



Parent Tip Sheet 8. Bullying

To ensure all Victorian government secondary schools are healthy and safe places to learn, each school takes bullying and cyber bullying very seriously and has policies and guidelines to prevent and manage it.

What is bullying and unacceptable behaviour?

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, with more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, damages their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Bullying includes:

- Direct physical bullying, such as hitting, kicking, damaging property
- Direct verbal bullying, such as name calling, intimidation, racist/homophobic remarks
- Indirect bullying, such as spreading rumours
- Cyberbullying, which includes the use of digital technologies to bully or harass someone, such as setting up a defamatory website.

Unacceptable behaviour refers to a wide range of behaviours that are not appropriate or acceptable, including harassment, discrimination and threats or acts of violence.

Many antisocial behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. Some examples of behaviours which are not bullying include:

- A situation where there is mutual conflict, that is, a balance of power where students are both upset and usually want a resolution to the problem
- Social rejection or dislike (unless it is a repeated act and directed towards a specific person)
- Single episodes of nastiness, meanness or one-off acts of aggression or intimidation. Although not bullying, these are unacceptable behaviours.

Schools are required to have a Student Engagement Policy that includes strategies to promote positive student behaviour, build a safe and inclusive environment, prevent bullying and antisocial behaviour, and encourage respect, compassion and cooperation.

Student safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of the whole school community. Teachers and staff have a responsibility to ensure students are safe. All students – whether they are being bullied or targeted, a bystander, or are bullying or harassing others – are able to play a role in preventing or responding to the situation.

