

Scouts Victoria

Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure 2022

PURPOSE

The Scout Association of Australia, Victorian Branch ('Scouts Victoria') is committed to providing safe, inclusive and respectful environments that promote the wellbeing of its members. Scouts Victoria rejects all forms of bullying behaviours.

The purpose of the Anti-Bullying Policy (Policy) is to:

- Explain the definition of bullying.
- Make clear that all forms of bullying will not be tolerated.
- Provide a framework to ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Scouts Victoria Adult Code of Conduct, Child Safeguarding Policy and the Peer to Peer Policy.

SCOPE

Preventing and responding to bullying is the shared responsibility of all staff, members, families and other supporters of Scouts Victoria. Bullying is never okay, regardless of age or position. Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility of all Scouts Victoria Members and families, employees and service providers. Accordingly, this Policy applies to:

- All Scouts Victoria Members, employees and volunteers;
- contractors, suppliers, families of Members and other members of the public, when interacting with Scouts Victoria;
- to bullying whether it occurs in the Scouts Victoria workplace, or otherwise the context of Scouts Victoria activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

Definitions

Scouts Victoria has adopted the following definition of bullying which has been endorsed by The Education Council and the Council of Australian Governments for use in 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 fight between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Features of Bullying

The three main features of bullying are:

- The misuse of power in a relationship.
- It is ongoing and repeated.

- It involves behaviours that can cause harm, or the loss of dignity and self-respect.

Types of Bullying

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include: hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include: name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include: deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- Cyberbullying – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Other specific forms of bullying can include:

- Race or culture-based bullying: belittling, mocking, intimidating or shaming someone because of their physical appearance, ethnic background, religious or cultural practices and/or the way they dress or talk.
- Identity-based bullying: bullying on the basis of sexuality or gender expression. It can include physical violence, cyberbullying, name calling, exclusion, 'jokes' and/or sexual harassment. Members who identify as LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning, or other) face a unique set of challenges, and bullying is a common experience for young people who are same sex attracted, gender diverse or for those who may not behave according to gender stereotypes. Affected members may not feel confident or safe enough to tell anyone about being bullied, especially if they have not disclosed their sexuality or gender identity to friends, family or Leaders.
- Ability-based bullying: belittling, mocking, intimidating or shaming someone because of a real or perceived disability or neurodivergence.

Detecting Bullying

Bullying can be easy to see and detect (overt) or subtle, hidden and hard to detect (covert). This means that Scouts Victoria need to be alert to possible subtle signs of bullying and check in regularly with all Members.

- Overt bullying involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.
- Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.

Bullying and Child Safety

Bullying that is directed at a young person may constitute child abuse.

Bullying and Harassment

Some behaviours can appear to be bullying, but are actually harassment. Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment, disability harassment or racial discrimination. For instance, sexual harassment is unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation. Any concerns about harassment should be reported to childsafe@scoutsvictoria.com.au if it involves a person under the age of 18, or as an incident report if it involves only adults.

What is not bullying?

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

- mutual conflict that involves a disagreement, but not 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 nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards 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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Commissioner

- Ensure this policy is made generally available, and is placed on the Scouts Victoria Website.
- Conduct an ongoing awareness program of regular communication with the wider membership and youth members' families.
- Manage complaints about how Scouts Victoria has responded to a report of bullying.

Executive Manager

- Oversee implementation of this Policy and monitoring its ongoing effectiveness.
- Provide reporting in relation to instances of bullying and their management to the Branch Executive Committee.
- Work with the Child Safe Team to manage bullying complaints.

Branch Executive Committee

- Periodically review this policy to ensure that it remains consistent with Scouts Australia policy and current Victorian legislation, as well as responding to community expectations and best practice.
- Identify patterns of bullying behaviour and initiate organisational action to respond, where appropriate.

Adults in Scouting

- Keep the Scout Promise, live by the Scout Law, act in accordance with the Adult Code of Conduct and provide an environment that is safe, inclusive and respectful, and is free from bullying.
- Manage reports of bullying and escalate matters when necessary.
- Model and promote appropriate relationships and behaviours.
- Promote a culture where bullying is not acceptable.

Youth Members

- Keep the Scout Promise and live by the Scout Law.
- Comply with the Unit Code of Conduct.
- Speak up. Speaking up can make a big difference. If you feel safe, step in and call the person out on their bullying behaviour. Be direct, calm and confident, and let them know that their behaviour isn't okay. Refer to your Code of Conduct.
- Support the person who is being bullied to ask for help. Offer to go with them to ask for help or point them towards some useful info.
- Report the bullying to a trusted adult such as your Leader or parent.

PROCEDURES

Reporting Bullying

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively. Anyone who may be experiencing bullying behaviours, or who has witnessed bullying behaviours, are encouraged to report their concern to their direct superior or a trusted adult, such as a Leader, or directly to the Scouts Victoria Child Safe team at childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au.

Scouts Victoria's ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviours is greatly affected by concerning behaviour being reported as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Scouts Victoria are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour should contact their Group Leader or the Child Safe team on childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au

For incidents of physical violence, and where required, members should administer first aid (consistent with their training and experience). If identified as a Category 4 behaviour (as per the Peer to Peer Policy), then members must report this concern to Scouts Victoria.

Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property or stalking and may be referred to Victoria Police or other external parties.

Managing Complaints of Bullying

When responding to bullying behaviours, Scouts Victoria aims to:

- Be proportionate, consistent and responsive.
- Find a constructive and positive solution for everyone.
- Stop the bullying from happening again.
- Restore the relationships between the members involved.

Depending on the concern raised, it may be dealt with by the Child Safe Team, the People & Culture Team or the Executive Manager.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The Branch Executive Committee will review the Anti-Bullying Policy in consultation with key stakeholders every three years or more frequently if required, for example to respond to change in the law.

RELATED DOCUMENTS, REFERENCES

Scouts Victoria Code of Conduct

Responding to Harmful and Unwanted Behaviours between Youth Members Policy and Procedure 2022

Scouts Victoria Whistleblower Policy 2022

Fair Work Act 2009

DATE OF APPROVAL: OCTOBER 2022

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: OCTOBER 2025