforce these skills across all subject areas and learning opportunities. See [respectful relationships education](#) (staff login required) for more information.
- use teachable moments when bullying issues happen as opportunities to reinforce and teach respectful and appropriate behaviours.

4.3.3. Work with others

Schools must work with families to address bullying and build a culture of shared responsibility and open communication.

It is required that schools:

- partner with Governing Council and department staff to design, implement and review local strategies to prevent and reduce bullying
- share information with parents and carers about bullying. Include how to recognise it and what to do when their child is involved in bullying. Be proactive in providing this information as part of regular

school communications. Ensure information is accessible, culturally appropriate and responsive, recognising the diversity within school communities

- encourage parents and carers to participate in activities, initiatives and whole-school approaches that promote safety, inclusion and wellbeing with additional supports to promote diverse participation where required
- communicate promptly and appropriately with families when a bullying incident happens, considering the supports needed to ensure understanding and inclusion for parents and carers from diverse backgrounds (see [Communication actions in response to bullying and maintaining privacy](#))
- work with other organisations and services, where appropriate, to support students who have been involved in bullying incidents.

It is recommended that schools:

- involve parents, carers and students, including those from priority cohorts, in planning bullying prevention and support responses
- engage with cultural supports, community elders and other trusted adults to ensure cultural safety in bullying prevention and responses. See [responding to racism for schools and promoting anti-racism](#) (staff login required) for more information
- partner with local groups, service providers, organisations and the community to promote safe, inclusive and respectful messages within and beyond the school.

4.3.4. Respond

Schools must provide visible, [consistent](#) and equitable responses, including [fair and logical consequences](#), to bullying that foster trust and confidence in the school community.

All reports and observations of bullying will be taken seriously and receive a response from staff. The response must be fair and take into account the student's behaviour and needs.

The rights of all students to be safely included in learning must be respected.

The school leader or leadership team must immediately respond to bullying that is life threatening or is a criminal offence. They must refer criminal behaviour to South Australia Police (police).

See [contacting the police about children's and young people's behaviour](#) (staff login required) for more information.

4.3.4.1. Reported or observed bullying behaviour

Staff must share information with students, parents and carers on how bullying will be responded to including:

- who they can report bullying to
- how to report bullying including establishing safe and accessible ways for students to report.

4.3.4.2. Initiate a response within 2 school days

Schools must initiate a response to any reported or observed bullying within [2 school days](#) of becoming aware of the behaviour, noting that some circumstances will require a quicker or an immediate response in order for a site to meet its duty or care obligations to keep [children and young people](#) safe from reasonably foreseeable harm.

Initial responses involve early safety and support planning, action to prevent further harm and initial communication, recognising that further time may be required to fully address the bullying behaviour and support needs of all involved.

An initial response to bullying behaviour may include some or all the following, depending on the unique circumstances of the behaviour and the context:

- taking immediate action to provide for the safety of all students by assessing immediate risk and identifying when immediate support is required to ensure safety (see [Intervene](#))
- beginning to collect information to inform the required response
- developing an initial response plan to support safety, decision making and problem solving and clearly identifying roles, responsibilities and actions
- making a report to [police](#) or other relevant authorities if required
- promptly contacting parents and carers, subject to the advice of police or other relevant authorities
- providing initial wellbeing support tailored to the individual needs of those involved
- reporting a critical incident through the department's [incident management system](#) (staff login required), noting the timeframes required in the [reporting critical incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses procedure \(PDF 234 KB\)](#) (staff login required) require schools to report within 24 hours for critical incidents of extreme severity or within 2 working days for other critical incidents.

4.3.4.3. Gather and document information

Staff must gather and accurately document information about reported or observed bullying. This might include:

- speaking with students involved, parents or carers, other staff or any witnesses, ensuring appropriate support is available when needed, to understand:
 - who was involved
 - when the incident(s) happened
 - where the incident(s) took place, for example, on social media or in the school yard
 - the behaviour that was experienced, observed or disclosed
 - if anyone stopped or tried to stop the behaviour
 - what led up to the incident(s)
 - what happened after the incident(s).

- collecting any supporting evidence, such as documents or screenshots where online content is involved (when appropriate, more details below)
- ensuring information about reported or observed bullying behaviour is recorded in line with department's record management procedures (see [Document and record](#)).

Where bullying behaviour may be criminal in nature:

- staff must seek advice from [police](#) prior to speaking with those involved, parents or carers, staff or other witnesses, to make sure any actions taken do not compromise any potential police investigation
- be careful with digital content of children and young people
- secure digital content and devices if appropriate
- if you have reason to believe that digital content may involve nude, nearly nude or sexual images of a child or young person, this content must not be viewed. Seek advice or instructions from [police](#). Intentional viewing, sending, copying and storage of this content may place the viewer at risk of committing a criminal offence and possible prosecution
- remain with the child or young person until police arrive. This is to ensure a device is not tampered with, resulting in loss of evidence.

See [student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy \(PDF 628 KB\)](#) for more information about confiscation of personal devices and [responding to online safety incidents in South Australian schools guideline \(PDF 455 KB\)](#) for more information about the management of sexually explicit material on devices.

4.3.5. Intervene

Schools must intervene in incidents of reported or observed bullying behaviour and ensure that responses are appropriate, consistent and equitable for all students.

Staff must assess the incident to determine if it:

- involves bullying or other [harmful behaviour](#)
- poses an immediate risk to the safety of students or staff.

A planning process must be undertaken and documented for any child or young person at ongoing risk or with support needs due to bullying behaviour of another child or young person at the same site. See the [behaviour support policy \(PDF 603 KB\)](#) for more information.

If there is an immediate risk to safety, staff must follow processes outlined in the [reporting critical incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses procedure \(PDF 681 KB\)](#) (staff login required), the [sexual behaviour in children and young people procedure and guideline \(PDF 2 MB\)](#) (staff login required) for incidents related to sexual behaviour, or, for incidents related to cyberbullying, the [responding to online safety incidents in South Australian schools guideline \(PDF 455 KB\)](#).

4.3.5.1. Strategies to address bullying

If there is no immediate risk, staff must use appropriate strategies to address bullying with students directly

involved in the incident that are [trauma-informed](#), culturally responsive and tailored to the unique circumstances involved.

Strategies may include:

- facilitating a meaningful dialogue to acknowledge harm caused
- targeted or intensive restorative interventions to repair relationships and restore trust, where it has been assessed as safe to do so (eg affected students are willing to participate and understand the process involved for repair)
- using the [Method of Shared Concern](#) or [Support Group Method](#). See [bullying prevention intervention and support training for teachers and school staff](#) (staff login required) for videos and practice guidance that provide step-by-step support to staff using these strategies
- parent or carer meetings to address concerns and plan next steps
- applying fair and logical consequences
- the use of [take-home, suspension, exclusion or expulsion](#) as a strategy of last resort when safety cannot be achieved via less exclusionary means.

It is recommended that schools:

- develop a Support and safety plan for children and young people affected by the behaviour of other students [to be linked on publication] when targeted or intensive support is required
- support leaders and staff to undertake professional learning to develop skills and confidence in managing complex bullying incidents, including where bullying is ongoing.

4.3.5.2. Refer to services

Staff may refer students to specialist support, if needed. This support may be provided by school buy-in allied health services, [Student Support Services](#) or external agencies. Options must be discussed with the student and their parents or carers ensuring that referrals are inclusive, culturally appropriate and responsive to the individual needs of each student.

4.3.5.3. Communication actions in response to bullying and maintaining privacy

Schools must communicate what actions have been taken, and the reasons for those actions, to those involved or impacted, to the greatest extent possible while maintaining the privacy of all those involved.

Without disclosing the identity of those involved, reassure parents and carers that a plan is in place for ensuring the safety, support and wellbeing needs of all.

Do not give out identifying information about the students involved, even when their identities are known in the school community.

If a student will not be attending the school for a period of time, the parents or carers of the students affected by bullying should be advised of the period of non-attendance and when the student is expected to return—so they can support their child or young person to know what to expect. The confidential details of the absence, for example, suspension, exclusion or exemption, must not be shared.

Students affected by bullying behaviour must be told what restrictions or expectations have been placed on the other students involved and how they can report any breaches of the restrictions or expectations.

4.3.6. Repair and restore relationships

Schools should take steps to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying when it has been assessed that it is emotionally and physically safe and in the best interests of everyone involved.

Schools are required to:

- work with students, staff, parents and carers to develop solutions following bullying incidents. Strategies must be culturally responsive and consider the experience of everyone involved
- support students who have engaged in bullying behaviours. This includes helping them to understand the cause, context and impact of their actions, develop empathy and learn positive, respectful behaviours in line with the 'behaviour support policy'.

It is recommended that schools:

- build staff skills in [restorative practice](#) and [trauma-informed practice](#) whole-school approaches that repair relationships and re-engage students through professional development and resources
- consider if a restorative intervention may be used to repair relationships, restore trust and facilitate open communication when it has been assessed that it is emotionally and physically safe and in the best interests of everyone involved (see [Assessing safe and appropriate use of restorative interventions](#)).
- seek advice and assistance from the department or external agencies when relationships are significantly harmed or complex needs are identified, and the rupture is interrupting engagement at school.

4.3.6.1. Assessing safe and appropriate use of restorative interventions

Schools should determine whether the bullying incident requires an immediate response to reestablish safety, according to relevant local and operational policy, prior to applying restorative practice interventions in response to bullying.

Schools should assess the emotional and physical safety needs of all students involved when deciding to use a restorative practice approach or intervention in response to bullying, to repair relationships.

Key considerations in assessing whether the use of [restorative practice](#) or restorative interventions in response to bullying is safe and appropriate include:

- the individual who caused harm is willing to acknowledge and be accountable for their actions that caused harm to others
- recognising and addressing any power imbalances between individuals to protect those who have been harmed from feeling pressured to participate
- ensuring all students involved understand the process for the proposed restorative practice intervention and are prepared and willing to participate
- ensuring the restorative practice intervention is facilitated by a staff member who has been trained to

lead targeted or intensive restorative practice interventions.

Key considerations for setting up emotional safety to support the restorative practice interventions if the above conditions are met:

- allowing flexibility for individuals to opt out and providing alternative support options where participation in restorative processes is not appropriate
- preparing participants thoroughly and including suitable support people, and involving parents and carers in the planning processes where necessary
- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all involved before, during, and after restorative meetings
- maintaining confidentiality, dignity and cultural safety for each participant, without excusing harmful behaviour
- monitoring outcomes and providing ongoing support to sustain respectful relationships and prevent recurrence.

See [restorative practices in education and care settings](#) (staff login required) for more information.

4.3.7. Create safety and wellbeing

Schools must establish safety and wellbeing for people involved in bullying incidents and others who have been impacted.

It is required that schools:

- report behaviours of a criminal nature to [police](#) in accordance with relevant department policies
- provide targeted social and emotional support for students who need more help after bullying incidents. This may include developing a Support and safety plan for children and young people affected by the behaviour of other students [to be linked on publication]
- embed a whole-school approach to prevent and address bullying, working with students, parents and carers, staff and the community to develop, implement and review policies and practices that support a safe and supportive learning environment
- develop locally tailored strategies to support all students, and provide targeted information and support for those who are at higher risk of experiencing bullying and harassment including:
 - Aboriginal children and young people
 - children and young people in care
 - children and young people with disabilities
 - gender and sexually diverse children and young people
 - children and young people experiencing mental health challenges
 - children and young people from culturally and racially marginalised groups
 - women and girls
 - other groups experiencing additional risk factors.

It is recommended that schools:

- organise extra adult supervision for the students involved if there has been a serious bullying incident. This includes before school, during breaks and after school and coordinating movements between schools and campuses
- build staff skills, knowledge and confidence to restore safety and wellbeing after critical incidents through professional development and resources.

4.3.8. Document and record

Schools must keep confidential documentation of all incidents of bullying and the responses in line with the department's records management procedures. Incidents can be recorded in one of the school databases or department information system. For example:

- Education Management System (EMS)
- the department's incident management system
- local student information systems (eg Day Map)
- confidential student records or files.

4.3.9. Monitor and follow up

Staff must check on all students involved in a bullying incident. They will make sure:

- all students are physically, [psychologically](#) and culturally safe and ongoing safety is supported
- harm is repaired and relationships are restored, where it is safe and in the best interests of all involved
- provide alternative supports at school that promote emotional and physical safety where repair is not possible
- actions taken are discussed with students, parents, and carers with consideration for [privacy requirements](#) for all involved
- effectiveness of actions are monitored and reviewed.

If a student, parent or carer is not happy with the steps taken by school leaders and staff, they must be provided with the details for the local education office and the department's Customer Feedback Team on 1800 677 435.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. Engagement and Wellbeing Directorate

Establish, maintain and promote an effective 'bullying prevention and response procedure' and supporting resources, that reflect evidence informed practice.

Support school leaders to plan, implement and evaluate behaviour support approaches.

Ensure information about the 'bullying prevention and response procedure' is accessible across the department and to the public.

5.2. Student Support Services

Provide specialist advice and services to support universal behaviour support strategies and the promotion of positive behaviour for children and young people.

Provide specialist advice and services to support targeted and intensive behaviour supports for children and young people who require support to be safely included in education and care services.

Model and coach behaviour support strategies and provide practical support to staff.

5.3. Education directors

Ensure each school in their portfolio is effectively applying this procedure to prevent and respond to bullying in schools, and to provide a positive learning environment for children and young people and those working with them.

5.4. School leaders and staff

School leaders and staff will model and promote positive behaviour, value diversity, demonstrate respect and include all students and their families. They will:

- provide and regularly take part in professional development to build the skills, knowledge and confidence required to prevent, recognise and respond to bullying
- collect data on bullying regularly. Use the data to plan how they will prevent and respond to bullying
- assess bullying data and trends to develop prevention strategies. Do this regularly with the Governing Council and school community
- explicitly teach students about respectful relationships, bullying and cyberbullying. Teach them how to recognise bullying, what to do and how to get help
- work with students to come up with solutions to bullying. Include them in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing
- support all students to be included, in particular students at higher risk of being bullied
- take action when bullying and cyberbullying has been reported. This includes incidents that happen out of school hours or off school grounds when it relates to school relationships
- report criminal matters to [police](#)
- help parents and carers to recognise bullying. Include information about what to do when their child is engaging in or affected by bullying
- work with families, service providers and the community to support students affected by bullying
- support students to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying when it has been assessed as safe and in the best interests of all involved, and where staff have built the relevant skills, knowledge and capability required

- have planned responses to bullying. Make them visible and consistent. Responses should foster trust and confidence
- help students to be physically, psychologically and culturally safe from bullying.

5.5. Non-department staff

Non-department staff working with children and young people and providing a service on behalf of the department or delivering a service on a departmental site must comply with this procedure and any associated policies and procedures.

5.6. Parents, carers and families

Parents, carers and families will model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive and ensure they:

- help their child or young person to be safe online, including checking their children's use of technology and social media
- make sure their child or young person knows how to identify and report bullying and work with the school to help their children be safe from bullying
- talk to their child or young person about safety issues, including bullying and cyberbullying, helping their children to understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond using the same messages the school uses
- report concerns about bullying to school staff
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve concerns if a bullying incident occurs, including discussing issues as soon as possible (in accordance with the education or care services procedures and policies) and collaborating on the development of plans
- support their child or young person to go to school while a bullying issue is being worked on
- support their child or young person to actively participate in addressing bullying related matters in accordance with their developmental abilities and best interests
- get external professional support for their child or young person, if needed.

5.7. Students

Students will model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive, both in face-to-face interactions and online. They will:

- build the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to recognise and respond to bullying
- be a part of decision-making processes aimed at improving student safety and wellbeing, ensuring their voices are heard and valued
- take action when bullying is observed in person or online, by safely intervening or seek help from adults to intervene
- support friends and peers in accessing assistance from trusted adults if they experience bullying, and encourage their friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends are involved in

bullying behaviours.

6. Definitions

6.1. behaviours of concern

Challenging, complex or unsafe behaviours that are of greater severity, frequency or duration and require more persistent or intensive supports to address.

Does not include low level, developmentally appropriate transgressions that test the boundaries of established rules, standards and norms but are relatively simple to redirect and minimise through universal behaviour support strategies.

6.2. bullying

See [Definitions for bullying](#) and See [Appendix 1 – Features and types of bullying and other harmful behaviour](#) for more information.

6.3. bystander

A person who witnesses or is present during a bullying incident or other harmful behaviour but is not directly involved as the person using the behaviour or the person affected.

6.4. child or young person

A person under the age of 18.

Where a school provides a service to students aged 18 years and older, the term 'child or young person' also applies to those students.

6.5. consistent

Done in the same way over time. Consistent responses to bullying does not mean that all children and young people receive the same response. Responses to bullying behaviour are tailored to the specific needs and context of the child or young person.

6.6. continuum

A series on a scale where the 2 opposite ends are distinctly different from each other.

6.7. covert bullying

Any behaviour that meets the definition of bullying (see [Definitions for bullying](#)) and is hidden, out of sight of, or unacknowledged by adults.

6.8. fair and logical consequences

A consequence is what follows a behaviour. It is not a punishment. Fair and logical consequences are directly related to the behaviour. For example, explicitly teaching a child who displayed dysregulated behaviour the

skills for self-regulation, or requiring a young person who knocked over the rubbish bins at recess to pick up the rubbish that has blown around the yard. Fair and logical consequences can include the use of [restorative practices](#) when safe and in the best interests of all involved.

6.9. harmful behaviour

Behaviour that threatens a child's or young person's right to a safe education or care environment or the rights of staff to a safe work environment. Harmful behaviour may occur as a once-off incident or as a pattern of repeated behaviour. Its impact can vary depending on the context, the nature of relationships involved, and personal circumstances. This includes bullying, cyberbullying and other online harms, violence and aggression (including physical, verbal and sexual), harassment (including sexual and gender-based harassment, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, misogyny and ageism), discrimination and emotional abuse.

6.10. Method of Shared Concern

A method that brings together children or young people believed to be involved in a bullying situation. The aim is to disrupt the power dynamics reinforcing the bullying behaviours and help children and young people to help each other.

6.11. overt bullying

Any behaviour that meets the definition of bullying (see [Definitions for bullying](#)) and is observable, acknowledged or witnessed by an adult.

6.12. priority cohorts

Groups of students identified as being more likely to experience barriers or disadvantage, and who may benefit from additional opportunities and support to promote equity, inclusion and positive outcomes.

6.13. psychological safety

Psychological safety is when individuals feel respected, empowered and comfortable speaking up, asking for help and support, and taking risks without fear of retribution. Mistakes are viewed as opportunities for learning and growth and diversity are celebrated. It considers and provides for what each person needs to be successful in the school.

6.14. restorative practice

A relationship-centred approach that focuses on both building community and repairing harm when it occurs. It operates at all levels within the community to support children, young people and adults. It teaches empathy and accountability and helps individuals to respond to conflict in ways that promote learning, personal growth and the repair of relationships.

Restorative practice aims to:

- actively build and maintain healthy relationships within the community
- prevent [behaviours of concern](#) by teaching and modelling responsibility, empathy and respect

- restore safety and repair harm when conflict or issues occur
- empower staff, children and young people to learn and work together in safe and inclusive environments, alongside other whole-school approaches.

6.15. safe inclusion

The inclusion of all children and young people, including those who engage in [behaviours of concern](#), in the setting to the fullest extent possible, while maintaining the physical and psychological safety of children, young people, staff and the broader school community.

6.16. school day

A day in which schools are operational and delivering educational services to students. Public holidays, school holidays, school closure days, pupil free days and weekends are not considered 'school days'.

6.17. student

A person to whom a school provides a service. This term may be used interchangeably with 'child and young person' in this procedure.

6.18. Support Group Method

A method that uses social dynamics to increase supportive actions by bystanders and increase the likelihood of positive behaviours for all children involved. The aim of the method is to change behaviours by raising awareness of the impact bullying is having and building empathy for the person affected. It also increases bystander support and helps to identify covert bullying.

6.19. trauma-informed practice

A practice approach that prioritises safety, relationship and supporting regulation for learning. When support for behaviour is trauma-informed, the educator:

- understands [behaviours of concern](#) as communication of an unmet need
- proactively considers how trauma and stress may affect the child or young person's ability to engage successfully in learning and creates safe learning environments that support this
- creates opportunities for children and young people to regulate their arousal levels and calm their stress response through coregulation and relational pedagogy.

7. Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Features and types of bullying and other harmful behaviour](#)

[Appendix 2 – South Australian Bullying Prevention Explanatory Model](#)

8. Supporting information

- [Behaviour support and interactions with children in preschools](#) (staff login required)
- [Bullying prevention and response tools and resources for all school staff](#) (staff login required)
- [Bullying prevention tools and resources](#) (staff login required)
- [Contacting the police about children's and young people's behaviour](#) (staff login required)
- [Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum](#) (staff login required)
- Online policy tool for schools (staff login required) [to be linked on publication]
- [National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools](#)
- [Respectful relationships education](#) (staff login required)
- [Responding to racism for schools and promoting anti-racism](#) (staff login required)
- [Restorative practices in education and care settings](#) (staff login required)
- [Student mental health](#) (staff login required)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Violence prevention and response in schools](#)

8.1. Related legislation

- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)
- [Civil Liability Act 1936](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)
- [Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)

8.2. Related policies

- Anti-racism policy placeholder [to be linked on publication]
- [Assault, weapons, sexual, drug and other offences reported on site: site responsibilities procedure \(PDF 669 KB\)](#) (staff login required)
- [Behaviour support policy \(PDF 603 KB\)](#)
- [Children and students with disability policy \(PDF 195 KB\)](#)
- [Duty of care to children and young people policy \(PDF 182 KB\)](#) (staff login required)
- [Gender diverse and intersex children and young people support procedure \(PDF 246 KB\)](#)

- [Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people: guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education or care settings guidelines \(PDF 3 MB\)](#)
- [Reporting critical incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses procedure \(PDF 234 KB\)](#) (staff login required)
- [Responding to online safety incidents in South Australian schools guidelines \(PDF 456 KB\)](#)
- [Sexual behaviour in children and young people procedure and guideline \(PDF 2 MB\)](#) (staff login required)
- [Student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy \(PDF 628 KB\)](#)
- [Suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students procedure \(PDF 1 MB\)](#)

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10. Contact

Engagement and Wellbeing

Email: education.BehaviourPolicy@sa.gov.au

11. Appendix 1 – Features and types of bullying and other harmful behaviour

11.1. Bullying has three main features

11.1.1. It involves the misuse of power in a relationship

Conflict and fights between equals are not considered bullying.

Bullying involves a power imbalance where a person or group of people have more power than the person being bullied.

Power can come from:

- physical characteristics like being bigger, taller, stronger or physically capable
- being older
- having more money or things
- being popular, well-liked, having lots of friends
- being in a group
- being from the mainstream or dominant culture, religion, gender identity, sexual identity.

11.1.2. It is ongoing and repeated

One incident of conflict is generally not defined as bullying.

But a one-off incident might be:

- harassment
- violence
- discrimination.

These types of incidents must receive a response from school staff, using the department's and the school's own behaviour support policies.

One act, by one person, may be bullying if it:

- adds to other people's behaviours to form a pattern
- can be shared online to a large audience, or reposted on other sites.

11.1.3. It involves behaviours that can cause harm

Bullying can cause physical and psychological harm.

Physical harm may result in injuries. It can also include theft or damage to belongings.

Psychological harm can include:

- anxiety
- not wanting to go to school
- lack of interest in school
- isolation and depression.

A fear of being bullied can create psychological harm.

Bullying can have long-term and short-term negative impacts. Negative impacts can be experienced by everyone involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can impact students in different ways. This will depend on the personal resources of the individual and the support network that is available to them. This network may include peers, friends, school and family.

11.2. Types of bullying

11.2.1. Physical

This includes:

- hitting
- kicking
- tripping
- pinching
- pushing
- damaging or stealing belongings.

11.2.2. Verbal

This includes:

- name calling
- insults
- taunting
- intimidation
- threats
- sarcastic remarks
- put-downs.

11.2.3. Social

This includes:

- social exclusion
- lying
- spreading rumours
- unkind facial expressions or body language
- mean and condescending looks
- playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking and damaging someone's reputation or social relationships.

11.2.4. Cyber

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying using digital technology including mobile phones, social media, games and apps. It includes posts, comments, texts, messages, chats, livestreaming, memes, images, videos or emails to upset, frighten, threaten, embarrass or hurt someone, usually a child or young person.

Cyberbullying involves:

- a misuse of power within a relationship
- behaviour that is repeated or can be shared or viewed multiple times
- intent to cause harm.

Examples of cyberbullying include:

- online gossip and spreading rumours
- leaving people out or starting exclusion campaigns on social media
- creating sites that mock or humiliate others
- sharing someone's personal information online without consent
- posting information to cause embarrassment
- tagging photos or videos with abusive comments or hashtags
- creating fake accounts in someone else's name to embarrass or trick someone or make them feel humiliated
- harassment, intimidation and threats.

Cyberbullying often happens alongside face-to-face bullying, leading many children and young people to experience both at the same time. Cyberbullying can have serious effects on a child or young person's wellbeing and mental health. The potential for harm is high because cyberbullying can:

- be done anonymously

- reach a large audience quickly
- be difficult to delete or remove
- happen anytime and anywhere, making it hard to escape.

Some cyberbullying behaviours may also be illegal.

11.3. Other harmful behaviour

Sometimes reports about bullying may also include harm resulting from other behaviours such as:

- harassment (including sexual and gender-based harassment, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, misogyny and ageism)
- violence and aggression (including physical, verbal and sexual)
- discrimination.

These behaviours can be related to each other and overlap. But they can also be separate concepts and experiences.

Bullying and other [harmful behaviour](#) are not acceptable. School leaders and staff must be proactive and responsive in addressing these behaviours and follow the relevant policies for the specific [behaviours of concern](#).

11.3.1. Harassment

Harassment is negative behaviour that targets an individual or group.

An individual or group may be targeted because of their:

- identity
- race
- culture or ethnic origin
- religion
- physical characteristics
- gender identity
- sexual orientation
- age
- economic status
- ability or disability.

Harassment behaviour offends, humiliates, intimidates and creates an unsafe environment.

It might be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or a one-off act. It might be targeted towards a specific person or directed randomly.

Harassment can be purposeful or unintended. A neutral behaviour can be harassment if it continues despite requests for it to stop.

11.3.2. Discrimination

Discrimination happens when people are treated differently (less favourably) to others. Discrimination can disadvantage some people because of their background or personal characteristics.

People can experience discrimination based on their:

- identity
- race
- culture or ethnic origin
- religion and religious appearance/dress
- physical characteristics
- gender identity
- sexual orientation
- age
- economic status
- ability or disability.

11.3.3. Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power against another person.

Violence can be threatened or actual. It might result in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death.

South Australia Police must be contacted by phoning 131 444 if a violent incident involves an assault where:

- any person is injured and first aid is administered or an ambulance is called
- it is more than a 1 to 1 altercation between 2 persons.

In an emergency contact police on 000.

See [contacting the police about children's and young people's behaviour](#) for more information.

12. Appendix 2 – South Australian bullying prevention explanatory model

The South Australian bullying prevention explanatory model describes bullying as a complex social issue, driven by the quality of social connections in a community. It is best approached as a social issue in the context of:

- family, community and social relationships
- society's expectations, values and structures.

