



Review Date: 2014

Revised:

Bullying Policy 2012

Rationale

"The vision of Catholic Education is to offer life-long and quality Catholic education so that each person may know and come to identify more fully with the living Spirit of Christ"

The Mission Statement at St Thomas of Villanova Parish School recognises:-

- the importance of the religious faith of staff and students
- the commitment to gospel values in our daily lives
- an environment that teaches the values of respect, trust, fairness, kindness, self-discipline, responsibility, friendship and forgiveness
- the development of genuine relationships in the school community that foster these values.

Close communication with parents and the local Christian community is seen as vitally important to the effectiveness of the mission of the school.

All schools in Queensland are committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. St Thomas's School, Mareeba, aims to practise a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying in all its forms. Our school and school community endorses the right to safety of all school community members. Bullying undermines this right and prevents students from achieving their full potential in the educational and social setting. Bullying affects all members of the school community, not simply the person doing the bullying or the victim, and can damage the supportive environment of the class and of the school in general. For these reasons, bullying cannot be tolerated and must be addressed with immediacy and consistency

In July 2011, students were surveyed on frequency of bullying they experience in the school, and how they respond to bullying. Some of their statements support the rationale for having a clear bullying policy.

Student beliefs about bullying

- No one deserves to be bullied.
- Bullying can hurt you on the outside and the inside. It can break your heart.
- Bullying is frightening.
- Bullying makes people feel sad and isolated.
- Bullying affects education when students are too upset to concentrate or choose to stay home to avoid the bullies.
- People who are bullied want it to stop.
- Most students do not like to watch bullying.
- Bullies pick on smaller, quieter people than themselves.
- Some bullies think they are cool.
- Some bullies have no respect for authority.
- Bullies don't usually act alone.

- Bullies are mean.
- People who are bullied might not know how to defend themselves.
- Most students hate people who think they are so important they can get away with intimidating others.
- Watching bullying, or ignoring bullying is as bad as being a bully yourself.
- Supporting the bully could make people think you are a bully.
- Other people notice what you do and how you react.
- Bullies should be stopped.

Student beliefs about taking action against bullying

- It is good to support other students.
- Taking the right action is better than watching.
- Students need to know how to help someone being bullied without putting themselves into danger.
- Supporting a person being physically bullied may look as if you are being a bully yourself.
- Bullies might turn on people helping others.
- People being bullied are grateful when someone helps them.
- It is a good feeling to help someone.
- It takes courage to stand up for others, but some people are too shy to help.
- Teachers have the authority to deal with bullies and know what to do to stop bullying.
- There are lots of things students can do to support one another.
- Trying to sort out physical fighting could just make things worse. Call a teacher.
- Witnesses can provide information that is helpful for investigations into bullying so that the correct facts become known.
- Reporting to a teacher prevents the bully from getting away with it.
- Involve parents – work together.
- Doing nothing does not help to change anything. Bullying should be reported.
- Quick action can prevent bullying from becoming a bigger problem.

Aims of this policy

1. To counter views that bullying is an unavoidable part of school life.
2. To overcome communication barriers associated with bullying.
3. To create a safe and supportive teaching/learning environment for students, staff and parents.
4. To proactively promote a school climate where bullying behaviours are not tolerated and are infrequent in incidence.
5. To facilitate the school community with strategies to counter bullying.

Definition of bullying

The Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (QSAAV) has adopted Dr. Rigby's definition of bullying and based on this, St Thomas's School involved the whole school community (teachers, students and parent body) in the development of this definition of bullying for our school community.

Dr. Rigby (Rigby, 2010) defines bullying in the following way:-

"Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:-

Bullying Policy

- *dominating or hurting someone*
- *unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power*
- *a lack of adequate defense by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.*"

Bullying can take many forms and can simultaneously include more than one element of any of these forms. It can occur in any arena (e.g. both at school and home).

The *National Centre Against Bullying* identifies five kinds of bullying:-

I. **Physical bullying**

This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

II. **Verbal bullying**

Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic, sexist or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

III. **Covert bullying**

Such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

IV. **Psychological bullying**

For example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

V. **Cyber bullying**

Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

The issue of cyber bullying has received a great deal of interest recently and has been the focus of a number of research and review processes, such as the *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* (Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L., 2009) and the *Review of the National Safe Schools Framework* (McGrath, 2005).

Current 20 October 2010 in a report commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (Bernard & Milne, 2008) the main forms of cyber bullying are identified as:-

- **Flaming:** online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- **Harassment:** repeatedly sending nasty, mean or insulting messages
- **Denigration:** Posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- **Outing:** sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyber stalking:** repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear
- **Sexting:** the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos, primarily, but not excluded to mobile phones.

Within the *Safe to Learn* (DCSF, 2007) resource it is identified that students can be bullied for a variety of reasons. Specific types of bullying may relate to:-

- race, religion or culture
- appearance or health conditions
- sexual orientation
- home and family circumstances
- learning needs or disabilities
- gender or sexual bullying.

Just as bullying can take many different forms, it can also occur between students, staff and parents/carers. While these instances of bullying are serious and need to be addressed, the focus of this procedure is on actions to address bullying among students.

Behaviours that are not bullying

Dr. Rigby (2010) identifies that for some people the term 'bullying' is a highly emotive term and its use may lead to an over-reaction.

The *National Centre Against Bullying* acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:-

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single acts of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance) they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

Students who bully

The research shows that students who bully are not necessarily the physically dominant student with self esteem issues.

McNamara (1997) identifies students who bully as often:-

- popular
- having good leadership skills
- thoughtless in their actions.

In the *Action Against Bullying* Education Series, Dr. Michael Carr-Gregg identified other characteristics of bullies, for example they often have:-

- high energy
- good verbal skills and an ability to talk themselves out of trouble
- a high estimation of their own ability
- an ability to manipulate individuals or groups
- an enjoyment of conflict and aggression
- a delight in getting their own way
- the appearance of being popular but often disliked.

Roles students can play in bullying behaviour

Not all students play a clear role as either the student who is bullying or the student who is being bullied. Students may take on different roles in different circumstances (for example a student who is being bullied in one context, may do the bullying in another or a student who acts as a bystander may intervene and act as a protector if the ring-leader is not around).

The *Safe to Learn* (DCFS, 2007) publication identifies the different roles as:-

- **Ring Leader:** students who through their social power can direct bullying activity.
- **Associates:** students who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader).
- **Reinforcers:** students who give positive feedback to the student doing the bullying, for example through comments, by smiling or laughing.
- **Outsiders/Bystanders:** students remain silent or watch and therefore appear to condone the bullying behaviour or who want to keep themselves safe by not drawing attention to themselves out of fear of the bully.
- **Defenders:** students who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort students who experience bullying.

Procedures for action against bullying

Responsibilities of the school community

Parent/caregiver responsibilities

1. Watch for early warning signs, including a reluctance to go to school, unexplained illnesses or injury, missing possessions, moodiness.
2. Take an active interest in your child's school and social life. Encourage talking about daily events and occurrences.
3. If you suspect bullying, or cyberbullying of your child at school, record any details and contact the class teacher or school administration.
4. Encourage your child to report persistent school bullying to those in the best position to provide immediate help, i.e. the teaching staff and administration.
5. Assure your child that seeking help is okay and an assertive measure.
6. Do not encourage your child to hit back or verbally abuse the bully.
7. Be prepared to assist your child to develop strategies to deal with the bully/bullies, or support the school in helping to develop strategies.
8. If you become aware your child has been involved in bullying behaviours, work with the school to develop positive behaviours.
9. Bullying procedures will be included in Parent Handbook/Prospectus, the school internet site and advertised at P&F meetings and through school newsletters.

Student responsibilities

Action plan for perceived bullying

Students will be supported with strategies to adopt an assertive, sequential response to incidents of bullying involving themselves or others. This response will take the following forms:-

Tell the bully to stop

This identifies for the bully that his/her behaviours are unacceptable to the victim, and provides the bully with the opportunity to modify behaviour without further consequence. It also establishes the victim's control over handling the situation.

Generally, what to do:-

1. Use the "fogging" technique which assists with assertiveness and allows people to deflect insults or putdown.
2. Take control of the situation and let the bully see that you are not feeling intimidated.
3. Maintain eye contact with the bully, speak clearly and firmly, stand upright and try not to fidget.
4. Act or pretend to be confident.
5. Use age appropriate language to teach the strategy.

In June 2011, students were engaged in a competition to create slogans that could be used to assist them with thinking assertively and also with what to say to a person who is bullying them. Classes will be issued with student made posters listing these slogans. Students will memorize some of these to use as part of an assertive approach to saying "No" to bullying. As part of the competition, some students designed symbols and signs which could also assist with this process.

Winning entries include the following:-

- Large poster with a cross on it. St Thomas's school name written in the cross and slogans around the cross.
- Slogans which would be good for thinking assertively:-
Bullies have nothing better to do.
Bullies aren't better than you.

Bullying Policy

- Slogans which could be good to say to a bully:-
Be smart. Don't start.
Stand up for fair play.

Role plays for younger students would be especially useful to teach students the body language and voice tone for assertive responses to bullying. Role playing use of signs e.g. holding up a hand to signify "STOP. I don't like this. I am not giving you permission to proceed."

- Other slogans submitted for the competition that could be good to assist with creating a positive attitude and to assist with changing a culture of bullying:-
Be kind. Be your best.
Bullying – not so cool at school.
Be cool. Don't be cruel.
What you say can go a long way.
Stop! Think! Care!
Think twice. Be nice.
Don't fight. It's not right.

If the bullying does not cease, or has caused significant physical or emotional harm, tell someone in authority (e.g. Teacher, School Officer, Assistant Principal, Principal, Parent, someone who is trusted).

1. The victim, if unable to stop the bullying, should report all incidents to the nearest available staff member. Immediacy of reporting is essential.
2. Students (victim, bully and witnesses) may be required to discuss reported incidents with a staff member. Aim for such a discussion to occur as soon as possible after the incident.
3. Parents/caregivers of students involved may be informed of the outcomes of investigations, and a record of an incident attached to the student's file, if deemed appropriate and necessary.
4. In the case of frequent or significant incidents of bullying by a student, the parents/caregivers may be required to attend an interview to discuss possible consequences and assist the school in planning a strategy to modify the child's behaviour.
5. The School selects an appropriate method for dealing with the bully/bullies and supporting the victim/s taking into consideration factors which influence choice of intervention e.g.:-
Traditional Disciplinary Method
Strengthening the Victim
Mediation
Restorative Practice
Group Method
Method of Shared Concern
(See Appendix 1. for Definitions of Methods)

Staff responsibilities

Identification of bullying

1. Watch for early warning signs of bullying in students (e.g. apparent behaviour change, physical injuries, emotional distress).
2. Record all incidences of bullying and/or cyberbullying, including action taken. Complete *Behaviour Incident Referral Forms* to submit to Administration. Where deemed necessary, specific incidents will be recorded in relevant student files. Admin to keep a register of bullying incidents. Offer the victim immediate support and help, but avoid 'bullying' the bully.
3. Use the **Six Thinking Hats Reflection** and/or **Class Meetings** to discuss bullying in class sessions when the need arises (e.g. after incidents).
4. Monitor all areas of the school during breaks and in between lessons.

Education of school community

1. All students and parents, on enrolment at the school, should be made aware of the school's Bullying Policy, including expectations and consequences.
2. Parents/caregivers to agree to and sign the Bullying Policy as a condition of enrolment.
3. Parents of students currently enrolled to agree to and sign the reviewed Bullying Policy on its completion. (Parents/caregivers have the opportunity to be involved with all steps of the review through newsletters, on assemblies and at P&F meetings.)
4. Where possible, parents/caregivers will be included in the education process for decision making and informed of developments within the school in the area of bullying at P&F meetings and through school newsletters after the policy review.
5. Education of all year levels will occur through the school's social skilling programmes (Social Emotional Learning Plan – SEL), within the context of the curriculum and during school assemblies.
6. All teaching staff will undertake regular professional development (at staff meetings) in regard to bullying issues and their professional responsibilities in combating bullying.

Action plan for bullying incidents

Teachers will adopt a logical and sequential approach when responding to reports of bullying and cyberbullying, using the following process:-

1. Teacher/Admin interrupts any ongoing bullying that may be occurring. Be aware of the difference between bullying and inappropriate behaviours that are not bullying and which may need to be dealt with differently.
2. Teacher/Admin listens to all sides of the story (victim, person bullying and available witnesses to the incident, where possible).
3. The School selects an appropriate method for dealing with the bully/bullies and supporting the victim/s taking into consideration factors which influence choice of intervention e.g.:-
Traditional Disciplinary Method
Strengthening the Victim
Mediation
Restorative Practice
Group Method
Method of Shared Concern
(See Appendices for definitions of Methods)

The Traditional Disciplinary Method

- The bullying constitutes a crime and there are legal obligations to apply sanctions and there is adequate monitoring of the outcome
- The penalties are rule-driven not arbitrary
- With younger children light sanctions, such as time-out, can be effective
- In all applications the focus is on the behaviour and not on the unworthiness of the individual, and should be complemented by the use of positive reinforcement of desired behaviour wherever possible.

Strengthening the Victim

- There exists a relatively small imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim.
- The victim is capable of acquiring skills that are relevant to preventing the bully or bullies from continuing.
- There is a careful monitoring of the situation to ensure that the resistance of the victim does not result in a continuing struggle for dominance, for example through fighting.

Mediation

- Both parties are ready to work towards a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict.
- There is little imbalance of power and both parties are unhappy with the conflict continuing.
- The teacher or counsellor CAN reasonably remain neutral in helping to resolve the conflict.

Restorative Practices

- There is evidence that the person who has bullied feels genuinely remorseful or becomes remorseful after being asked to reflect on what harm has been done.
- The level of bullying is not extreme.
- If extreme, the use of a Community Conference is an acceptable alternative to taking legal action.
- There are grounds for believing that an apology or restorative action will lead to the 'wrongdoer' becoming acceptable to those who have been offended.

The Support Group Method

- There is a readiness of the perpetrators of the bullying to respond empathically to evidence provided by the practitioner of the distress that has been experienced by the victim.
- There are other students who are prepared to act supportively towards the victim at a meeting which includes the perpetrators.
- The cases are not ones involving extreme violence and which call for a strong disciplinary approach.

The Method of Shared Concern

- May be used when the bullying involves a group of suspected perpetrators.
- The bullying is not of a severity that would entail taking legal action.
- Students are amenable to taking part in the series of meetings that are required in implementing the method.
- The method is especially useful in cases where there is some provocation by the victim and careful preparation is undertaken before mediation is attempted.

Sometimes multiple methods may be used, for example, the traditional disciplinary approach and strengthening the victim. Training is required before some methods can be used most effectively. The choice of methods should be in accordance with agreed school policy.

If the student re-offends after reflection, then **in-class withdrawal** (via seating plan) or short-term **playground withdrawal** to separate the bully from his/her victims.

If the student continues to bully despite previous measures, then **alternative classroom withdrawal** (movement to another classroom for a period ranging from one session to one day) or **long-term playground withdrawal** (one day to one week) will be used.

In unison with Step 6, parents will be contacted either by phone or in writing, and informed of the situation. If deemed necessary, a parent conference will be held to discuss issues and collaboratively formulate a solution. This may take the form of an *Individual Behaviour Management Plan*.

For extreme incidences of bullying (e.g. physical assault) or where previous steps have failed to modify student behaviour then **suspension** (1-20 days) and possibly **exclusion** of the student may occur.

Educational Programs

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at St Thomas of Villanova School. At St Thomas's we use the following educational strategies:-

- Making Meaning Out Of Classroom Behaviour – Maurice Balson

- Dr. Ken Rigby vodcasts series on Bullying

Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At St Thomas's School we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by using:-

- Essential Skills for Classroom Management – Mark Davidson
- Classroom Profiling – Mark Davidson
- Class Meetings
- Six Thinking Hats – Edward De Bono
- Stop, Think, Do
- You Can Do It
- Look for early warning signs (e.g. apparent behaviour change, physical injuries, emotional distress)
- Maintain adequate surveillance in the playground
- Advertise policy – internet, newsletters, prospectus, assemblies, staff and parent meetings etc.

Responses to bullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

At St Thomas's School we support targets and perpetrators through:

- Following action plans for responding to bullying (flow charts for students, staff and admin)
- Assisting students being bullied with strategies
- Educating bystanders to disclose/intervene
- Selection from 6 major methods of intervention:-
 - Traditional Disciplinary Method
 - Strengthening the Victim to resist
 - Mediation
 - Restorative Practice
 - Support Group Method
 - Method of Shared Concern
- Completing behaviour/bullying referral to admin forms
- Post incident meetings/discussions/reflections – include all parties, including witnesses
- JAQ – Primary cyber-bullying
- JAQ – Primary Package 1
- JAQ – Primary Package 2
- Behaviour Think Sheets
- Class Meetings
- Six Thinking Hats – Edward De Bono
- Stop, Think, Do

Consequences for bullying:-

- Apology

Bullying Policy

- Individual behavior management plans
- Contracts
- Replace/repair damage to personal property – school/home partnership
- Referral to counselor
- In-class withdrawal
- Buddy class
- Detention
- Withdrawal from playground – short or long term
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Monitoring interventions

Reporting and Monitoring Bullying

At St Thomas's School reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers may report bullying in the following ways:-

- To any staff member
- Bullying drop box in the foyer
- Electronically for adults by emailing secretary.mareeba@cns.catholic.edu.au
- Electronically for students by emailing – Admin staff to check. Set up a specific email address
- Consumer satisfaction surveys – such as the school opinion surveys that seek general responses about safety and wellbeing of students.

The Safe to Learn resource identifies that reporting systems are of value when students:-

- have confidence their concerns will be treated promptly and seriously, and that action will be taken which will not make their situation worse
- can access reporting routes easily
- know who will deal with their concerns, and have trust both in them and the systems which the school uses
- are aware that malicious reporting relating to students or staff will be taken seriously and could incur a disciplinary measure (DCFS, 2007).

The Safe to Learn resource identifies that parental reporting methods are most effective when:-

- all staff (including office staff and other support staff) are familiar with and have been trained in the school's systems and understand the steps to be taken
- all staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of parents/carers making contact with the school about incidents of bullying
- parents/carers have confidence staff will take the concern seriously and act promptly in a way that improves the situation for their child
- staff take action according to agreed timelines and report progress to parents/carers
- parents/carers are clear about how to take further action if they do not feel that their concern has been properly addressed (DCFS, 2007).

Follow up to actions

- The nature of bullying, means that unless the students involved in the bullying incident and the interventions applied are monitored over time they may only have a short term impact.
- It is recommended that two or three months after a major bullying incident, the school seeks formal feedback from parents/carers and the student to check whether the intervention has prevented any further bullying from occurring. This can be done through a simple interview with the students involved, or the school could engage the parents/carers using a standard review letter to gather judgements on their satisfaction with how the bullying was dealt with.
- If the response indicates the bullying has not stopped or the student does not feel safe, further intervention is required.
- The information collected through this process can be used to inform the review of the anti-bullying policy, assists to reinforce the change in behaviour for the bully and provides assurance to the school community that this issue is being taken seriously.

Reports of bullying will be monitored to inform the school community about the extent of bullying and to identify particular areas of concern for future action.

The bullying policy will be reviewed annually and is regarded as a work in progress.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Intervention strategies

Dr. Ken Rigby identifies a number of intervention strategies that may be effective in responding to bullying incidents. In cases of serious bullying, careful investigation may need to be undertaken, leading to planned or systematic treatment involving the bully or bullies and in some cases, others such as the target of the bullying, bystanders and parents/carers.

The school may choose to use multiple approaches depending on the incident or may adopt one approach across the school. Depending on the approach or range of approaches staff will need to receive training so they are competent in the use of the chosen approach.

The nature of the bullying incidents will help to determine which method is most appropriate, as should school policy and the availability of school resources, particularly access to trained practitioners.

The school will also need to assess the most appropriate method for the students involved, taking into account individual needs such as language, stage of development and disability.

The intervention strategies identified by Dr. Rigby are:-

The Traditional Disciplinary Approach

Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, proportionately and consistently and taking account of any reasonable adjustments students may require and the needs of vulnerable children.

Disciplinary measures have three main purposes:

- to impress on perpetrators that what they have done is unacceptable
- to deter them from repeating that behaviour
- to signal to other students the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Disciplinary measures for bullying are intended to hold students who bully to account for their behaviour, and ensure they accept the harm they have caused and to learn from it. Disciplinary measures may also provide (as appropriate) an opportunity for the student to put right the harm they have caused.

It is necessary to ensure that the needs of the student who has experienced bullying are addressed. It is not advisable to force them into situations where they have to face their bullies in isolation.

The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. However, covert or cyber bullying should not be taken less seriously than physical bullying. In reviewing disciplinary measures, due care will be taken to ensure that the

bullying behaviours are addressed in a way which does not lead to escalation and which gives the best chance that bullying will not be repeated.

When other strategies and disciplinary measures do not resolve the problem, the school leadership team may be required to apply disciplinary absence measures, as appropriate (Rigby, 2010a).

Strengthening the Target

This approach to dealing with cases of bullying aims to assist students who have been the target of bullying to cope more effectively in interactions with the bully or bullies. Students who are being targeted are advised or trained to become less vulnerable, for example, by learning to act more assertively. Students who have been bullied may be taught a technique known as fogging. This involves openly acknowledging that the bully may actually believe the negative things he or she is saying and refusing to be disturbed or intimidated. It can be effective in some cases of one-to-one bullying but is limited to bullying that is verbal (Rigby, 2010a).

The *Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support* program contains lesson plans and strategies for working with students who have been targeted by bullying. These lesson plans contain a 'checking in' process for following up with students to check on their progress and whether the bullying and negative impact has decreased (Ross, Horner, & Stiller, B., 2009).

Mediation

According to this approach, students in conflict are invited to work with a trained teacher or peer- mediator, to find a mutually acceptable way of resolving their problem. It requires a readiness by the parties involved in the bullying to agree to meet and seek a solution, facilitated, but not imposed, by a neutral practitioner. Its application is severely limited to cases in which both the bully and target of the bullying are genuinely interested in mediation and the practitioner can remain neutral. Often those who bully are not motivated to seek mediation and it is difficult to remain neutral when the bullying is seen as completely unjustified, as it normally is (Rigby, 2010a).

The use of this method is not recommended for students with limited social skills or difficulties in receptive or expressive language (such as English as a Second Language students or students with disabilities).

Restorative Practice

The use of restorative approaches has proven effective in many schools. The aim of these approaches is to work with students rather than doing things to them or for them. Such approaches are underpinned by the principle of restorative justice whereby the student causing harm is held to account for his/her behaviour. This means:-

- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied
- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (e.g. staff, friends or family)
- recognising the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused
- all those involved agreeing to a range of actions, which will be monitored over an agreed period of time.

There is a range of restorative approaches, from informal meetings with students where they can talk through their issues in a structured way, to, at the most formal end, a restorative conference with an independent facilitator. Restorative approaches can be effective when the requisite time and resources are invested, but it is important they are used in conjunction with, not in place of, disciplinary measures (Rigby, 2010a).

The Support Group Method

This is a non-punitive approach that involves the students who have been identified as bullying being confronted at a group meeting with vivid evidence of the target's distress. Those present also include a number of students who are supportive of the target. The target is not present. The students are required to say what they will do to improve the situation for the target. The outcome is carefully monitored. This approach is seen as appropriate for non-violent, non-criminal forms of bullying. It does not, however, take into account any provocation that may have occurred to precipitate the bullying and the need, in some cases, for changes in behaviour on the part of both parties (Rigby, 2010a).

The Method Of Shared Concern

This is also a non-punitive approach. It involves first working with the suspected bullies and with the target, in one-to-one meetings. When progress has been made, a meeting is held with the suspected bullies as a group to plan how the problem

might be resolved. Subsequently they are joined by the target and an agreed solution is negotiated. Although this approach can be time-consuming, outcomes are overwhelmingly positive and it is uniquely appropriate for dealing with cases of group bullying in which the target has behaved provocatively; this occurs in about 20 per cent of cases. Violent or criminal behaviour is normally not handled using this approach (Rigby, 2010a).

School leaders need to be aware of the social and emotional skills of the teacher/s and support staff involved in dealing with the bullying incident, to ensure they are appropriately skilled in the chosen intervention strategy.

Appendix 2. Teaching and Learning Programs

Establishment of teaching and learning programs that promote personal development and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders.

The most effective way of addressing bullying through the curriculum is to create effective learning environments in which:-

- the contribution of all students is valued
- all students can feel secure and are able to contribute appropriately
- stereotypical views are challenged, and students learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others whether arising from race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability or disability
- students learn to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour both in school and in the wider community
- all forms of bullying and violence are challenged
- students are supported to develop their social and emotional skills (DCFS, 2007).

Teachers can use class time to raise awareness of bullying, for example by discussing issues of diversity and cyber safety, and also teaching the social and emotional skills that have proven effective in enhancing students' ability to manage their interactions with others while at the same time reducing the risk of bullying. Some classroom management practices and learning experiences may provide opportunities for students to learn about and develop social and emotional skills applicable to enhancing interactions with others, for example group work based on ground rules.

While there may be opportunities to address bullying through a number of subject areas such as English, Drama, Health and Physical Education, this issue can best be addressed through Religion and SEL, particularly through comprehensive programs which promote personal development.

The Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (Cross et al., 2009) found that students should be provided opportunities to learn about group mechanisms and motives for covert bullying, as well as opportunities to develop their social skills and social problem solving, including ways to be an effective bystander.

"Ideally this learning would mobilise student bystanders to take action when they observe covert bullying (as well as overt bullying) and increase the resilience of students who are bullied covertly" (Cross et al, 2009).

The developmental stage of students should be considered when addressing these issues within the curriculum – not all topics are appropriate to all phases of schooling. It is recommended that these components are embedded within personal development programs.

The curriculum includes all the planned learning activities, explicit and implicit, which a school promotes. When reviewing curriculum it may be useful to consider:-

- the responsibilities of all curriculum team leaders in addressing diversity and tackling prejudice that may give rise to bullying in their curriculum area
- specific curriculum areas such as Health and Physical Education and History and Geography
- how assemblies and class time can be used as teaching opportunities for anti-bullying principles and practices.

The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework enables schools to seek information regarding the delivery of social and emotional wellbeing programs that promote respectful relationships among children and adults. The Framework is accompanied by an overview of commercially available Social and Emotional Learning programs that address the core social and emotional competencies: self awareness, social awareness, self management, responsible decision making and relationship skills.

One of the major outcomes of the National Centre Against Bullying national conference was that bullying behaviour peaks at particular transition times at school. For example bullying behaviour increases when students transition from primary school to high school. This indicates a need for support, particularly around the development of social skills and coping strategies in the years prior to transition.

Students should be provided with opportunities to develop the breadth and depth of their knowledge as well as the skills that enable them to enhance their personal development, manage themselves and others in social contexts. Such knowledge and skills should be specifically relevant to students' development and phase of learning.

Appendix 3. Professional Development

Staff are to be provided with professional development to enable the full implementation of the anti-bullying policy. Professional development should cover familiarity of the policy, teaching and learning programs that build social and emotional learning of students, methods of reporting and appropriate intervention strategies and support for students affected by bullying.

The Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS) found the majority of teachers felt staff at their school needed more training to effectively deal with covert bullying incidents and to address covert bullying (including cyber bullying) within the curriculum (Cross et al, 2009).

“The ACBPS data suggest that teachers, who lack training to understand the effects of covert bullying are less able to recognise it, often consider it less serious or problematic, have less empathy for children who are covertly bullied and are less likely to intervene to prevent or manage this behaviour. This inaction on the part of teachers results in students believing that teachers condone this behaviour.”

The ACBPS results suggest that schools should focus on providing professional development for staff to develop their understanding on how to effectively address covert bullying. The ACBPS recommends professional development is provided to enhance student transition and reduce the subsequent bullying, particularly covert bullying, which continues to increase following transition from primary to high school (Cross et al, 2009).

Relevant topics for professional development include, but are not limited to:-

- developing an understanding of the school's anti-bullying policy
- understanding bullying behaviour (including covert and cyber bullying)
- understanding the environment of bullying, particularly developments in the cyber world and the impact on cyber bullying
- understanding child and adolescent development and the impact on bullying behavior
- understanding the increased prevalence of bullying during transition periods and ways to address this
- development of social and emotional learning through the curriculum (such as social skills, communication skills, assertiveness, decision-making, relationship formation, conflict resolution, coping strategies)
- developing skills in the specific interventions to address bullying
- exploring opportunities to engage parents/carers in conversation regarding bullying.

Recommended Resource:

Department of Education and Training (2010) Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools: Vodcasts and Support Materials by Dr. Ken Rigby

<http://education.qld.gov.au/studentsservices/protection/community/bullying.html>

- Vodcast 1 - The nature of bullying Duration: 00:16:15
- Vodcast 2 - Addressing bullying in schools Duration: 00:17:35
- Vodcast 3 - Interventions in cases of bullying Duration: 00:20:53
- Vodcast 4 - Three more ways of intervening Duration: 00:18:48
- Vodcast 5 - Working with groups Duration: 00:18:49

The vodcasts all come with accompanying notes and powerpoint presentations.

Induction

All members of the school staff (including casual, temporary and itinerant staff) are to receive comprehensive induction support. Clearly communicate the standard of behaviour expected of students to enable them to learn, and act to pre-empt and deal with inappropriate behaviour in the context of the behaviour policy of the school.

Ensure throughout the induction program that the anti-bullying policy of the school is clearly outlined. This needs to apply for all teachers or other staff working within the school and as part of any school activities, such as camps, sporting events and excursions (DCFS, 2007).

Appendix 4: Physical Environment

Gathering information and data on the views and experiences of students, staff and parents/carers about bullying will enable the school to develop an understanding of the patterns of bullying behaviours occurring within the school and bullying that occurs outside school but has implications when students return to school.

There are a number of audit tools currently available to assist schools to assess their physical environment schools:-

- **Friendly Schools Friendly Families physical environment audit tools**
<http://www.friendlyschoools.com.au/survey/Sample-questions.pdf>
<http://www.friendlyschoools.com.au/materials/whole-school/physical-environment.php#samples>
<http://www.friendlyschoools.com.au/materials/whole-school/physical-environment.php#physical>
- **MindMatters staff survey** http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/verve/_resources/Staff_survey_Full_version.pdf

Alternatively existing data that has already been collected on incidents that have occurred throughout the school can be used, or the school may choose to engage students, parents and staff through existing forums to gain input into the nature of bullying concerns throughout the school.

A Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) (Behaviour Management Program at St Thomas's – up for review) program should help with the creation of positive learning environments by developing proactive whole-school systems to define, teach, and support appropriate student behaviours. An important component of SWPBS (BMP) is the collection of data to inform future work.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has developed a student technology audit that provides a quick and effective tool for schools to establish how their students use computers and other technologies. Gaining an understanding of how students use technology will help school staff to develop appropriate intervention and education programs. Identifying the types and level of technology use may also be a useful conversation starter for addressing cyber safety issues.

The Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study found that covert bullying takes place predominantly during break times and in the classroom. Nearly two thirds of students who were bullied covertly said this occurred during break times and nearly half said it occurred in the classroom. Covert bullying was less likely to occur travelling to and from school (Cross et al., 2009).

Schools can use existing data to identify how the physical and cyber environment of the school impacts on bullying behaviour. Aspects to review may include:-

- staff supervision patterns in the playground, school buildings and on public transport
- the physical design of the school building(s), including addressing 'blind spots' where bullying could take place
- designation of 'quiet-play' areas in playgrounds or short term safe rooms for use at break times (DCFS, 2007)
- web filtering programs and student web accessing patterns.

It is recommended schools focus their attention on key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent, and that they work with students to establish when and where those times and locations are.

The Australian Government has published a Schooling Issues Digest: the Impact of School Infrastructure on Student Outcomes and Behaviour that provides brief reports that assess links between building design, school facilities and their impact on student learning and behaviour.

It is also recommended that schools work with students and parents/carers to discuss acceptable use of technology policies focusing on the use of mobile phones, social networking sites and websites. Schools should work with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of concerns related to cyber safety and the availability web filtering programs.

Appendix 5: Support for Families

It is important to work with the parent body to ensure they are aware of the school's stance on bullying. Actively engage the Parents/carers and Friends association to develop a strategy for communication with parents/carers.

Regular communication should be made with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of what to do if their child is involved in a bullying incident. Parents/carers should also be engaged to support the work the school is doing to address bullying. This is particularly important in the area of cyber bullying, which occurs in the home environment as well as the school.

Support parents/carers of students who experience bullying as they play a key role in assisting their children with the development of coping strategies and assertiveness skills. Parents/carers of those students bullying may also have a range of emotional needs, and may need time and support in developing a balanced view of what is happening and appreciating their role in helping their child to learn about the consequences of his or her actions. The assistance and support of the school counsellor or outside agencies to support the needs of students and their families may be required.

For more information on ways to develop sustainable, collaborative and productive family, community and school relationships for a more satisfying educational experiences visit the Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau website on <http://www.familyschool.org.au/> :-

- Family-School Partnerships Framework – A Guide for Schools and Families
- Family-School Partnerships Project: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study

Appendix 6: Policy Monitoring and Reviews

It is recommended schools regularly review their anti-bullying policy. Use of a checklist to monitor activities against the ten Elements of effective school based action against bullying.

Dr. Ken Rigby (2010b) in his report Enhancing Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools identified evaluation of bullying approaches as a major challenge for schools. Dr. Rigby recommends that schools systematically follow up on bullying incidents they have responded to in order to examine what works best for different cases. See Dr. Rigby's vodcast below for resources to address these issues.

Department of Education and Training (2010) Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools: Vodcasts and Support Materials by Dr. Ken Rigby

<http://education.qld.gov.au/student-services/protection/community/bullying.html>

- Vodcast 6 - Issues with parents/carers and evaluating anti-bullying work.
Duration: 00:18:31

The vodcast comes with accompanying notes and powerpoint presentations.

Gathering information and data on the views and experiences of students, staff and parents/carers will enable the school to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy and associated actions. Monitor the progress of actions and establish systems to help analyse the effectiveness of policies.

Some suggested questions to address in evaluating the policy are:-

- Do the data and views of the school community gathered show that we have achieved what we set out to do?
- What have we learned about how to use anti-bullying strategies in the school?
- What is our next priority in taking action against bullying and how will we go about it (DCFS,2007)?

Celebrating success

- It is important to celebrate the success of anti-bullying actions. Discuss with the parent body, students and staff suitable ways to celebrate their hard work in fostering a safe and supportive school community.

Appendix 7: Posters

- *St Thomas's Declaration Against Bullying*
- *Slogan Poster*
- *Hand Poster*
- *Stop Sign Poster*

RESOURCES:

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support

www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=24668

Alannah and Madeline Foundation: a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating effects. The Foundation promotes the Better Buddies initiative designed to help older children to care for younger children and create friendly and caring primary school communities where bullying is consequently reduced.

<http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

Bounce Back! a classroom resiliency program written by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble. It is a collection of practical classroom strategies to help young people cope with the complexity of their everyday lives and learn to 'bounce back' when they experience sadness, difficulties, frustrations and hard times.

<http://www.bounceback.com.au/>

Friends for Life: a program for use in schools to prevent anxiety and depression and build resilience. It is aimed at children aged between 7 and 11 years.

www.friendsinfo.net/index.html

Friendly Schools and Families Program: provides a description of individual, group, family and school community level actions to address and prevent bullying in its social context. The program assists with the design, development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation of a social skill building and comprehensive anti-bullying program. It was developed by Dr Donna Cross and co-workers at Edith Cowan University.

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/about.php>

Kids Helpline: a free, private and confidential, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

Kids Matter: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children, reduce mental health problems and achieve greater support for children experiencing mental health difficulties and their families.

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au>

Mind Matters: a resource and professional development program supporting Australian secondary schools in promoting and protecting the health, social and emotional wellbeing of all the members of school communities.

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/default.asp>

Reach Out: an online resource that assists young people by providing information to improve understanding of the issues that relate to mental health and wellbeing. Reach Out also has information on how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities to connect with other young people.

<http://au.reachout.com>

National Centre Against Bullying: a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber safety.

<http://www.ncab.org.au/about/>

Current 20 October 2010 p.54 **National Safe Schools Framework:** developed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. It incorporates existing good practice and provides an agreed national approach to help schools and their communities address issues of bullying, harassment, violence, child abuse and neglect. It is a collaborative effort by the Australian Government, State and Territory governments, non-government school authorities and other key stakeholders. It presents a way of achieving a shared vision of physical and emotional safety and wellbeing for all

students in all Australian schools.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm

Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students: an initiative of DET which outlines how state schools are to provide positive support for students in order to facilitate learning and responsible behaviour. Schools are required to set out clearly the expectations they have regarding student behaviour and to provide support for students according to their degree of need; for example, some may need to be especially targeted and others may require intensive support.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/behaviour/bm-plans.html>

Rock and Water Program: founded by the Dutch educationalist, Feerk Ykema, is designed to help young people interact and communicate more confidently with others. It makes use of physical exercises that are constantly linked to the acquisition of mental and physical skills. It claims to assist boys and girls to become aware of purpose and motivation in their lives.

<http://www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/stories/rockandwater.php>

You Can Do It! a program delivered through a school curriculum to help students set achievable goals and enjoy life. It emphasises the need to have positive thoughts in order to change negative feelings and behaviours. The program covers eight areas: confidence, effort and persistence, happenings, self-acceptance, goal setting, time management and organisation, making friends and handling conflict.

www.youcandoit.com.au

REFERENCES:

AlCrime Reduction Matters. (2007). Cyber bullying: issues for policy makers.hh

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). (2009). Inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians. South Australia.

Bernard, M., & Milne, M. (2008). Schools Procedures and Practices for Responding to Students Who Bully. Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L. (2009). Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS). Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

Cross, D., Shaw, T., Pearce, N., Erceg, E., Waters, S., Pintabona, Y., & Hall, M. (2007). School-based intervention research to reduce bullying in Australia 1999-2006. What works, what doesn't and what's promising? School of Exercise, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance (DCSF) (2007). Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools. United Kingdom.

Kandersteg Declaration <http://www.kanderstegdeclaration.com/>

Lodge, J. (2008). Working with families concerned with school-based bullying. Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse briefing.

Lodge, J., & Frydenberg, E. (2007). Cyber-Bullying in Australian Schools: Profiles of Adolescent Coping and Insights for School Practitioners.

McGrath, Dr H. (2005) Making Australian Schools Safer: A Summary Report of the Outcomes from the National Safe Schools Framework Best Practice Grants Programme (2004-2005). Faculty of Education, Deakin University, Melbourne.

Merrell, K. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008) How Effective are School Bullying Intervention Programs? A Meta-Analysis of Intervention Research. School Psychology Quarterly, V23, No. 1, 26-42. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, USA.

Miles, P. (2003). Don't Just Stand There. Yell Something! North Ryde: McGraw Hill.

Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (2010). Working Together. A Toolkit for effective School Based Action Against Bullying. Queensland Government.

Rigby, K. (2010). Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools: Consultancy for the Department of Education and Training, Brisbane.

Rigby, K. (2010a) Breaking the Cycle. Education Review, Sydney. Rigby, K. (2010b) Enhancing

Bullying Policy

Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools, Department of Education and Training, Brisbane.

Current 20 October 2010 p.62 Rigby, K. (2003) *Addressing Bullying in Schools: Theory and Practice*. Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

Riley, D., Duncan, D. J., & Edwards, J. (2009) *Investigation of Staff Bullying in Australian Schools – Executive Summary*. University of New England, Armidale.

Ross, S., Horner, R., & Stiller, B. *Bullying Prevention: In Positive Behaviour Support for Middle Schools. Educational and Community Supports*. University of Oregon, Oregon, USA.

Ross, S., Horner, R., & Stiller, B. *Bullying Prevention: In Positive Behaviour Support. Educational and Community Supports*, University of Oregon, Oregon, USA.

Safe Schools Action Team. (2008). *Shaping a Culture of Respect in our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*. Ministry of Education, Ontario, Canada.

Williams, J., Toumbourou, J., Williamson, E., Hemphill, S., & Patton, G. (2009). *Violent and antisocial behaviours among young adolescents in Australian Communities*. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, South Australia.