

Renmark Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying is

- *An ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social and/or psychological harm*
- *Can be 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*
- *Be obvious or hidden*
- *Have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.*

Single incidents, conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online are not defined as bullying.

Renmark Primary School strives to provide a safe, inclusive, supportive and orderly learning environment free from bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment and violence. **Bullying in all forms is unacceptable in this school.**

Bullying will be addressed through restorative practices that empower individuals to speak up and assert themselves. This is an important lifelong skill.

Renmark Primary School will work with the school community, services and agencies to support its students to be responsible and productive members of the school and broader community.

Bullying is not....

Many behaviours may be distressing but are not necessarily bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention.

These include rude and mean behaviours.

What is the difference between rude, mean and bullying behaviours?

Rude behaviours are defined as accidentally saying or doing something hurtful. They are usually thoughtless and ill mannered, but not meant to actually hurt someone else.

These include:

- burping in someone's face,
- pushing in front of others in a line; and
- bragging to demean others.

Mean behaviours are defined as saying or doing something to deliberately hurt a person, once or maybe twice.

These include

Making fun of someone's appearance, what they are wearing

- I don't like your short hair. You look like a boy.
- Why did you wear that dress?

Insulting someone's intelligence or ability

- You're so stupid.
- You're hopeless at soccer.

Saying or doing something unkind after a fight with a friend

- Saying, "I hate you."
- Taking something that doesn't belong to you.

The main difference between "rude" and "mean" behaviour is that **rudeness is usually unplanned. Mean behaviour is intentional.**

Students involved in or who witness distressing and concerning behaviours are asked and encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

Cyber Safety

The widespread availability of the internet provides unique opportunities to communicate and learn, however some individuals use the power of the internet for bullying and harassment.

We can minimise the harm that such individuals do by teaching students how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

Renmark Primary School teaches a **Cyber Safety curriculum** in each year level.

The term "**Cyber Ethics**" refers to a code of safe and responsible behaviour for the internet community.

Practising cyber ethics requires an understanding of the risks of harmful and illegal behaviour online, and learning how to protect internet users from such behaviour.

It also involves teaching young people, who may not realise the potential for harm to themselves and others, how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

What makes cyberbullying different to in-person bullying?

- it is often anonymous and unlimited by time and place so the victim has little respite from the abuse,
- there is an element of disinhibition due to anonymity where students who would not normally participate, do so,
- it can reach hundreds or thousands of people quickly. The victim can feel even more isolated; and
- it often involves repeated episodes of aggression and an imbalance of power. The victim may feel escape is impossible.

An Educator's guide to Cyberbullying and Cyber threats defines verbal aggression as:

- harassment or repeated insults through various forms,
- defamation of a person's character through derogatory postings, rumours, or images,
- inflaming or fighting messages using anger and vulgar language,
- outing or deceiving someone into sharing secrets or private information,
- polling such as posting an image on a voting website to make fun of a person's looks,
- impersonation or identity theft to embarrass or destroy a person's identity,
- cyber stalking including sending intimidating or threatening messages,
- sexting including sexual solicitation and/or exploitation; and
- unsafe digital communities with shared interests, such as social communities that validate eating disorders, violence, or drug use.

How does Renmark Primary School protect our students?

- teaches strategies for personal safety and advises students not to reveal personal or identifying information (e.g. passwords, names, images, telephone numbers)
- teaches topics and uses resources from the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum
- encourages students to inform the teacher if they are exposed to inappropriate material or anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable
- uses a Department for Education filtered internet service to filter out inappropriate material
- addresses cyber-safety complaints promptly
- establishes the facts of the situation
- applies appropriate sanctions that align with the school's Behaviour Learning policy, and in more serious situations, police contacted.

Cyber-safety Use Agreements are in place for all students.

Policies and written agreements are signed by parents and students (or for younger students, parents only) and implemented.

Bullying Prevention

Renmark Primary School

- implements programs and strategies that build a positive, inclusive school culture,
- fosters a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour, by modelling and encouraging acceptance, kindness and respect and
- is proactive and implements a whole school, multifaceted approach to prevent and address bullying, within the framework of evidence based research into best practice.

These include

- a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students, and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing,
- strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community, all working together to ensure the safety of students,
- classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour,
- year level incursions and programs to raise awareness of bullying and its impacts,
- a social and emotional learning curriculum, teaching students about bullying; what it is and how to respond assertively to promote resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving,
- the Peer Mediation program that encourages positive relationships between students across year levels, empowering them to be confident, effective communicators who can resolve conflict non-aggressively and constructively; and
- students being encouraged to look out for each other and talk to teachers and older peers if they have experienced or witnessed bullying.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our [Behaviour Learning Policy](#).

Incident Response

Students experiencing bullying or who have witnessed bullying are strongly encouraged to report their concerns to staff as soon as possible (teacher, Student Wellbeing Leader, senior staff).

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

Investigations

The Leadership Team is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for a timely resolution.

To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, a member of the leadership team will speak to

- students involved (victim/s, alleged perpetrator/s and witness/es),
- parents/ carers of students involved; and
- teachers of students involved.

Detailed notes of all discussions and written statements from all or any of the above, will be taken as required for future reference.

A thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying determines the nature of the conduct and students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will determine the most effective and appropriate response to the behaviour.

Serious bullying, including cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to the South Australian Police.

Responses to bullying behaviours

A number of factors are considered when determining the most appropriate response to bullying behaviour.

These include

- the age and maturity of students involved,
- the severity and frequency of the bullying and its impact on the victim,
- whether the perpetrator/s have displayed similar behaviour before,
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one,
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse; and
- the alleged motive, including provocation.

Principal, Deputy Principal or Student Wellbeing responses to bullying may include

- offering support to the victim/s, perpetrator/s and others affected, including referral to an external agency as required,
- facilitating a restorative meeting with the students involved to repair damaged relationships; remorse and restorative action from the person who has bullied, and forgiveness from the person who has been bullied. Restorative justice seeks to understand, make amends and put things right. The healing of the relationship concerns all affected by the wrongdoing thus allowing everyone to begin their "journey to belonging",
- implementing natural consequences for the perpetrator/s which may include removal of privileges, suspension and/or exclusion consistent with our Behaviour Learning Policy,
- developing a Behaviour Support Plan with perpetrator/s,
- providing discussion and/or mentoring to develop the social and emotional learning competencies of students involved,
- monitoring the behaviour of the students involved and follow up as necessary; and
- implementing year level targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.

The staff at Renmark Primary School understands the importance of monitoring students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour.

To effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour, students must report concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the teacher and senior staff respond in a timely and appropriate manner.

Responsibilities of Principal, Staff and Students

Staff Responsibilities

Staff have a moral and legal responsibility to support all learners in an environment free of harassment or bullying.

In your supervisory and duty of care role you

- build trusting relationships with students, parents and wider community members,
- support each other to adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct,
- use preventative intervention strategies and inclusive teaching methodologies to build protective factors in children,
- are a positive role models for others,
- provide effective support for all involved in bullying, teasing, alienation or discrimination,
- manage incidents and learn from them,
- conduct regular safety audits: document, collect data, analyse, intervene, monitor, evaluate,
- participate in program, policies and procedures reviews; and
- engage in relevant training opportunities.

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

Parents/caregivers have a moral and legal obligation to protect and raise children in safety, free of harassment or bullying by:

- staying connected to your child, be aware of and attend to changes in feelings or behaviours,
- supporting everyone's right to feel safe, be active in developing and supporting safe school policy,
- taking interest in what your child enjoys and achieves,
- noticing your child's small steps and positive efforts,
- listening carefully, understand your child's concerns,
- modelling appropriate behaviour in your relationships with others, including school staff,
- communicating an understanding that preventing bullying is everyone's responsibility,
- avoiding comparing your child with others, tell and show love for your child for being themselves,
- avoiding involving children in adult problems; and
- work with the school in resolving issues, should they arise.

Student Responsibilities

Students have a right to fair and safe treatment, learning in environments free from harmful bullying or harassment. You have a responsibility to:

- be fair and honest,
- listen politely to others,
- speak in a respectful tone of voice,
- act and move in safe ways,
- use good manners,
- keep your hands off others' belongings and work,

- allow others their personal space,
- give and seek help when needed,
- engage in fair resolution when a problem arises,
- be accountable for your choices,
- take part in learning to develop your understanding of anti-bullying, anti-harassment and laws relating to discrimination and exclusion; and
- think positively, avoiding mean thoughts about others.

Evaluation

The Renmark Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed every two years, informed by a range of school bullying data and responses to ensure the policy remains current, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- student discussions,
- regular student bullying surveys and staff surveys; and,
- documentation and records (EDSAS, notes) including the number of reported bullying incidents in each year level, and the effectiveness of implemented responses.

Approval Date: _____

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