



PURPOSE

Montmorency Secondary College is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Montmorency Secondary College community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Montmorency Secondary College will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Montmorency Secondary College to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our College community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Montmorency Secondary College.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Montmorency Secondary College aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Montmorency Secondary College acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Montmorency Secondary College aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Montmorency Secondary College recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our College. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.



MONTMORENCY SECONDARY COLLEGE

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

POLICY

Definitions

Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all 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 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 has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect* bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our College will follow the *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to



the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

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

Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Montmorency Secondary College will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Montmorency Secondary College and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Montmorency Secondary College will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Montmorency Secondary College has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Montmorency Secondary College is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- This policy is published on our College website.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- 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.
- The Bigger Buddies Program and encourages positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.



- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- Student traffic on the College computer networks are regularly monitored in order to identify potential problems.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Montmorency Secondary College

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Montmorency Secondary College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their Year Level Leader. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, school social worker etc.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Montmorency Secondary College, should contact the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Sue Muir, by telephone on 9422 1550 or email Susanne.muir@education.vic.gov.au

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in XUNO portal and
2. inform the relevant Year Level Leader, Student Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principal and Principal.

The Year Level Co-ordinator is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Year Level Co-ordinator may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.



All communications with the Year Level Co-ordinator in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying 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.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

Responses to bullying behaviours

When the Year Level Co-ordinator has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with the Student Welfare Team.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Montmorency Secondary College 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.

Montmorency Secondary College will implement the following structured approach for dealing with bullying:

Level 1

If the bullying incident is minor or first time occurrence, the teacher may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

For example: stopping the bullying, re-statement of rules and consequences, restorative questioning, think time, detention, private conference, shared control discussion.

If the student does not take control over their behaviour, a **Bullying Incident Report Form** should be completed and submitted to Year Level Co-ordinator.

Level 2

If the bullying behaviour continues, or in instances of severe bullying behaviour, a referral should be made to the Level Co-ordinator.

The Year Level Co-ordinator will undertake the following actions, as required:



MONTMORENCY SECONDARY COLLEGE

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

- Investigate and take notes from the victim, witnesses and perpetrator.
- Contact parents of the victim and perpetrator.
- Meet with the perpetrator to implement some/all of the following options:
 - Behaviour Contract
 - Discussion/Mentoring
 - Restorative Conference
 - Detentions
 - Refer onto Year Level Leader

Level 3

Students at risk, whose bullying behaviour is severe, and for students who are not at risk but whose bullying behaviour, and other aggressive behaviour, is resistant to change and to other previous interventions, will be referred onto the Year Level Leader.

The Year Level Leader will put into place the following interventions as required:

- Contact the parents of both the victim and perpetrator.
- Revisit previous interventions.
- Review the situation and decide on an appropriate intervention (which may include suspension from school, either in-school or external suspension).
- Liaise with a member of the Principal Class.
- Ongoing bullying will result in more severe consequences.
- Referral onto the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying behaviour resists the school's efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of others will be referred to the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator using the *Formal Referral Form*.

The Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator may make referrals onto community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and the student's family.

- The Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator will work with the student/s involved in the bullying and in liaising with the Year Level Leaders, may implement various strategies which may include:
 - Referral to school-based educational psychologists.
 - Referral to community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student/s and the student's family.
 - Will liaise with the Principal Class.



Montmorency Secondary College will also implement the following strategies to assist with Bullying prevention:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours. For example Cyber Bullying and Bullying Presentations and/or incursions for the Year 7 student cohort each year.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Montmorency Secondary College 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 and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

Montmorency Secondary College is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Vision Statement and Values
- MSC Complaints Management Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with School Council.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 10th June, 2020 and is scheduled for review in June 2021.