

# Solvelt @ Riverside



## Our approach to dealing with bullying

Solvelt is a non-punitive process of dealing with meanness.

- It is meld of the “no blame” & “method of shared concern” strategies proven highly effective in combating meanness in schools around the world.
- It involves teachers & students in 3-4 interviews across 2 weeks

Solvelt works because it:

- entrusts individuals known to have been involved in mean behaviour to take responsibility to change the situation for the target of their behaviour by challenging them to solve the situation
- raises the overall empathy quotient of the individual &/or group in order to bring about fundamental behaviour change
- is powered by the genuineness of teacher confidence in the capability of the mean students to bring about change
- is not directly concerned with punishment or control
- reframes events as a “problem” situation which needs to be solved without building a “case” to be answered
- reduces risk of future retaliation or more subtle meanness
- reduces the risk of unfair punishment of bystanders
- recognizes that the target may need to act differently

However, Solvelt:

- is not suitable in all circumstances
- is not appropriate in situations which can be dealt with by a simple intervention or warning
- will not be suitable in cases when extreme mean has occurred, or when students have been involved in previous Solvelt interviews, in such cases the student/s involved will be referred to DP2, parents will be informed and the stages system will be implemented.
- does NOT apply when definite physical assault has occurred, again the DP2 will be informed and the stages system will be implemented.

Solvelt works because:

- Students are empowered because the solutions develop outside the direct influence of the teacher
- Empathy is a motivating force for self-change
- Social psychologists have identified the factors that motivate students to help peers in distress:
  - they have been asked to help & have agreed
  - the situation is unambiguous, students know help is needed
  - students have been given individual responsibility to act
  - students know they are going to receive feedback
  - students feel guilt about what has happened
  - students have an assigned task
  - there is no longer any anonymity
  - there has been a commitment to “public” action
  - continuing to act unhelpfully becomes unacceptable to the group
  - identifying with a successful group enhances self-esteem
  - even if only one member of the group helps initially, the others are likely to follow
  - students receive a range of positive outcomes such as freedom from guilt, feeling good about their altruism & approval from the facilitator

[Taken from: McGrath, Helen & Noble, Toni ‘Bullying solutions: evidence based approaches to bullying in Australian schools’ French’s Forest, Pearson, 2006]