1. Purpose and Rationale

Sandringham 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 Sandringham College community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Sandringham College will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Sandringham College to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our school 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 Sandringham College.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Sandringham 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.

Sandringham 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.

2. Policy Goals

This policy addresses how Sandringham College aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Sandringham 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 school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

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

3. Implementation

3.1 Bullying definition

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:

- direct physical bullying - e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.

- direct verbal bullying - e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.

- 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.

3.2   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 school will follow our 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. Sandringham 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. Further information about these two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Sandringham College and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Sandringham 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.

3.3   Bullying prevention

Sandringham 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 Sandringham 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:

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) in a consistent and systematic way.

- All new students and staff will be informed of the relevant policies and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

- All complaints of bullying will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

- Sandringham College will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of this policy.

- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

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

3.4   Incident response

3.4.1   Reporting concerns to Sandringham 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 Sandringham College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teachers and Year Level Leaders. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff teachers and members of the Student Wellbeing Team.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Sandringham College should contact Penny Power, Student Wellbeing Coordinator Year 7-9 or Bre Gerritsen, Student Wellbeing Coordinator Years 10-12 by calling the school.

3.4.2 Investigations

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

1. Record the details of the allegations the student's COMPASS file; and
2. Inform the relevant staff. This may include the Year Level Leader, the Student Wellbeing Team and the Campus Principal and Principal.

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

3.4.3 Responses to bullying behaviours

When the Year Level Leader 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 the Student Wellbeing Team, Campus Principal, Principal and specialist staff from the Department of Education and Training.

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, Sandringham 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.

The Year Level Coordinator may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours.

If the bullying is minor or a first time occurrence, the teacher may elect to use one or more or the following practices:

- stopping the bullying with a restatement of rules and consequences

- restorative questioning

- think time detention

- private conference

- shared control discussion.

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form will be completed and submitted to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Campus Principal or Principal.

If the bullying continues or in instances of severe bullying, a referral should be made to the Year Level Leader. Here, the Year Level Leader or Wellbeing Coordinator may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract

- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities

- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and target(s)

- refer the student onto the Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Mental Health Practitioner.

For 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying behaviour is severe and for other not at risk students whose bullying behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Mental Health Practitioner in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Students whose severe bullying behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to their own safety and wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others, should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Student Wellbeing Coordinators and Mental Health Practitioners will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student's family.

Sandringham 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.

The Year Level Leader is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

4. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed 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 student bullying surveys

- regular staff surveys

- Bully Stoppers Data Collection tool

- 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

This policy was last updated on May 2020. Please refer to the Sandringham Policy Schedule for the next review date.

5. Definitions

DET – Department of Education and Training

6. References

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

School Policy and Advisory Guide (http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Sandringham College Duty of Care Policy

Sandringham College Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Sandringham College Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Sandringham College Student Wellbeing and Engagement 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

Policy Number	SC-SM-02	Last Approval Date	1st May 2020
Policy Owner	Sandringham College	Approved By	School Council
Policy Reviewer	AP Wellbeing and Inclusion	Next Review Date	1st May 2022

Review Frequency	Document Availability	Policy Delivery	
☐ 1 Year ☐ 2 Years ☐ 3 Years ☐ As Required ☐ n/a	☐ College Website ☐ Student Compass ☒ Parent Compass ☒ Staff Compass ☐ Staff Information Drive ☒ Enrolment Pack	☐ Annual Staff Meeting ☐ Annual Parent Meeting ☐ Annual Student Meeting ☐ Annual School Assembly ☒ Staff Handbook/Manual ☐ Staff Briefing ☒ Student Enrolment Process	