

APPENDICES:

A. Countering Bullying Policy

THORNLIE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Countering Bullying Policy

We aim to build a safe, caring environment where people are treated with respect. Bullying will not be tolerated at Thornlie.

Department of Education MISSION STATEMENT

- Providing an environment where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted
- Promoting care, respect and tolerance in the community
- Ensuring the safety of every individual in the school

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**Bullying** is when an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group to intentionally threaten or harm them on more than one occasion. This may involve verbal, physical, relational and psychological forms of bullying and the person feels unable to do anything about it. Teasing or fighting between peers is not necessarily bullying.

- **Physical:** Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, fighting, invasion of personal space and intimidating gestures.
- **Verbal:** the repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. This may include mocking, name-calling, swearing, put-downs, insulting and offensive language and racist or sexist comments.
- **Relational:** this involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group, making or spreading rumours and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information.
- **Emotional/Psychological:** Includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.
- **Cyber Bullying:** Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in bullying.

Thornlie Senior High School believes that every student has the right to a safe, supportive and caring environment. This includes the right to experience positive and respectful relationships between members of the school community.

## Prevention Strategies

The school has developed clear processes for preventing bullying and for dealing with episodes of bullying that may occur. The following strategies aim to create a school atmosphere where it is accepted by all that bullying has no place. A whole-school culture that involves a multi-faceted approach to bullying:

- Increasing the **awareness** of bullying in the school community through assemblies, newsletters, guest speakers, special programs and Homerooms.
- Effective **classroom and behaviour management** strategies.
- The promotion of a **positive school environment** that provides safety, security and support and promotes positive relations and wellbeing.
- **Encouragement and skill development** for all students (and bystanders) to respond negatively to bullying behaviour and support to students being bullied.
- **Peer support** focussing on positive peer relationships and bullying prevention.
- **Teacher Professional Learning** and in-service opportunities to up skill staff.
- **Student Service** support and case management for identified students.

*Staff, parents and students each can play a role in maintaining the restorative and solution-focused approaches to bullying at Thornlie Senior High School.*

### ***For Staff this means:***

- modelling appropriate behaviour for students;
- teaching co-operative learning, play skills and conflict resolution skills;
- actively supervising to minimise opportunities for bullying by building supportive and inclusive school environment;
- being observant to signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying;
- intervening to assist students being bullied by removing sources of distress and supporting students who speak out;
- consulting with students to identify issues which give rise to concerns; and
- reporting all incidents and suspected incidents.

### ***For Students this means:***

- refusing to be involved in any bullying behaviours;
- if appropriate, taking some form of preventative action;
- supporting friends who may have been bullied;
- show empathy and care for all member of the school community;
- take responsibility for own behaviour and be a positive role model; and
- speaking out by reporting all incidents or suspected incidents.

### ***For Parents this means:***

- modelling appropriate behaviour;
- encouraging your child to report bullying incidents;
- informing the school if bullying is suspected;
- avoid encouraging your child to retaliate;
- communicating to your child that parental involvement is appropriate;
- engage with the school if your child is involved in a bullying incident; and
- inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your child is not directly affected.

**The school processes for dealing with bullying have been designed to protect the health and safety of all school community members.**

All episodes of bullying will be referred to the relevant Year Coordinator, who will use a “Shared Concern” and or “**Restorative**” approach to address the issue. This means the Year Coordinator will:

- Investigate and interview all relevant parties;
- Convene a meeting with the students involved, including bully, bystanders and the colluders;
- Explain the problem in terms of how the bullied student has been made to feel;
- Attribute no blame, but encourage all involved to share the responsibility for the event;
- Give the students the responsibility for solving the problem by sharing ideas on how to assist the bullied student feel better and how to prevent similar events from happening again; and
- Call a follow-up meeting in approximately one week to check that the issue has been successfully resolved.

Where students fail to respond to these approaches behaviour management sanctions may need to be implemented. This may include parent interviews, detention and suspension from school