VVSS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Valley View Secondary School, **everyone has the right to feel safe, included** and **supported**.

We strive to provide a **positive** and **professional** learning environment free from bullying, harassment and violence.

Bullying including cyber bullying, harassment and violence, is **NOT** acceptable in our school community and will be dealt with seriously and expediently. This includes incidents that may occur outside of school hours.

At Valley View Secondary School, we work with the school community and other services and agencies to support our students in being responsible and productive members of the community.

The implementation of this policy supports the aims of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, which includes "building safe school communities where diversity is valued, the risk from all types of harm is minimised and all members of the community feel respected and empowered."

Valley View Secondary Students have pledged to:

- *Treat others with respect and kindness*
- *Report bullying and 'be a better ally'*
- *Encourage others, rather than put them down*
- *Think before they comment on, post or forward messages*
- *Embrace difference*

DEFINITIONS

Bullying

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools states that:

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.

Cyber-bullying/Social Media

Cyber-bullying/Social Media is bullying which uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies—such as e-mail, chat room discussion groups, instant messaging, web pages or SMS (text messaging)—with the intention of harming another person. Examples include:

- Sending insulting and/or intimidating text or online messages
- Publishing someone's private information
- Creating hate sites and intentionally humiliating others
- Implementing social exclusion campaigns in social networking sites
- Unwanted or sharing sexually explicit content (images, language, etc.)
- Nasty online gossip and rumours

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin (racism), physical characteristics, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or ability or disability, and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person (male or female, of the same or opposite gender, same-sex attracted, bisexual or transgender) feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where that reaction to the conduct is reasonable in the circumstances. Sexual harassment can be a single incident, repeated or continuous, direct or indirect, and take various forms.

Homophobia

Homophobic language is any language that uses sexual orientation or sexual identity as a put down. This includes calling someone a faggot, homo, dyke, etc or calling a person, object or situation "gay": to mean something negative. Homophobic language is harassment as it creates a hostile environment and reduces a sense of safety for students who hear this language even if it is not directed at them.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH HARASSMENT / BULLYING

There are many ways of dealing with harassment and bullying and each way is different for every individual and/or situation. Some examples are:

- Ignore it and walk away
- Tell the person who is bullying you to STOP. Use a strong and confident voice (assertive) – stay positive
- Try to act unimpressed or unaffected
- If you feel safe, talk with the person who is bullying you to sort out the problem
- If you feel scared, ask a friend to assist
- DO NOT try and get back at them, you can get into trouble too
- Tell a trusted adult as soon as possible and complete a **S**tudent **I**ncident **R**eport **F**orm (**SIRF**) *see attached

If it is happening online or your phone:

- DO NOT respond to the messages
- Save/Screen shot any online messages, images and posts and show a trusted adult
- Block the person on the mobile device or social network
- Report to the relevant social media platform ie Facebook, Snapchat etc
- Make a cyber-report using the eSafety Commissioner website: https://www.esafety.gov.au
  **If the harassment/bullying continues, follow the flow chart on the back page.

SIGNS OF A STUDENT BEING HARASSED OR BULLIED

Students who are being harassed or bullied may not talk about it with their teachers, friends or parents/caregivers for fear of making things worse. Therefore, teachers and parents have an important part to play in helping the school and student deal with bullying. A change in behaviour in students may be a signal that they are being harassed, bullied or have some other concern.

Signs include:

- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares and anxiety
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide
- 'hiding' information on mobile phones, emails or in comments on their social networking pages

Signs of a student harassing/ bullying others:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

RESPONSIBILITIES

Principals and Leadership will decrease the likelihood of bullying and harassment by:

- Developing, implementing and regularly reviewing the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Including the voice of staff, parents and students in the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Providing Governing Council updates in relation to school bullying data and trends and any anti-bullying programs/initiatives in place
- Ensuring that new staff and new students and their families are aware of the school community's Bullying and Harassment Policy and the decision making procedures open to them if they wish to influence school practice
- Managing incidents of school bullying in a way that is consistent with the Department for Education School Discipline Policy
- By providing in-service training and development to all staff in effective strategies in managing 'Bullying in Schools'
- Managing a 'whole school change' approach to ensure the Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum is implemented across all year levels
- Ensuring that parents have access to the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy and that they are aware of their rights to advocacy and avenues open to them should they need support relating to an incident of bullying

School Staff members will decrease the likelihood of bullying and harassment by:

- Developing and fostering positive relationships with students and families
- Communicating and interacting effectively with students and engaging in cooperative problem solving relationships to address issues of bullying
- Participating in developing, implementing and reviewing the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy, curriculum and in-service offerings and the procedures for managing incidents of bullying
- Critically reflect on practices and developing the knowledge and skills needed to manage incidents of bullying successfully
- Participating in Professional Learning related to decreasing bullying in schools
- Supporting students to be effective bystanders

Parents and Caregivers will support the school in maintaining a safe and supportive environment by:

- Keeping informed of concerns about behaviour, their children's health issues or other matters of relevance
- Communicating in a respectful manner with the school staff about issues of concern soon after these concerns arise
- Following up on these concerns and, if necessary, contacting Regional Office if the concerns are not resolved following intervention by the Principal.

Students will support the school in maintaining a safe and supportive environment if they:

- Are respectful towards other students, staff and members of the school community
- Participate in sessions regarding the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy, Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum, being an effective bystander, and other sessions regarding behavioural expectations
- Communicate to an appropriate adult if bullied or harassed or if they are aware that someone else is being bullied or harassed
- Learn to be an effective bystander, so that bullying and harassment are discouraged through peer influence
- Use school's reporting mechanisms including completion of a **S**tudent **I**ncident **R**eport **F**orm

GUIDE FOR PARENTS – WHAT TO DO IF MY CHILD IS BEING HARASSED/BULLIED?

You need to consider what you know about your child and the details of the situation to make the best decision for your child.

Let your child know that you will take the harassment/bullying seriously and that you can help them to report it to the school.

- Stay calm and positive
- Talk with your child
- Do not advise your child to fight with the other child
- Report the harassment/bullying to the school
- Seek help for your child to develop his/her social skills

The strategies mentioned above for dealing with harassment/bullying also applies to dealing with cyberbullying. You can teach your child how to be safe on line, as well as supervising and restricting access to technology.

Useful Websites for Students and Parents

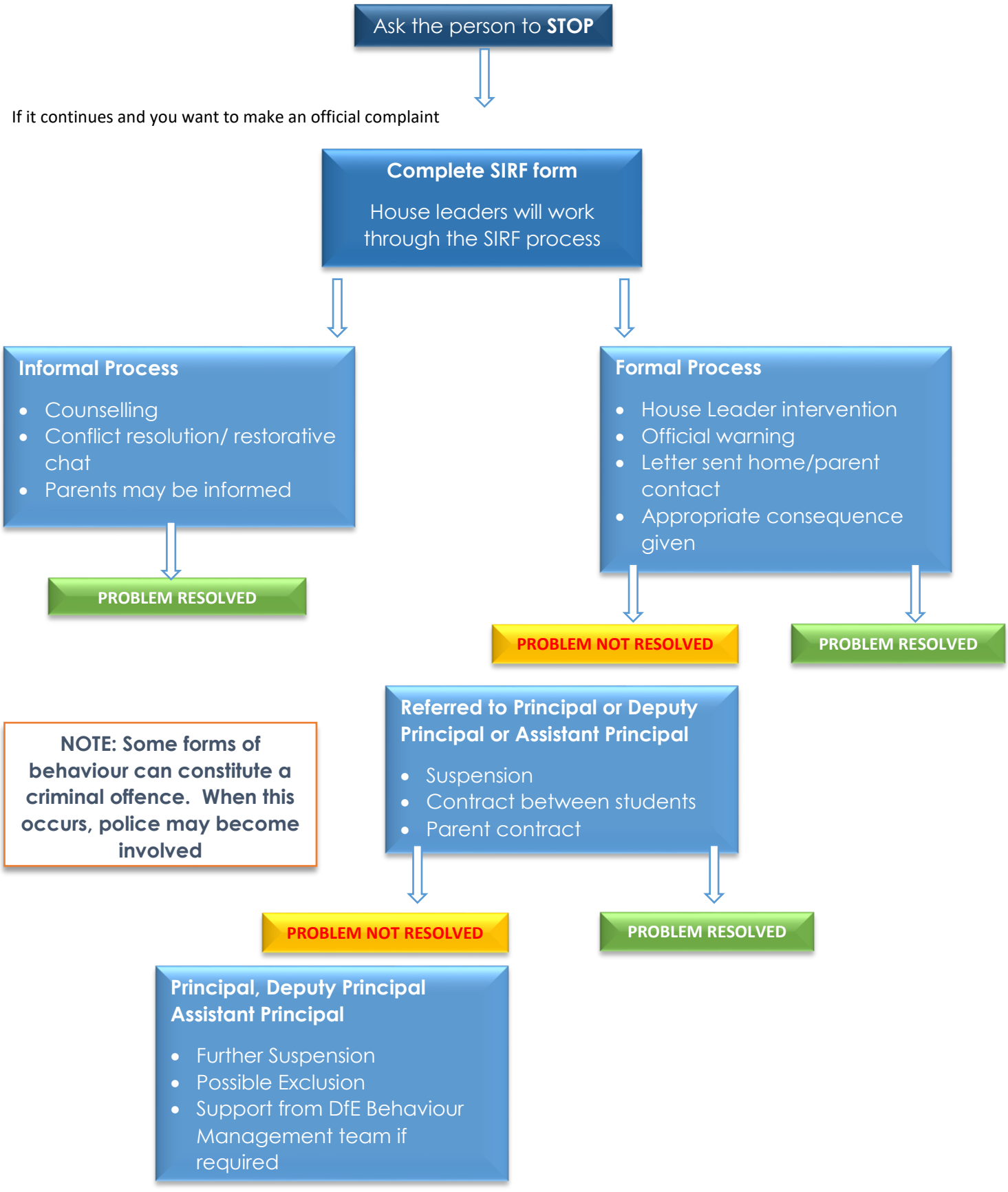
www.kidshelpline.com.au

www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

www.reachout.com

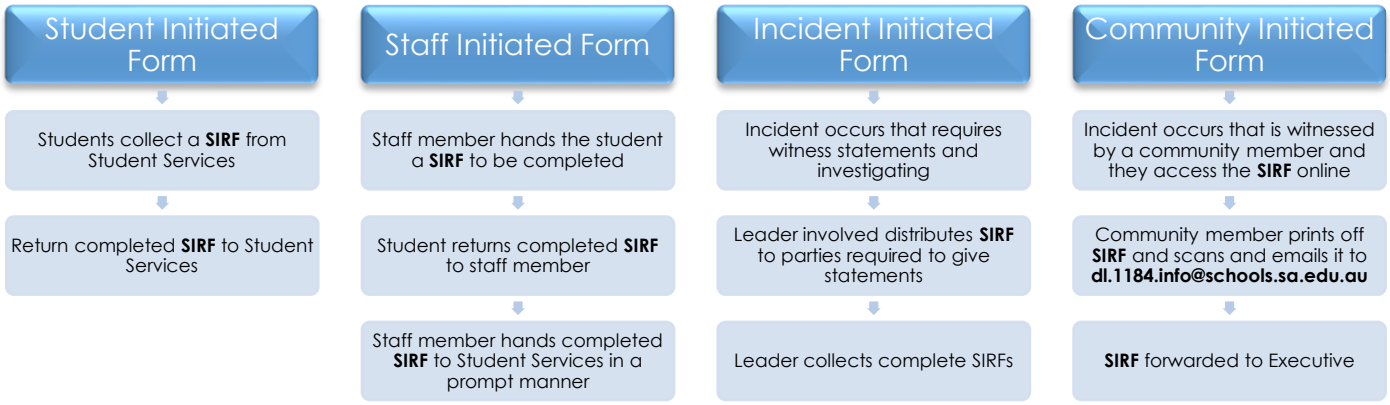
www.esafety.gov.au

HOW IS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT DEALT WITH AT VALLEY VIEW SECONDARY SCHOOL?

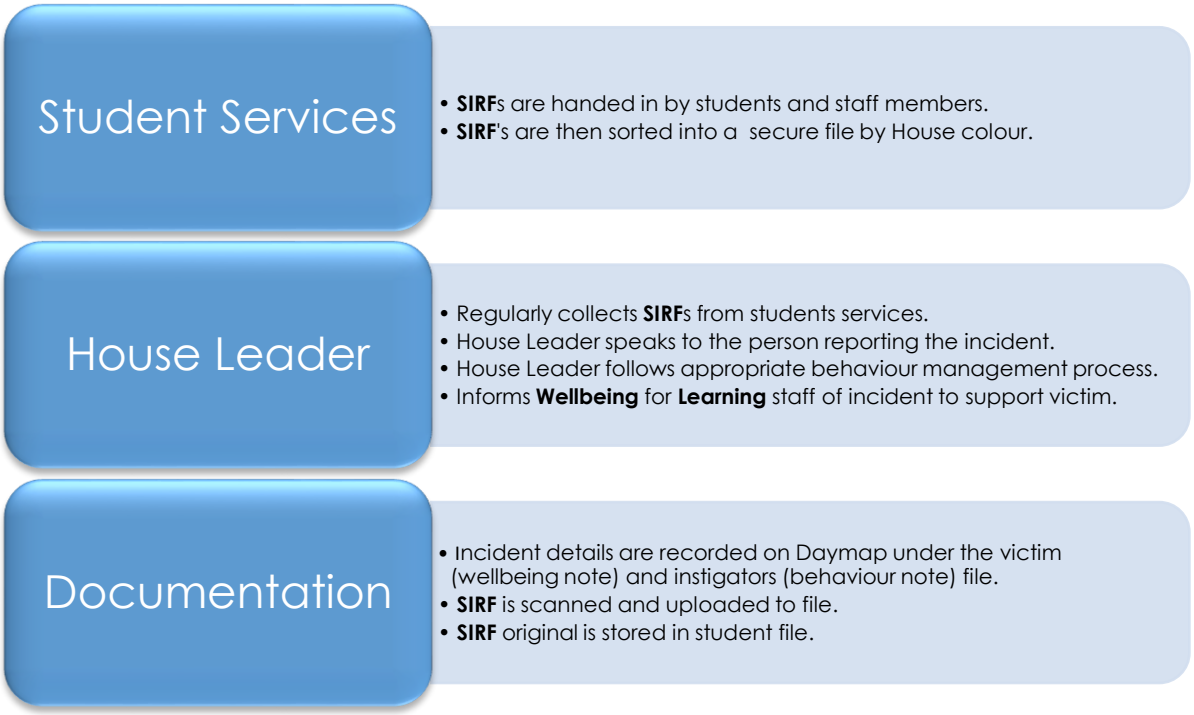


Student **I**ncident **R**eport **F**orm

Distribution and Collection flow chart



SIRF processing



VALLEY VIEW
SECONDARY SCHOOL
Every Student Matters

STUDENT INCIDENT REPORT FORM

At Valley View Secondary School we encourage and support the process of reporting Students' Incidents of Bullying and Harassment via the completion of the SIRF. This form should be completed in full and returned to Student Services. Once your report has been read by a Leader, you will be consulted to plan the next step. If you have an immediate concern please notify a member of staff.

An incident of Bullying and Harassment refers to intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance or with a student's physical or psychological wellbeing.

Person Reporting Incident Name **Today's Date / / House YL**

◯ Student (victim) ◯ Student (witness/bystander) ◯ Parent/Guardian ◯ Community Member ◯ School Staff Member

Please describe what happened Who is this about? What happened? ***(please tick)***

◯ harassment ◯ intimidation ◯ physical aggression ◯ teasing, name calling, threatening ◯ excluding/rejecting

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How has this incident made you feel? (please tick) ◯ unsafe ◯ anxious ◯ upset ◯ stressed ◯ other

Please describe if you chose 'other'

Where did this happen? For example, at recess on the oval, during science, social media, messenger etc…..

When did this happen? For example, Lesson 2, before school, after school, at night online etc….. And the date

Has this happened before? ***(please tick)*** ◯ No ◯ Once before ◯ More than once ◯ It has happened regularly

Were other people there? Either with you, standing close, or joining in online ***(please tick)*** ◯ Yes ◯ No

Follow up…..

Please note that your report will be followed up during school hours. A staff member will speak to you regarding your report as soon as possible. If the concern continues, please report it to a staff member, wellbeing member or student services.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this report form. We enter this information onto a confidential data base. We can then monitor what action has occurred and if there have been previous concerns. Once your report has been read by a Leader, you will be consulted to plan the next step.

Support available

Sometimes, stressful events can impact on how we feel and affect our happiness and wellbeing. It can also trigger past experiences which may be painful to remember. If this is the case, it may be good to speak to a family member about how you are feeling. There are also services available through Learner Wellbeing.

These could include placement Counsellors, Learner Wellbeing Leaders, the AET, Mentors and other support services.

If you would like to speak with someone, please make an appointment through student services.

Making an appointment

Would you like an appointment for further discussion and support? (please tick)

◯ Yes ◯ No

For Office use onlY

This issue was followed up by

The following action occurred

◯ no action required (false allegation/did not warrant any corrective procedures)

◯ student conference

◯ student warning

◯ letter of apology

◯ mediation

◯ counselling

◯ parent letter

◯ parent phone call

◯ parent conference

◯ detention

◯ in school suspension

◯ out of school suspension

◯ expulsion

◯ other (specify) _____