Bullying:
Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy (2011)

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the Department.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour can be:
- **verbal** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

The term “bullying” has a specific meaning. The school’s Anti-bullying Plan sets out the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying. The school has a range of policies and practices, including welfare and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

**School staff** have a responsibility to:
- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:
- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

**Students** have a responsibility to:
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

**Parents and caregivers** have a responsibility to:
- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

**All members of the school community** have a responsibility to:
- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.
Our School Anti-bullying Plan

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

All members of the school community contribute to preventing bullying by modeling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

This plan was originally developed in 2008 in consultation with the community through P&C representation on the anti-bullying planning committee. The draft plan was published and feedback considered. In 2011 the plan was reviewed by a committee comprising the Principal, a staff member and a nominated member of the P&C.

Statement of purpose

Tharawal Primary School aims to provide an environment in which each student is personally involved, in which each can develop as a person with courage, integrity and a social conscience.

To this end, we aim to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every student has a right to enjoy his or her time at school.

This community does not tolerate bullying or harassment. Respect for others is expected.

Prevention

Students, teachers, parents and the community will be aware of the school’s position on bullying.

- Professional development for staff related to bullying and the strategies to counteract it.
- Community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the school’s programs and response. (e.g. weekly newsletter, parent forums)

Protection

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

All forms of bullying – whether it be verbal, physical, social or psychological are not tolerated at any level at school.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life skills and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills.
- Learning Support Team
- Restorative Justice
- Annual Anti-bullying Lessons to promote assertive / proactive behaviour by students.
- Anti-bullying Performances
- Peer Support
- Values Education
- Buddies
- SRC
- Staff supervision of set area in playground.
- Ensure students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable in the school. (i.e. consistent classroom/school rules displayed in the school)

**Early Intervention**

- Students are to be encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others. The role of bystanders is explained.
- Teachers to regularly remind students to report incidents. Reporting is not dobbing.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Students are recognised for positive behaviours

**Teachers use a class and playground management plan if an incident of bullying occurs.**

**Response**

- Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses are spoken with. All incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated.
- Consideration as to why the bullying occurred will be investigated. (e.g. The bigger picture or contributing factors)

- Both bully and victim are to be offered basic assistance and support (i.e. outside school resources through counselling may be utilised if deemed necessary)
- A meeting of relevant persons is to be convened following identification of on-going bullying behaviour. (Principal, class teacher, parents, students, other) All issues relevant to the behaviour of the student are considered.

The reporting of a bullying incident can be made to a student’s teacher, the teacher on playground duty or any member of the teaching staff at Tharawal Primary School. Students may report an incident to their parents. Parents are encouraged to contact the school where their child has reported an incident of bullying so it may be investigated. These procedures are regularly promoted to students at school and in the school newsletter to parents.

When reported, an alleged bullying incident is investigated as soon as practically possible by the appropriate teaching staff member. Students may be interviewed and information recorded during the investigation.

Where a bullying incident is confirmed, a number of strategies may be employed to intervene and prevent the incident re-occurring.

The Tharawal Primary School Discipline Policy outlines appropriate procedures and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and the playground. These include:

- offering the bully, the victim and any bystanders support through the school counsellor, the school chaplain and restorative conversations with the Principal
- convening a meeting of key stakeholders (students, parents, teacher, Principal).

Key stakeholders involved in the bullying incident will be kept well informed by the teacher or Principal about the ongoing welfare of their child.
Where the bullying behaviour involves assault, threats, intimidation or harassment, the issue may be referred to the Department of Education and Communities’ Safety and Security Directorate and the Police.

In some cases it may be necessary to inform the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services of the incident.

Where parents are not happy with the outcome of handling a bullying incident, an appeal can be made. Please see the Complaints handling Policy at https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/about-us/how-we-operate/how-we-handle-complaints/schools

Parents may also complete a compliments form (obtained at the above website) where an issue has been handled well.

ADVICE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO ARE BEING BULLIED

The student should be encouraged to:

- Tell the bully to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive
- Seek help. Talk about the experience to someone who is trustworthy (School Counsellor, teacher, parent, peer, buddy).
- Report the bullying to a member of staff and feel confident that any incident can be resolved promptly and satisfactorily.

Other ‘self protective’ strategies that might be suggested include:

- Staying away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs.
- Be with friendly, supportive friends.

ADVICE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IS BEING BULLIED

Students should be made aware that early intervention can defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or gets out of hand. The role of the bystander is crucial.

Therefore, the following suggestions should be made:

- If possible, intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if the on-looking student has influence with the bully.
- Refuse to join in with the bullying.
- Discourage others from joining in.
- Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
- Tell an adult about the bullying.
- It is every student’s right and responsibility to report bullying whether it happens to oneself or to someone else

The Tharawal Primary School Anti-bullying Plan is available on the school's website www.tharawal-public-schools.nsw.edu.au from the school office and published in the school newsletter, the Tales.

The effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan will be communicated to the Tharawal Primary School community on an annual basis via the Annual School Report.

The Tharawal Primary School Anti-bullying Plan is reviewed every three years. At this time the Principal, two members of the teaching staff and a member of the community (as nominated by the P&C) will form a committee to review the Plan.
Additional Information
Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO)
Sutherland Police Local Area Command – 9542 0899
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
Family and Community Services 132 111

Principal's comment
Every student has the right to attend school in a safe and caring environment. The Tharawal Primary School Anti-bullying Plan provides strategies and support for all students at school.

Sue Roach Principal
Nat Murarotto Teacher
Heather Coombes Teacher
Trevor Crittenden SASS
David Linquist Parent
Karen O’Sullivan Parent

School contact information
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Tharawal Primary School’s Core Values

Care
Our students and staff will care for people, the community and the environment.

Participation and Cooperation
Our students and staff will work together to achieve common goals and restorative justice for all.

Excellence
Our students and staff will strive for the highest personal achievements in everything we do at school and in the community.

Fairness
Our students will treat others with consideration and the staff will provide a consistent model of fairness for all students.

Integrity
Our students will be consistently honest and trustworthy and will be encouraged to make good choices and decisions.

Respect
Our students will honour the school rules and respect the rights of others.

Responsibility
Our students and staff will acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of individuals and recognise there are consequences for all actions.