

# BULLY PREVENTION POLICY

## PURPOSE

Thornbury Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Thornbury Primary School will not be tolerated
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Thornbury Primary School
- document the teach, prevent strategies

When responding to bullying behaviour, Thornbury Primary School 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 students involved

Thornbury Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

## SCOPE

This policy addresses how Thornbury Primary School aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. Thornbury Primary School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy, KISWPBS Behaviour Flowchart and Deadly Behaviour Matrix.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps, after school care and excursions.

# POLICY

## Definitions

Thornbury Primary School community defines bullying as “Bullying is picking on someone repetitively, in a physical, verbal or psychological way. It’s about having power over someone else. Bullying can be sexist, racist or because of other differences. It can happen online, at school, outside of school or anywhere. It doesn’t just affect children, it happens to adults too. It makes the other person feel unsafe. It usually doesn’t happen around teachers or other adults. Bullying affects everyone, the person bullying needs help, the person being bullied needs help and the people who may see the bullying need help.”

Bullying can be:

1. *direct physical bullying* – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property
2. *direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse
3. *indirect bullying* – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance
4. *Cyber bullying* – bully behaviour using digital technology

## Other distressing behaviours

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are not “Deadly”. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff.

*Mutual conflict* involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

*Social rejection or dislike* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

*Single-episode acts* of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

## IMPLEMENTATION - BULLYING PREVENTION

Thornbury Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness, respect and being “Deadly”.

Bullying prevention at Thornbury Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students

- Teachers explicitly teach skills and strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour. In the classroom, our Stop, Walk, Talk Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support Program and Respectful Relationships curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed. Our Deadly value is “If I have a problem I speak with a teacher”
- We participate in the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

### **Reporting concerns to Thornbury Primary School**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school. We respect the privacy of all parties involved.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or a parent/carer as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher or one of their safe five people. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including Teachers, Education Support Teachers, Wellbeing Leader, Leadership Team.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Thornbury Primary School should contact Student Wellbeing Leader, the Assistant Principal or the Principal.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly improved by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Thornbury Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

### **Investigations**

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass, and
2. inform [Classroom Teacher, Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, Principal]

The Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, Principal] is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, Principal may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents/carers of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above

All communications with the Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, or Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. If cyberbullying occurs we encourage screenshots to be taken for evidence. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

## Responses to bullying behaviours

When Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, or Principal has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with i.e. Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, Student Support Services (SSS), Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Thornbury Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation

Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, Principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to [the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider].
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to [ the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider].
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to [the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider].
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, reflection, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students, with parents/carers.
- Prepare a [Safe at school plan, snapshot or Individual Learning Plan] restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved.

- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary, for example check in, check out.
- Implement Deadly Behaviour strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.

Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, and Principal are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Thornbury Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents using the Thornbury Primary School Stop, Walk, Talk response checklist.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

- Thornbury Primary School Guiding Statement
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Parentline](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion with students
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of Attitudes to School Survey, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, parents groups, school council, teachers and education support staff.

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 17th June 2021 and is scheduled for review in 2023

## APPENDICES AND OTHER

[Thornbury Primary School Bullying Response Flow Chart](#)

Parents and Carers Bullying Prevention Action plan

Students Bullying Prevention Action plan

Staff Bullying Prevention Action plan

Thornbury Primary Schools Parent Deadly's

Parent Complaints policy

Stop, Walk, Talk Conversation Students

Stop, Walk, Talk Conversation Staff

Stop Walk Talk Program

Stop Walk Talk Passcard

Flowchart to deal with Bullying

Deadly Behaviours (highlighted linked values)

Safe at School Plan

Individual Learning Plan

Behaviour Support Plan

Team around the Learner Plan

Snapshot

Thornbury Primary School Behaviour Flowchart

My 5