

# WEST LAKES SHORE SCHOOL

## Bullying & Harassment Support Guideline

West Lakes Shore School will provide a safe, inclusive, supportive and ordered learning environment free from bullying, harassment and violence. Our Bullying & Harassment Guideline should be read in conjunction with the Department for Education's *Behaviour Support Policy* which documents the requirements and standards for behaviour throughout the Department and *Keeping Children Safe from Bullying* Implementation Plan.

Bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment and violence, are not acceptable in this school. The school will work with the school community and other services and agencies to support its students in being responsible and productive members of this community.

### Definitions: Bullying & Harassment

A definition for **bullying** is: Repeated and ongoing verbal, physical or social behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

A definition for **harassment** is: Behaviour that targets an individual or group due to characteristics held by that group (identity, race, culture, etc.) that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or it may be a single act.

At our school students are expected to be respectful and cooperative community members. Bullying must be addressed through restorative practices that empower individuals to speak up and assert themselves; all individuals involved in any incident has their voice heard (recipient and target student have a say in the consequences and collaborate on steps to move forward), power is refocused. This process is an important lifelong skill.

### Code of Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities

All students, staff, parents/caregivers have the RIGHT to:

- be treated with courtesy, kindness and respect
- express feelings and opinions respectfully
- work and play in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation
- expect that the co-created school values and essential agreements will be consistently implemented and that there will be respect for the rights of all involved
- be valued as an individual
- learn in a supportive atmosphere

All students, staff, parents/caregivers have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect
- actively listen to others
- maintain a safe and secure school environment
- manage impulsivity
- model and support co-created school and classroom values
- take responsibilities for their own actions
- value others, for their individual differences and similarities
- work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same
- not take part in bullying in any way, with zero tolerance
- report incidents of bullying
- understand and not tolerate the participatory role of bystanders

The elimination of bullying at West Lakes Shore School is everyone's responsibility. A person who is bullied does not have the problem alone because bullying adversely affects everyone in the community in one way or another. For example:

- The student who is bullied and their family, suffer emotional and physical distress
- No one is safe whilst bullying is happening. Bullying creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place
- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it may feel guilty and ashamed and allow it to continue

Both students who bully and the bystanders can:

- become desensitised to cruelty and injustice
- fail to develop social responsibility
- in some cases, become involved at a later stage in workplace bullying and/or other forms of anti-social behaviour
- affect the way in which the school is perceived in the community
- facilitate the setting-up of humiliating experiences

**STOP**  
**BULLYING**  
**STAND UP. SPEAK OUT.**

# Cyber Bullying

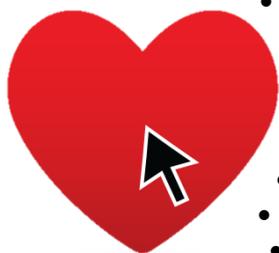
The widespread availability of the internet provides unprecedented opportunities to communicate and learn. Whilst most people use the internet as a powerful tool for communication and education, some individuals use the power of the internet for purposes such as posting quite personal information and for bullying and harassment. We can minimise the harm that such individuals do by teaching students how to use the internet safely and responsibly. West Lakes Shore 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 good cyber ethics involves understanding 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 so different than 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 even thousands of people quickly. The victim can feel even more isolated.
- 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 the behaviour as verbal aggression such 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.
- Unsafe digital communities with shared interests, such as social communities that validate eating disorders, violence, or drug use.

## What is being done at West Lakes Shore School to protect our students:

- Teaching and learning programs are implemented every year, across all year levels, about Cyber safety.
- SAPOL ThinkUKnow Cyber Safety lessons implemented across all year levels at WLSS
- Clear policies have been developed for computer & internet access
- Information evenings are held for parents and community members to further develop their understanding and knowledge about Cyber safety. By incorporating technology into the classrooms teachers can focus on the ethical use of technology.
- Behaviour support focuses on interventions to eliminate cyber bullying with a focus on restorative conversations
- Wellbeing & Engagement Data Collection informs staff of the impact of teaching and learning implemented as well as targeting learning



## Recommendations for staying safe while using the internet at home and at school include:

- Talk to an adult immediately if you see something you are not comfortable with.
- Be open and honest with parents/caregivers about your Internet usage.
- Talk to parents/caregivers about your different online experiences, the good and the bad.
- Tell mum and dad if anyone online makes you feel uncomfortable or scared.
- Don't give out personal details.
- Use advanced search to narrow results.
- Use internet content filters.
- Don't chat to people you don't know.
- Don't open unexpected email attachments.
- Don't follow email links you are not expecting.
- Don't follow email links that request personal details.
- Use an email junk-mail filter and anti-virus software.



## Guidelines for students, staff and parents on what to do in bullying situations

### Terminology to be used within the school community

- Avoid the term “victim” and use “recipient” or “target” instead.
- Avoid the term “the bully” and use “the bullying behaviour” instead.
- Avoid the term “weaker” and use “in a less powerful (or more vulnerable) position” instead.

### Guidelines to be followed within the school community

- All students are acknowledged and valued as individuals regardless of gender, racial, cultural, religious, physical or intellectual differences.
- The principal and staff have a responsibility to fairly; reasonably and consistently implement the Code of Conduct.
- All students are informed that if they are bullied, teachers are available to support them and to stop it from happening. Incidents must be reported to a teacher be it the class teacher, the teacher on duty or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All students are informed that if they witness bullying or are aware of it occurring in other ways, incidents must be reported to a teacher whether it is the class teacher, yard duty teacher or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All parents are informed that if they believe that their child or another child is being bullied, they should contact the school.
- All teachers are informed that if they feel bullied they must report the incident to the principal or line manager.
- All teachers are informed of the procedures that must be followed if an incident of bullying is reported to them.
- All teachers have a responsibility to respond to, investigate, follow up and monitor incidents of bullying.

## Procedures for identifying and dealing with bullying

### The staff member investigating the report should:

#### 1. Establish the facts

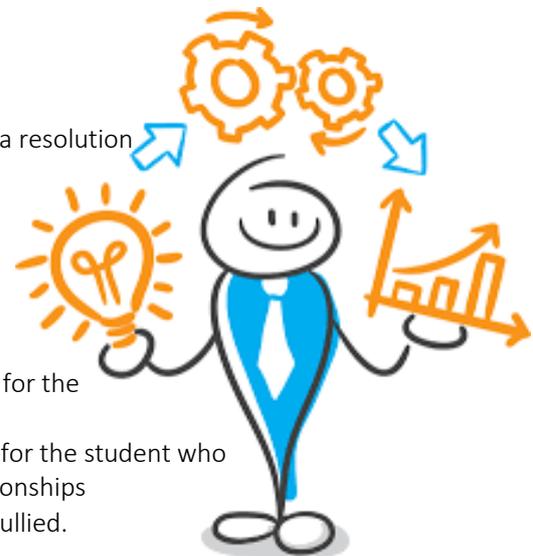


- What was said and/or done to the recipient
- The time and place the incident occurred
- The reaction of the recipient
- Whether it is the first time the recipient has experienced bullying behaviour and, if not, whether the same person or group was involved
- Whether the recipient knows of anyone else experiencing the same treatment
- Whether there were any witnesses to the incident

These facts will be ascertained using a range of strategies which best suit the child’s age and emotional state eg. Drawings, written conversations, group interviews, one on one interviews and verification techniques. This information must be recorded and kept for future reference.

#### 2. Strategies the school will use to respond to a confirmed incident of bullying:

- Record any statements from the recipient of bullying
- Record any statements from witnesses
- Record any statements from the student who allegedly bullied
- Discuss a range of possible solutions to manage the situation and find a resolution to which all parties involved agree
- Advise all involved that they may make additional reports if they are not satisfied that the issue has been resolved
- Advise the parents of the recipient, and the student who bullied, of the incident
- Monitor and record the situation on an ongoing basis
- Where necessary provide support and the opportunity for counselling for the recipient and the student who bullied
- Develop an Individual Behaviour Management Plan, where necessary, for the student who bullied and the recipient, to promote and establish positive peer relationships
- Establish behaviour management strategies for the student who has bullied.



3. If bullying by a student persists, strategies to eliminate further incidents may include recommendations to seek placement of the student in an alternative setting such, suspension or exclusion. Parties involved will be advised of their right of access to the Department of Education and Childhood Development and complaints procedures or to seek external review through the office of the State Ombudsman.

# Our Whole School Approach to Bullying & Harassment Protection

## Restorative Practices

Restorative Practice is based on an old common sense understanding of wrongdoing and the underlying need in all of us to be connected. Wrongdoing is therefore damage to the connection, and restorative justice seeks to understand, make amends and put things right.

At WLSS Restorative Justice Approach is a central process used throughout the school, in ensuring that all stakeholders involved in misunderstandings and conflict situations are supported to solve the problem. Student voice is integral to the process therefore students are given opportunities to collate their thoughts in a written format prior to having a restorative chat with the support of an adult.

## PEACE Pack

Peace Pack is a program that is taught from R-7 to support children and adults to develop resilience and a stronger sense of wellbeing. This program is delivered across the site.

At West Lakes students are explicitly taught strategies to deal with situations when they or their peers are being harassed or bullied. Teaching and learning focusses on building students capacity to seek help for themselves and/or their peers by:

- Identifying a network of trusted people who can help you. Borrowing their strengths to support you through your challenge.
- Not putting up with bullying. Speak up and report what has happened. Talk to someone from your network.
- Stick up for yourself. Do not react at the time and be sure to report it later.
- Do not bully back
- When taking a stand, make an 'I' statement, Saying- "Stop it, I don't like it when you..... Leave me alone!"
- Be respectful. Use a loud, assertive voice. Making eye contact when you say how you feel, standing tall and proud, using bold body language
- When bullies apologise don't say – "That's okay". Instead tell them "I accept your apology and I don't want you to do it again."
- Standing by watching, laughing or encouraging bullying is unacceptable. Such action indicates that you accept bullying of another person. Bystanders need to take action and support the person being bullied.

The strategies taught are linked with our PEACE Pack and include the following affirmations embedded with the school values;

- I am Resilient and Honest.... I am strong and will tell someone
- I am Respectful...I am Kind
- I am Resilient.....I manage my feelings
- I am Respectful.... I am a good friend
- I am Respectful.... I work and get along well with others
- I am Resilient..... When I am down, I pick myself up and move on
- I am Responsible.... I am proud and responsible
- I am Resilient..... I stay calm and think clearly

**Responsible**  
**Honest**  
**Resilient**  
**Respectful**

Children learn about what a **Good Friend** is and how they can be a good friend to others. All classes across the school work to unpack each of these attributes listed, building on the learning throughout the year. They practice using these attributes and skills in daily life.

## Child Protection Curriculum

- recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult about it
- understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching
- Understand ways of keeping themselves safe.
- The curriculum has been developed by child protection experts and experienced educators from South Australian schools and preschools. This is a mandated curriculum that needs to be taught in all Government schools.

