



# Bullying Prevention Policy

	<b>Ratified by Council</b>	<b>Reviewed by Principal</b>
<b>Date</b>	23 May 2023	23 May 2023
<b>Name</b>	Justin Coombs	Jenny Dougan
<b>Signature</b>		

*West Coast Steiner School is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation, taking a preventative and participatory stance on child protection issues and promoting a child safe environment based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*

<b>PROVENANCE</b>		
<b>Responsibility:</b> School Principal	<b>Review Cycle:</b> 3 years	<b>Date for Next Review:</b> May 2026
<b>Related Policies and Procedures</b>	Child Protection Policy Duty of Care Policy Code of Conduct for Parents Code of Conduct for Staff Code of Conduct for Students Enrolments Policy Attendance Policy	Concerns and Complaints Management Policy Student Complaints Policy Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy Incursions, Excursions and Camps Policy Work Health and Safety Policy Risk Management Policy Pastoral Care Policy
<b>Relevant Legislation and Authority</b>	School Education Act 1999 (WA) School Education Regulations 2000 (WA) Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)	Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 and Regulations 1996 WA Work Health and Safety Act 2020 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth) Disability Standards for Education 2005
<b>Appendices</b>		

<b>VERSION MANAGEMENT</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes Made</b>	<b>Author</b>
April 2023	Anti-bullying Policy reviewed in line with National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Bullying No Way recommendations. Rewritten as Bullying Prevention Policy. Revisions from AISWA Bullying Prevention Guidelines Version 3 incorporated.	L Lane
May 2023	Ratified by Council	L Lane

# Policy

## Background

West Coast Steiner School values and celebrates diversity and expects all sections of our school community to demonstrate respect towards others and together make our School safe for everyone. We seek to create at all times an environment which is safe, supportive and listening, where all sections of our school community (councillors, staff, pupils and parents) understand that bullying in any form, by anyone (adults or children) and anywhere, is always unacceptable.

Our aim is to be a school at which bullying does not exist. We expect everyone to take action if bullying occurs, by implementing recognised procedures and strategies to minimise impact and ensure safety for all students. West Coast Steiner School is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to ensure:

- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the School on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies;
- bullying is managed through a 'whole-of-School community' approach involving students, staff and parents;
- staff, students and parents are empowered to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed regularly against best practice.

## Application

This policy applies to and is binding upon all students, parents, employees, work experience students, volunteers and contractors of West Coast Steiner School. For the purpose of this policy 'parent' includes step-parents, foster parents, legal guardians, carers and grandparents.

## Definitions

### Child abuse:

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law as defined by the Department of Communities:

1. Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver.
2. Sexual abuse, in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
  - a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
  - b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
  - c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.
3. Emotional abuse includes:
  - a) psychological abuse; and
  - b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
4. Neglect includes failure by a child's parents to provide, arrange or allow the provision of:
  - a) adequate care for the child; or
  - b) effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

**Corporal punishment:**

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm (From UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 15: CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007).

**Degrading punishment:**

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child. (From UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 16: CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007).

**Policy Review and Dissemination**

This policy and related procedures will be made available to the public and staff on the School website and is available to staff in the Policies and Procedures folder in Reception. The School Community will receive reminders to refer to this policy (and updated versions) through the School Newsletter.

All staff will be directed to read this document at the first staff meeting at the commencement of the school year. New staff will be informed of this policy as part of the School's Induction Program. The School will provide ongoing training to ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities in relation to this policy.

The School may, at any time, make amendments to this policy to ensure continuous improvement. If changes are made prior to the scheduled review they will be noted in the Version Management table of the policy and communicated to the School community as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed every three years by the School Principal and ratified by the School Council.

## What is Bullying?

In line with the Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools and the recommendations of the Director General, West Coast Steiner School uses the national definition of bullying for 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, emotional 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 of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. Cyberbullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

### What Isn't Bullying

Behaviours can be impolite or rude such as inadvertently saying or doing something that offends someone or forgetting to use our manners. At other times children can be deliberately mean and purposefully say or do something to hurt another person. Both these instances can be hurtful and damaging to relationships and can be addressed through restorative processes. These are not the same as bullying which is intentional and repeated behaviour involving an imbalance of power.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single acts of nastiness, physical aggression or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not the same as bullying, although elements of these may be present when bullying occurs.

Although these behaviours may not be described as bullying, they are not acceptable behaviours at our School and will have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour.

### What is Harassment?

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person/s. It may be intentional or unintentional (i.e. words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless).

## Bullying Prevention

Bullying prevention at West Coast Steiner School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

An essential component of the protective behaviours curriculum includes explicit instruction on the role of bystanders. The action taken by this group has been shown to either discourage or support the person doing the bullying. The role of the bystander is becoming increasingly prominent as an effective means to counter bullying. Students are made aware that even taking action by telling a responsible adult can make a substantial difference.

Our Buddies Program encourages positive relationships between students in different year levels. They are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.

It is essential that we respond to bullying as a community. Students, staff, parents and other members of the School community, including visitors, volunteers and contractors, all have responsibility to:

- be observant to signs of bullying
- report incidents of bullying as quickly as possible
- treat reports of bullying seriously
- be familiar with the School's policies & procedures.

Parents are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through their child's teacher, the Deputy Principal or Principal immediately, if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

### **Recognising Signs of Bullying In Your Child and Supporting Your Child**

Signs a teacher may notice:

- becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- starts getting into fights
- refuses to talk about what is wrong
- school grades begin to fall
- student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school
- change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.

Signs a parent may notice:

- does not want to go to school or participate in school activities
- changes in their method or route to school or is frightened of walking to school
- changes their sleeping or eating patterns
- has frequent tears, anger and/or mood swings
- takes money from home
- has unexplained bruises, cuts and/or scratches
- loses or brings home damaged belongings or clothes.

Students who are more likely to be bullied are also more likely to:

- feel disconnected from school and not like school
- display high levels of emotionality that indicate vulnerability and low levels of resilience
- be less well accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn
- have low self-esteem

- be relatively non-assertive

As a Steiner school, we do not advocate the use of electronic devices and social media in Primary school. However, we do understand that children may use technology at home and be vulnerable to being bullied online. Signs of online bullying may include:

- being hesitant about going online or suddenly avoiding their phone
- seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
- being visibly upset after using the computer or mobile phone
- closing the screen, or hiding the mobile phone when others enter the room
- spending unusually long hours online
- receiving suspicious phone calls, emails or packages.

### **Supporting your child at home**

There are ways you can support your child if they are being bullied.

- Listen calmly, get the full story and let them know it is not their fault.
- Ask them how they want to deal with the bullying. Encourage them to seek help from their teacher.
- Talk about strategies for dealing with the bullying. Practising at home can be useful.
- Focus on solutions and stay positive.
- Tell them you will report the bullying if it does not stop after they have tried to deal with it.
- Check in regularly with them.

### **Reporting Bullying**

Students and their parents are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents for fear that it will only make matters worse. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents reporting concerning behaviour as soon as it occurs, so that the responses implemented by the School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to their teacher, or any trusted member of staff, as soon as possible. Students can also complete a Student Complaint Form available in Reception to express their concerns.

### **Responding to Bullying**

All communications with the involved parties in the course of investigating will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

When determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour, West Coast Steiner School will consider:

- the age and maturity 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, including any element of provocation.

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

Please refer to the School's *Behaviour Development Policy* for further information as to how the School responds to bullying and harassment.