

Behaviour Management Policy

To inform staff, students and families about the rights and responsibilities of students at The School.

To outline how the school will respond to behaviours that breach these rights and responsibilities.

Purpose:

To emphasize that we take a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and harassment.

To comply with Child Safe Standards in Ministerial Order 1359 and the VRQA Minimum Standards and Other Requirements for Schools

Scope:

School Coordinator (Principal), teachers (including casual relief staff), families and students

Implemented by:

School Coordinator (Principal), Teachers employed in their capacity as VIT Registered Teachers

Approved by:

Parent Group, LC Board

Communicated via:

School website, staff induction, enrolment agreement, whole school training plan

Reviewed:

Every two years or as legislative changes or improvements are identified

Overview

Learning Co-operative affirms that a culture of positive behaviour and high levels of student engagement are essential prerequisites for learning. The school has a responsibility, in partnership with families, to create and sustain a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

This policy provides students, staff and families with clarity about the behaviour expected of students and the responses that may follow when expectations are not met.



The Rights of Each Student

- to be and feel physically and emotionally safe
- to be accepted and valued as an individual regardless of personal characteristics, including gender identity, race, (dis)ability, neurodivergence, sexual orientation and values
- to be spoken to with respect by everyone in the community
- to be shown courtesy, kindness and respect by everyone
- to learn in a rich, well resourced environment
- to work without being disturbed
- to expect personal property to be safe from damage, theft or unauthorised use
- to have personal boundaries respected and not receive uninvited physical or online contact
- to have their privacy respected (including use of their image and personal information)
- to have their concerns taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
- to have a say in what happens at the school and decisions that affect them, including through student meetings or student council processes
- to hold an opinion that is different from others provided these are expressed in a way that does not conflict with any of the other rights

The Responsibilities of each Student

- to abide by the Student Code of Conduct
- to conduct themselves in a way which allows others to be safe and feel safe
- to accept and value others as individuals regardless of personal characteristics, including gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation and/or romantic orientation, and values
- to express themselves respectfully to everyone in the community
- to cooperate and act in a friendly manner
- to show courtesy, kindness and respect to everyone
- to listen to others, allowing them their thoughts and opinions, and accept that the opinions of others may differ from their own
- to conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate for a school environment
- to work without disturbing others
- to abide by all school policies and direct instructions given by staff members
- to contribute to the wellbeing of the school community and environment



- to communicate with staff and alert them to any situation that has or could impact the safety or wellbeing of a student, staff member or community member
- to respect school property and the personal property of others
- to respect the personal boundaries of others and not engage in uninvited physical or online contact
- to respect the privacy of others (including the use of their image and personal information)

The Responsibilities of the School

It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to ensure the school and its staff:

- actively promote and support the development of respectful and meaningful relationships between students, staff, families and members of the community
- proactively identify and consider the diverse needs of all students including Aboriginal students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, students unable to live at home, students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and students experiencing risk or vulnerability.
- apply this policy and ensure that its implementation is age appropriate, fair, consistent and non-discriminatory
- organize student programs and curriculum to raise student's awareness about bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment including what to look for and actions they can take if they are experiencing or witnessing bullying or harassment. It will include a variety of forums for learning and discussions and to aide development of attitudes and school culture. Topics and themes may be dealt with formally in the curriculum, in peer based or cohort specific programs, extra-curricular programs, and activities run by outside experts and workers.
- can identify and respond to bullying and harassment and to understand that bullying behaviour and harassment should not be ignored.
- share observations and concerns with other school staff to raise awareness of suspected instances of bullying to ensure that patterns and further incidents are quickly recognised and can be dealt with promptly.
- make sure that all members of the school community understand their obligation to report accounts of suspected harassment, bullying or cyber-bullying to Teachers or the Coordinator.
- discharge its Duty of Care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. This Duty of Care is not delegable.



- understand its Occupational Health and Safety obligations to ensure staff safety and wellbeing
- provide opportunities for students to grow in their social learning in order to develop positive behaviour and respectful relationships and encourage high levels of engagement.
- ensure that all members of the school community have a shared unambiguous understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- monitor and record student behaviour and regularly review, analyse and look for trends and emerging patterns, and use this information to update policies, practices and processes.
- Maintain records of any Level 3 behaviours or serious breaches of the student code of conduct, recording the event and subsequent investigations, actions and outcomes.

Where appropriate, behaviour concerns may also be discussed at student morning meetings or student council to support collective responsibility and culture building.

Behaviour Management Pathway

The School recognises that inappropriate behaviour exists along a continuum and must always be understood in context, including timing, intensity, intention and impact.

Teachers, in conjunction with the Coordinator, will consider the broader context when determining the appropriate response. Repeated lower-level behaviours may result in a higher-level response.

Types of Inappropriate Behaviour

Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of how different levels of behaviour will be defined by the school:

Level 1 One-off instances of name calling, inadvertent embarrassment, disrupting meetings and classes, distracting others' learning, one-off put-downs, non-cooperation, not taking care of school property, writing on walls and tables.

Level 2 Ongoing or repeated instances of name calling, uninvited online contact, uninvited physical contact, intentional embarrassment, defiance, low-level physical contact (e.g. pushing), graffiti, swearing, excluding other students or staff members.

Level 3 Intimidating or threatening others through actions, language or behaviour, serious physical violence (e.g. punching, kicking, intent to injure) or communicating an intent to injure or cause harm towards staff or students (either directly or to another person), inappropriate physical or online contact, persistent uninvited physical or online contact, coercion (either explicit or implied) of another student, high level swearing directed at another individual, vandalism or destruction of property, vaping/smoking/using illegal substances, bringing illegal or dangerous items or substances to school, bullying, harassment, vilification, identity-based slurs (including but not limited to race, religion,



disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age), cyberbullying, accessing inappropriate online content, or persistent Level 1 and 2 Behaviours.

Staged Responses

The below steps outline how Teachers will respond to inappropriate behaviours and breaches of the Student Code of Conduct. Staged responses will be considered and actioned if the behaviour continues.

Stage 1 – Request

Teachers will calmly describe the unwanted behaviour and make a request describing what is needed / wanted from the student. This may include reference to the Student Code of Conduct or inappropriate behaviour examples.

Stage 2 – Remind

Teachers will ask if the student heard / understood the previous request and remind them of what is needed / wanted from the student.

Stage 3 – Instruct

Teachers will instruct the student to stop the unwanted behaviour and will follow-up with the student to ascertain any feelings or unmet needs, triggers or other underlying factors that may be informing the inappropriate behaviour. Note of incident is made in student management system.

Stage 4 – Relocate

The student is relocated within or near the space while remaining supervised. A discussion with family members may occur where patterns are emerging. The meeting will be documented in the Student Management System. If warranted, an individualised Behaviour Support Plan may be developed and documented.

Responses to Level 3 Behaviours

Stage 5 – Remove

Students will be removed from the situation to prevent further harm and re-establish safety. If a student cannot be safely relocated, others may be moved instead. Parents/carers will be notified and a thorough investigation will be undertaken and documented in the Student Management System.

The school may:

- require the family to collect the student before the end of the school day, particularly if physical violence against another student has occurred



- implement a Restorative Practice session
- develop or review a Behaviour Support Plan
- require a family meeting

Where appropriate, the matter may also be discussed at a Monday night meeting to review strategies and supports. Minutes will document relevant discussions.

The School Board is advised by the Coordinator if a Behaviour Support Plan is developed or formal notification of a breach in the enrolment agreement is issued.

Stage 6 – Suspension

A two-day suspension may be authorised by the Coordinator where there has not been a significant shift toward positive behaviour, particularly where the rights of others are impacted. All suspensions are recorded in the Suspension and Expulsion Register.

Where expulsion is being considered:

- A thorough investigation will be conducted and documented.
- The student and parent/carers will be given the opportunity to hear the grounds for consideration, respond, provide additional information and discuss possible supports or transition options.
- Wherever possible, interventions and supports will be implemented before expulsion is determined.

If behaviour continues following suspension, the Board and Coordinator will meet to determine next steps.

The School Board is advised by the Coordinator if a two-day suspension is given.

Stage 7 – Refer (Board Consideration)

The School Board will determine on a case-by-case basis whether the student's enrolment can continue and if so, any special conditions. The principles of procedural fairness will be followed. All decisions will be provided to parent/carers in writing.

Stage 8 – Refer (Expulsion)

If the Board determines that a student's enrolment will be cancelled, this is considered Expulsion.

Where expulsion is determined by the Board:

- The decision will be provided in writing.
- The expulsion will be recorded in the Suspension and Expulsion Register.



- If the family wishes to appeal, they may attend a Monday night meeting supported by the HR Sub-committee.
- If there is consensus to reconsider, the Coordinator and Board will review the decision in line with the Concerns and Complaints Policy.

Any child safety concern or serious matter will be managed by the Coordinator in line with relevant child safety policies and processes.

Restrictive Interventions, Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension & Expulsion

If a student is removed from a class or other activity for a length of time beyond that which it takes to de-escalate the situation, interview participants, establish what happened, and (if required) re-establish acceptable behaviours and a suitable environment, this will be recorded as a suspension in the school's Suspension and Expulsion Register by the Coordinator. Parents/carers will be notified if this has occurred and may be required to collect their child before the end of the school day.

Prior to a student being suspended from class or other activities for an ongoing period, he/she must have an opportunity to be heard or have taken into account any additional information or documentation that is provided by the student or parents/carers. Suspension from school is a seen as a last resort, can only be authorised by the Coordinator, and a Behaviour Support Plan may be established prior to the student returning to school.

Expulsion will be considered at Stages 7 and 8 in the Behaviour Management Pathway and can only be authorised by the Board. If authorised it will be recorded as an expulsion in the school's Suspension and Expulsion Register by the Coordinator.

Restrictive Practices, Restraint & Seclusion

In some limited circumstances, it may be necessary for a staff member to use physical restraint or seclusion strategies in order to satisfy their duty of care.

Every effort should be made to prevent the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion. It should only be used in situations where the student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to self or others and where there is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

Restraint should only be used with the minimum force required, and seclusion should be used for the minimum duration required. Both should be discontinued as soon as the immediate danger has dissipated.

Physical restraint or seclusion should never be used in a manner that restricts a student's breathing or willfully harms the student.



The decision about whether to use physical restraint or seclusion rests with the professional judgment of the staff member/s involved, who will need to take into account both their duty of care to their students, their right to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Should a staff member physically restrain or seclude a student, they should report the incident to the Coordinator immediately. Details of the incident should be recorded in the Student Management System, including witness statements from other staff who were involved or present. Parents/carers should be notified as soon as possible after the incident. The Coordinator will decide if a Behaviour Support Plan or other support strategies, including staff training, are required to reduce the likelihood of a similar incident happening again. Wellbeing support including restorative conversations and debriefing will be facilitated.

Procedural Fairness

Students and families have a right to be treated fairly.

At The School, we will

- ensure all those involved in an incident have a reasonable opportunity to have their voice heard, defend themselves and/or explain their understanding of the context and any extenuating circumstances
- ensure the response and consequences are unbiased and are applied consistently.
 - A test of this could be whether the same (or similar) sanctions are applied:
 - to different students for the same breach
 - for the same breaches occurring at one time compared with another
 - by one teacher compared with another
- use levelled responses and consequences that are proportionate to the behaviour and broader context.
 - This could involve taking into account questions such as:
 - the impact of the behaviour on others
 - the prior behaviour of the student
 - the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated.

Documentation

Records relating to behavioural incidents, either suspected or confirmed, will be determined by the nature of the offence or as requested by the Coordinator and may be in the form of an incident report, documented concern or complaint, email or text message to parents/carers, behavioural management record, staff meeting minutes, student or parent/carer meeting records, or individual student file.



Records will be managed in line with our Privacy Policy and the Record Keeping Obligations which cover the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (PROV) and the Records Retention & Disposal Schedule for Non-Government Schools (RRDS).

Concerns & Complaints

If parents/carers or students disagree with or are unsatisfied with an outcome of an incident, they may make a complaint by following our Concerns & Complaints Policy.

Related Policies

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Concerns & Complaints Policy
- Digital Technologies Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Enrolment Agreement

Related Documentation

- Digital Technologies Code of Practice
- Electronic Student Records/Student Management System
- Safety Behaviour Support Plan template
- Suspension and Expulsion Register
- Record Keeping Obligations
- Student Code of Conduct



SCHEDULE A – BULLYING & HARASSMENT DEFINITIONS

Definitions: What are bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment?

Bullying (as defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission) is when people repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless.

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 can be done in various ways including physically, verbally, socially and psychologically and can be in person or via online platforms and devices (cyber-bullying). It is often behavior directed towards a less powerful person or group (or that is perceived as vulnerable) or behaviour by a person or group with perceived power or status that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

The list below includes, but is not limited to, examples of bullying behaviour. A student is experiencing bullying when they are subjected to such behaviours in an ongoing way.

- Hitting, pushing, kicking, punching, blocking doorways, spitting.
- Humiliation, put-downs, name calling, mocking, shaming, ignoring, exclusion, racism and identity-based slurs, homophobic or transphobic comments or refusal to acknowledge and use a person's chosen name and pronouns
- Initiating or spreading rumours or sharing private and sensitive information
- Staring, dirty looks, sharing inappropriate notes or drawings
- Exposing others to inappropriate online content
- Encouraging or requesting others to act in a certain way or undertake activities that would be harmful to themselves or another person both in-person and online
- Deliberately damaging or stealing others property
- Coercing gifts, money or items from others



- Sharing or threatening to share intimate images including AI “deepfake” images

Bullying can be easy to see, called overt, or hidden from those not directly involved, known as covert.

Overt bullying involves physical actions such as punching, kicking or pushing, or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting. Overt, direct, physical bullying is a common depiction of bullying (this is sometimes called 'traditional bullying').

Covert bullying can be challenging for people outside the interpersonal interaction to identify as it is usually intentionally hidden. It can include repeatedly using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks, whispering, spreading rumours, blackmailing, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Covert social, verbal or online bullying can be subtle and even sometimes denied by a person who claims they were joking or 'just having fun'.

Indicators of a power imbalance may include: differences in social status, popularity and length of time at the school; group-against-one dynamics; age/size/strength gaps; positional/role authority (e.g., captains/student leaders) or gatekeeping of opportunities; control over digital spaces or large audiences; access to private/exclusive information; dependency on resources or relationships. These indicators may present as gatekeeping of resources or spaces, rule setting, friendship gatekeeping, digital control, coordinated online actions, role-based influence, relationship leverage).

Cyberbullying (as defined by the e-Safety Commissioner) is when someone uses the internet to send, post or share content that is harmful to the physical or mental health of a child or young person. It can happen on a social media site, game, app, or any other online or electronic service or platform. It can include posts, comments, texts, messages, chats, livestreams, memes, images, videos and emails.

Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Sending hurtful messages about an individual to them or others
- Sharing or threatening to share embarrassing or intimate photos or videos of an individual including AI “deepfake” images
- Spreading gossip or rumours about an individual or sharing their private information without their consent
- Trying to stop a young person from communicating with others or from shared or group online activities
- Creating fake accounts in someone else’s name
- Tricking someone into believing you are someone else

How does cyber-bullying differ to traditional bullying?



- Availability – It can occur anywhere and at any time. Misperception that there are no real-world consequences for online actions.
- Anonymity – The impression of anonymity in the ‘online world’ leads young people to feel less accountable for their actions and provides a false bravado to would-be bullies.
- Geography – Rather than being limited to the schoolyard, cyberbullying can operate wherever a young person uses the internet or a mobile phone, which occurs in most areas of a young person’s life.
- Impact – The internet provides the means for ‘bullying’ comments to be available to a wider audience. Through social networking sites, these comments can be viewed by a potentially unlimited number of people. The impact of and embarrassment caused by these statements is increased many times over.
- Intent – A private message or joke that is forwarded on may become offensive or harassing even though that was not the intention of the original sender.
- Permanence – Verbal comments are fleeting. Online content is tracked and stored and can potentially resurface at any time.
- Democracy – Anyone can be a victim – students, teachers, parents/carers.

Harassment means unwelcome behaviour (a single incident or a pattern) that targets a person or group because of a personal attribute and offends, humiliates, intimidates, or creates a hostile environment. Harassment can occur in person or online. Personal attributes include those protected under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) (e.g., race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, age, parental/carer status, physical features). (Source: [Bullying No Way](#))

Sexual Harassment means unwelcome sexual behaviour that causes a person to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, where a reasonable person could have anticipated that reaction in the circumstances. It includes an unwelcome sexual advance, an unwelcome request for sexual favours and any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It can be physical, verbal or written. Examples include comments about someone’s private life or the way they look, sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring, brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging, sexually suggestive comments or jokes, displaying offensive images or objects, repeated requests to go out, requests for sex, sexually explicit emails, text messages or posts on social media, sexual assault and suggestive behaviour. (Source: Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission)

Bullying and harassment of any form can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential.

What is not bullying



There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant, inappropriate, or distressing, are not bullying:

- **mutual conflict**- which involves a disagreement, but one without an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- **single-episode acts** of inappropriate behaviour directed towards an individual or many different people, is not bullying
- **social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or create dislike by others.

However, these items may still be a breach of the Student Code of Conduct and may also be dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy.