The Relationship Between the School Environment and Antisocial Behaviour

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by third party is acknowledged, and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

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Abbreviations

ACT  Australian Capital Territory
ADHD  Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AFP  Australian Federal Police
ATP  Australian Temperament Project
DSM  Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder
KSC  Kyabram Secondary College
LIFT  Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers
LOTE  Language Other Than English
NSW  New South Wales
ODD  Oppositional Defiant Disorder
PEACE  Preparation, Education, Action, Coping and Evaluation Pack
SES  Socio-economic Status
UK  United Kingdom
USA  United States of America
# Table of contents

Table of figures 7  

Abstract 8  

Chapter one: Research development 9  
1.1 Introduction 9  
1.2 Background 9  
1.3 Classifying antisocial behaviour and bullying 11  
1.4 Why research antisocial behaviour? 13  
1.5 Scope of research 14  
1.6 Research and objective questions 15  
1.7 Contribution to knowledge 15  
1.8 Presentation of the thesis 16  

Chapter two: Antisocial behaviour and bullying 17  
2.1 Introduction 17  
2.2 Criminal behaviour, antisocial behaviour and bullying 18  
2.3 Theories that influence antisocial behaviour 32  
2.4 Consequences and resilience 47  
2.5 Preventative and intervention measures 55  
2.6 Conclusion 63  

Chapter three: Methodology 65  
3.1 Introduction 65  
3.2 Conceptual framework of research 65  
3.3 Research design and methodology 69  
3.4 Ethics, reliability and validity 79
3.5 Analysis and development of themes
3.6 Conclusion

Chapter four: Antisocial behaviour and bullying: The participants discuss
4.1 Introduction
4.2 Participant profiles
4.3 Types of antisocial behaviour and bullying
4.4 Lets paint a portrait: Bully, victim and bystander
4.5 Interventions to antisocial behaviour
4.6 New knowledge and critical reflection
4.7 Conclusion

Chapter five: Antisocial behaviour and bullying: Clarifying the issue
5.1 Introduction
5.2 Antisocial behaviour and bullying
5.3 Lets paint a portrait: Bully, victim and bystander
5.4 Theories that influence antisocial behaviour
5.5 Interventions
5.6 Conclusion

Chapter six: Bringing it all together
6.1 Introduction
6.2 Addressing the objective and research questions
6.3 Strengths and limitations
6.4 Recommendations for future research
6.5 Conclusion

References
Table of figures

Figure one: Primary and secondary deviance 38

Figure two: Complex model of social bond 41
Abstract

The objective of this research project was to explore the relationship between the school environment and antisocial behaviour from student and teachers perspectives. The research focused on specific areas in the school environment including: peer influence, academic achievement and attachment. Education policies and curriculum were also reviewed to establish what relevant interventions and preventive measures were considered successful.

While the literature on antisocial behaviour and bullying is comprehensive and extensive, the research predominantly focuses on statistics and academic definitions of the topic. Reference to student and teacher opinions were not as prevalent, despite that fact that the majority of bullying occurs in the school environment. Hence this study is of an exploratory nature and will gain an insight into student and teacher’s thoughts, experiences, attitudes and opinions on the topic of bullying which could provide meaning and substance to the existing research.

The research was conducted at Kyabram Secondary College in northern Victoria and students and teachers participated in three semi-structured discussions: year 7/8 focus group, year 9/10 focus group and a teacher focus group. Interpretivism and symbolic interaction theory were utilised by the researcher to assist in understanding the meaning behind the participants’ responses.

The student and teacher participants provided valuable information on the topic of antisocial behaviour and bullying. The participants’ opinions and perceptions on a whole coincided with the literature, but the participants also provided various unique points of view compared to past research. The research was able to establish a connection between peer influence and antisocial behaviour but was not able measure the extent that peers influence bullying. A correlation between school attachment and academic achievement and antisocial behaviour was confirmed in the current research. The research was also able to verify which school disciplinary actions influence student’s antisocial behaviour. Even though the sample was small, the participants’ differing responses from the literature acknowledges the significance and importance of getting students and staff involved in researching antisocial behaviour and bullying.
Chapter one: Research development

In recent years an awareness has developed of the frequency and destructive consequences of harassment, intimidation and students picking on each other – what may all be called bullying – in the school.

(Staub & Spielman, 2003, p. 227)

1.1 Introduction

The above quote from Staub and Spielman (2003) recognises the importance of understanding the relationship between the school environment and antisocial behaviour. With antisocial behaviour and bullying increasing in frequency, it is vital to understand the various dynamics and dimensions of these behaviours. An ideal way to achieve this is to obtain both student and teacher perspectives on bullying as these two groups are often at the forefront of the problem and may hold answers to the solution. This chapter will establish the direction of the thesis and development of the research.

The first section of this chapter will present background information about adolescent crime and antisocial behaviour. The second section will focus on establishing definitions for bullying, to provide a solid foundation for the current research. The scope of the research will then be presented, followed by the objective and research questions, and contribution of knowledge. Finally, the structure and presentation of the thesis will be presented.

1.2 Background

The level of adolescent crime and antisocial behaviour has become a major concern to parents, teachers, police and governments, and is a significant cost to the community (Hemphill, Herrenkohl, McMorriss, Clements, Mathers & Toumbourou, 2004). It is difficult to define antisocial and criminal behaviour as it varies individually and between communities, depending on their expectations and levels of tolerance towards particular behaviour. What one group of people may deem as offensive,
another group may find completely innocent. Differences between communities can result from a variety of factors including legislative definitions and recording practices (Richards, 2011).

Drown and Hess (1990) estimated that about 80 to 90 per cent of children under the age of 18 in the United States of America (USA) commit some kind of offence that has the potential to lead to their arrest. Stranger (2002, p. 20) stated that 71 per cent of violent crimes are committed by 13 to 16-year-olds. Hayward and Sharp (2004) further reported that the general age at which individuals tend to regularly participate in criminal behaviour is between 14 to 16 years, and that 29 per cent of young people have committed at least one criminal act in the previous year (Hayward & Sharp, 2004).

It is widely accepted that the majority of crime is committed by young people internationally and in Australia (Farrell, 1998; Richards, 2011). Cunneen and White (2011) stated that communities are more likely to attribute criminal behaviour to adolescents, because those that offend tend to so in groups in their local area, which makes them more noticeable and more easily recognised. The Australian Institute of Criminology (2012, p. 74) reported that the juvenile offending rate is the highest it has been since 1996-97 at 4,584 per 100,000. Siegel (2002) acknowledged that statistics regarding juvenile crime levels need to be treated with caution, as not all criminals are arrested for their criminal behaviour. In reality juvenile offenders are only recorded as participating in 21 per cent of offences in Victoria, 18 per cent in Queensland and South Australia and 16 per cent in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) (Richards, 2011). Property crime such as burglaries (70 per cent) and vehicle theft (95 per cent) was recorded as one of the most common types of crime committed by adolescents, followed by arson (30 per cent) (Bor, McGee & Fagan, 2004, p. 365; Cunneen & White, 2011; Australian Institute of Criminology, 2012). Dubecki (2006a) further reported in The Age that other antisocial activities (graffiti, chroming and verbal abuse) are on the rise.

Bartol and Bartol (1998) stated that there are two broad categories of juvenile offenders: those who offend persistently and continuously into adulthood (persisters), and those who participate in delinquent acts only in their teenage years (experimenters) (Vassallo, Smart & Sanson, 2002, p. 2). The criminal behaviour of a persister does not necessarily escalate into more serious or violent offences (Cunneen & White, 2002). Hemphill et al., (2004) further reported that if a person is arrested at an early age they are eight times more likely to participate in further antisocial behaviour. Generally, youth participation in
serious delinquency and violence is just a phase that the majority of adolescents will outgrow, as most younger offenders do not re-offend later in life (Alder & Hunter, 2001). Siegel (2002) and Vassallo et al., (2002) stated that individuals commit fewer criminal acts as they grow older because their negative behaviour is replaced with maturity and increased levels of responsibility for their actions (see also Cunneen & White, 2011). Thus, individuals who continue offending are resistant to change and are unconcerned with the consequences to themselves or the victim (Siegel, 2002).

There has been a variety of factors linked to the development of juvenile offending; these include broken families, criminal family history, homelessness, ethnic and minority background and the school environment (Cunneen & White, 2002). The school environment is one of the main settings for adolescent crime, which is not surprising since young people spend the majority of their time there. Thirty-seven per cent of all violent crimes experienced by youth occur on school grounds both in the United Kingdom (UK) and the USA (Welsh, 2001; Siegel, 2002, p. 214; McConville & Cornell, 2003; Li, 2005). Theft and violence in the school environment disrupts the students’ learning environment, impacts academic results and influences bullying (Cunneen & White, 2002; Siegel, 2002, p. 215; Hayes & Prenzler, 2009). The next section will define the term bullying.

1.3 Classifying antisocial behaviour and bullying

It was not until the early 1980s that bullying and victimisation were acknowledged as an important issue for schools (Rigby & Thomas, 2010). The concept of bullying is now universal and its characteristics have been represented in both literature and film; for example Tom Brown's School Days, Lord of the Flies and My Bodyguard (Slee, 2002; Kowalski, 2003; Rigby & Thomas, 2010). Rigby and Johnson (2004a) stated that bullying is no longer viewed as something that exists between two individuals who differ, but rather as a form of antisocial behaviour within the school environment and society. Rigby (2000, p. 57) stated;

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons.
Despite this quote being over 10 years old, it is important as it provides a solid foundation when attempting to define bullying and its effects. Rigby (2000) revealed that three points were crucial in the above definition power, frequency and intent to harm. A combination of these three points can explain what turns an individual into a bully - the need to frequently have power over someone else by purposely causing them harm (Rigby, 2011; Rigby & Smith, 2011). Campbell (2005) stated that bullying is not a physical fight between two people of equal strength, but rather an imbalance of real or perceived power. The imbalance of power may be correlated to a difference in physical strength, the ability to verbally govern another person or to socially exclude an individual from a group.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training’s definition of bullying (2006, p. 2) breaks the term bullying into three main categories - direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying and indirect/covert bullying (see also Spears, Slee, Owens & Johnson, 2009). The first two categories are self-explanatory and include actions such as punching, shoving, stealing, threats and name-calling, whereas indirect bullying is harder to define and often happens without the victim being aware of it (Siegel, 2002; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Kowalski, 2003; Writer, 2009). Indirect bullying or what Rigby (2003) referred to as relational bullying includes spreading rumours, mimicking, excluding someone, damaging existing relationships and cyber-bullying and can occur without consequence.

With the advancement of technology the term cyber-bullying was defined by Belsey (cited in Li, 2007) and involves the use of communication technologies such as email, mobile, instant messaging and websites to create defamatory and derogatory messages about the victim. Cyber-bullying enables bullies to extend the reach of their antisocial behaviour and threats beyond physical bounds. Spears et al., (2009) reported that cyber-bullying can occur both covertly and overtly as technology crosses school and home boundaries. Willard (2004 cited in Li 2007) identified several different types of common cyber-bullying actions - these include flaming (sending derogatory messages about a person to an online group) and online harassment (repeatedly sending offensive messages). Other cyber-bullying actions include cyber-stalking (online harassment and threats of harm); denigration (sending untrue statements about a person to others); masquerade (pretending to be someone else and making them look bad); outing (posting sensitive information about someone) and exclusion (excluding someone from an online group). Thus it is clear that the introduction of technology to the education curriculum has resulted in cyber-bullying becoming an increasingly critical problem for schools (Li, 2005; Hanewald, 2008). A more recent study conducted by Johnson and Tonkin (2009) reported that 8
to 11-year-old students are more influenced by technology and social changes compared with children from previous generations.

There have been differing views about whether cyber-bullying has become an addition to traditional bullying, or is it replacing it (Hanewald, 2008). Ybarra and Mitchell (2004 cited in Hanewald 2008) theorised that often victims of face-to-face bullying can start to bully online as a way to take revenge on their tormentor, as the anonymity of cyber-bullying can protect them. Containing cyber-bullying is quite difficult for educators, due to the majority of the bullies being anonymous and having the right to freedom of speech (Li, 2005). Herring (2001 cited in Li, 2007, p. 438) stated that the anonymity behind cyber-bullying ‘not only fosters playful inhibitions but reduces social accountability, making it easier for users to engage in hostile, aggressive acts’.

Antisocial behaviour in the form of bullying can occur across primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in both urban and rural settings (Flynn & Fox, 2000). Astor, Benbenishty and Meyer (2004) stated that bullying was more likely to happen within and around school buildings such as auditoriums, playgrounds and corridors (see also Rigby & Thomas, 2010). Patchin and Hinduja’s (2008) research showed that bullying also exists while students travelled to and from school and in public places such as playgrounds and bus stops. Nansel and colleagues (2002 cited in Kulig, Hall & Kalischuk, 2008, p. 927) stated that there has been a three to five per cent increase in antisocial behaviour amongst rural youth compared to urban adolescents. These results defy the myth that rural areas are the ideal place to raise children, because since everyone knows each other this makes it easier for specific individuals to be excluded or targeted (Kulig et al., 2008).

### 1.4 Why research antisocial behaviour?

Understanding the reasons and decision making surrounding antisocial and criminal behaviour has been an area of interest for the researcher for a number of years. The completion of an undergraduate degree in psychology has provided the researcher with an overview of how individual’s think and behave. It was not until the researcher started a postgraduate diploma of psychology that an interest in adolescent criminal behaviour developed. The researcher’s postgraduate thesis examined whether fear of crime affected the public’s attitude towards sentencing decisions and punishments for juvenile offenders. Upon completion of the postgraduate thesis the researcher became interested in
understanding why adolescents turn to crime and where such behaviour stems from. The researcher felt that bullying was the first step to antisocial and criminal behaviour so decided to focus on this area in the current Masters.

The importance of this research was reinforced through the researcher’s work as a psychologist over the past eight years. During that period the researcher has worked with numerous adolescents who present with low self-esteem, anxiety and depression because of bullying and stress in their school environment. Working with young people who experience such emotional and psychological turmoil on a day-to-day basis fuelled the researcher’s interest in adolescent antisocial behaviour and bullying. With an increasing number of adolescents accessing psychological services because of bullying, understanding what factors in the school environment contribute to the development of bullying is essential when dealing with the issue.

Whilst the amount of literature on antisocial behaviour and bullying is increasing and studies are attempting to understand the severity and frequency of bullying, the researcher was interested in student and teachers’ views on the issue. After undertaking a literature search regarding antisocial behaviour and bullying the researcher discovered that the research predominantly focuses on statistics and academic definitions of the topic. Since the majority of past research tended to be more quantitative, the researcher focused more on locating literature that describes the dimensions of bullying and the various people involved. The majority of bullying occurs in the school environment, yet there is limited information about student and teacher views on bullying. Thus, the lack of documented literature and my observations as a psychologist working with adolescents have led to the development of this research.

1.5 Scope of research

Since the majority of the literature regarding antisocial behaviour and bullying is quantitative research and is limited to academic definitions and opinions, both students and teachers were recruited to participate in this research. Unlike much of the past research, this study is of an exploratory nature and will gain insight into the connection between the educational environment and antisocial behaviour. It is guided by an interpretive framework, thereby acknowledging the various meanings and experiences that teachers and students associate with negative behaviour. Students and teachers from one
secondary college were divided into three separate focus groups to discuss the issue of antisocial behaviour and bullying in the school environment. Participants were asked to provide their thoughts and experiences about the topic of bullying to establish whether their knowledge, attitudes and opinions coincided with the literature already available. This research is timely given there has been increased media interest in adolescent antisocial behaviour and bullying in schools (Rigby & Johnson, 2007; Kerin, 2011).

The research focused on specific areas in the school environment that may contribute to the rise in antisocial behaviour and bullying including peer influence, school attachment and academic achievement. These particular areas were explored as they focus on influences which effect students and teachers directly on a day to day basis. The current research project also sheds light on whether the interventions implemented in some Australian schools recognise the basic principles of various theoretical models that have been developed to understand the existence of antisocial behaviour and bullying.

1.6 Research and objective questions

The objective of this research project was to gain insight into students and teachers perspectives on: The existence of bullying in Kyabram Secondary College (KSC), including factors that influence such behaviours.

To assist in achieving the objective of this research, the following research questions were established;

- To what extent do peers influence student antisocial behaviour?
- Does a connection exist between school attachment and antisocial behaviour?
- Is there a correlation between academic achievement and antisocial behaviour?
- What school disciplinary actions influence student behaviour?

The next section will ascertain how the research objective and questions address important aspects of antisocial behaviour and bullying that need to be researched.
1.7 Contribution to knowledge

This small qualitative study acknowledging student and teachers' views and experiences of antisocial behaviour and bullying will provide meaning and substance to the existing quantitative literature. Identifying students and teachers’ views on what factors in the school environment influence the development of antisocial behaviour will assist educators, professionals and academics in the development of interventions and policies regarding bullying. The development of a profile identifying characteristics of a bully, victim and bystander may also assist staff to recognise and address the needs of individuals who are at risk of engaging in antisocial behaviour or vulnerable to victimisation. Through this research project the researcher also hopes to draw attention to beneficial early intervention and prevention strategies for dealing with antisocial behaviour and bullying within our education system. It is intended that the results of the current study may be published in a journal and/or presented at a conference.

1.8 Presentation of the thesis

This study seeks to understand what factors in the school environment contribute to the development of antisocial behaviour and bullying. The following chapters explain how the research explores this connection. Chapter two reviews relevant literature associated with antisocial behaviour and bullying, and examines a number of theoretical perspectives. Chapter three outlines the research structure and the conceptual framework for the thesis. Chapter four presents the qualitative research findings. Chapter five provides an analysis of the results of the study using pertinent and relevant literature. Finally, chapter six addresses the primary research objective and questions formulated for this thesis. Additionally it outlines the strengths and limitations of this research and identifies areas for future research.
Chapter two: Antisocial behaviour and bullying

It is a fundamental democratic right for a child to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation implied in bullying.

(Olweus, 2001, p. 11-12)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the literature surrounding crime and antisocial behaviour and more specifically bullying in the school environment. The quote from Olweus (2001) highlights the need to understand the issue of bullying in order to protect and support our children. The literature will be separated into three themes. The first theme reviews the literature on crime, antisocial behaviour and bullying which has been further separated into three sub-themes. The first sub-theme continues on from the previous chapter and reviews criminal and antisocial behaviour overseas and in Australia. Sub-theme two focuses on bullying in schools and the workplace, including international and Australian research, to establish the similarities and differences that exist between Australia and countries overseas. The final sub-theme focuses on the impact of bullying on the various individuals involved - the bully, the victim and bystanders.

The second theme considers four different theoretical models that aid in understanding adolescent antisocial behaviour. The theoretical models will be analysed as separate sub-themes and presented in the following order: social learning theory, labelling theory, control theory and the social development model. It is important to recognise the theories that explain the emergence of antisocial behaviour to assist in the development and application of appropriate interventions. The last theme has three sub-themes and focuses on the consequences of antisocial behaviour, resilience and international and national interventions for dealing with bullying. The first sub-theme acknowledges the physical, emotional and psychological consequences of bullying for the victim. The second sub-theme reviews how resilience is important for children when affected by antisocial behaviour. The final two sub-themes review the interventions used internationally and in Australia separately to provide a comprehensive overview of what programs are available to break the cycle of bullying.
2.2 Criminal behaviour, antisocial behaviour and bullying

This theme reviews the dynamics of adolescent crime, antisocial behaviour and bullying. International and national crime statistics will be discussed in the first sub-theme. The second sub-theme will discuss the bullying in the school environment and the workplace respectively. The last sub-theme will cover descriptions of all of those involved in the bullying process: bully, victim and bystanders.

2.2.1 A snapshot of young people’s criminal and antisocial behaviour

Chapter one acknowledged that juvenile crime is a significant problem in the community as adolescents (15 to 19 years of age) are recorded to have the highest rate of offending in Australia (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2012). Dr Carr-Gregg (cited in Silvester, 2009, p. 9) reflected that there has been a substantial change in the behaviour of teenagers, as 13 and 14-year-olds are behaving more antisocially, compared with 10 to 30 years ago. A difficulty for the criminal justice system is determining the age at which children or adolescents have criminal responsibility. A standardised minimum age of criminal responsibility has been established across Australia at 10 years. The maximum age of dolio-capax across Australia is also standard at less than 14 years. On the other hand, the minimum age in which a child/adolescent is treated as an adult in the criminal justice system is 18 years of age in most jurisdictions, except in Victoria and Queensland, where the minimum age is 17 years (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2005).

Overall, Australian statistics have shown that 50 per cent of individuals apprehended consisted of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years (Mukherjee, 1997; Vassallo et al., 2002). More recently Richards (2011, p. 2) stated that individuals aged between 15 and 19 years are more likely to be processed for crimes than any other population group. Western, Lynch, Ogilvie and Fagan (2005; p. 87) stated that the average age at which adolescents commit their first illegal act is 11.7 years of age, and is similar for both males and females. It is believed, however, that the age at which an individual first starts offending depends on the crime itself. For example the recorded peak age for theft in

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1 Criminal responsibility is when a young offender may be held fully responsible for their criminal behaviour, but is sentenced differently compared to adults who commit the same offence/s (Cunneen & White, 2011; Richards, 2011).

2 The age in which a child who participates in criminal behaviour can be held accountable for their actions and taken to court (Cunneen & White, 2011).
Australia is 16 years of age; robbery at 17 years of age and aggravated assault at 21 years of age (Cunneen & White, 2011). It has been reported that offending at a young age tends to be more spontaneous, (Western et al., 2005) this contradicts choice theory, which will be discussed later.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (2012, p. 75) reported that juvenile offending rates for males and females has increased since 1996-97. Shaw (2002) suggested that perpetrators of youth crime are generally male and that they tend to victimise teenage males more than teenage females. Male offending has increased by four per cent, compared to female offending which has increased by six per cent. In the USA female arrests predominantly include runaways (56 per cent) and prostitution (68 per cent). Even though male and female arrests were comparable for embezzlement (44 per cent and 52 per cent respectively), it has been recorded that young women tend to steal smaller amounts than men (Berger, Free & Searles, 2009). A study conducted by Hayward and Sharp (2004) showed that one third of the male population in England/Wales participates in all types of criminal behaviour compared with one fifth of adolescent females.

Hemphill, Toumbourou and Catalano (2005) compared the types and frequency of antisocial behaviour between students in Victoria, Australia and Washington DC, USA. The results between the two countries varied when specific types of antisocial behaviour were considered. Male participants in Washington were reported as being more likely to steal, whereas Victorian students were more likely to threaten others with a weapon, or wag school. Despite the variation in types of antisocial behaviour, overall the levels of behaviour were surprisingly similar across the two different countries.

Overall, Australian adolescent males are five to six times more likely than females to be charged with a criminal offence, as females generally receive a diversionary outcome as opposed to appearing in court (Cunneen & White, 2011). Past research by Hayes and Prenzler (2009, p. 84) reflected that it appeared that females benefit from a ‘chivalry factor’ when it comes to sentencing, as judges often give lighter sentences to female offenders. Therefore it is not surprising that statistics show that 80 per cent of crime is committed by males (Hayes & Prenzler, 2009). When comparing statistics between the genders, males are significantly more likely to perpetrate sexual assault and homicide than females (Carache, 1997; Hayes & Prenzler, 2009). In relation to robbery and extortion 89.8 per cent of males were convicted, compared with 10.2 per cent of females. Road traffic and motor vehicle offences were
the crimes that have the most recorded female convictions (21 per cent), but the male convictions (78.6 per cent) are still significantly higher (Hayes & Prenzler, 2009, p. 83). Past research has also shown that recidivism is also higher for males as they are one-third more likely to reoffend, compared with females (Cunneen & White, 2011). Western et al., (2005) supported this and reported that males (31 per cent) are more likely to commit six or more offences, compared with females (19 per cent).

A study conducted by Huizinga, Loeber, Thornberry and Cothen (2002) across three cities in the USA, Pittsburgh, Denver and Rochester - revealed that there is a significant relationship between school problems (below average grades, truancy and bullying) and delinquency for males (see also Stranger, 2002, p. 20). Baldry and Farrington (2000) reported that bullying is an early sign of future delinquency, and is common amongst boys and girls. Recent research by Farrington and Ttofi (2011, p. 97) reported that bullying at age 14 could increase the probability of future violent convictions. This is because bullying and offending are from the same theoretical framework (antisocial behaviour) which continues over time. They also stated that bullying leads into further offending because the individual learns the benefits of bullying which increases the probability of later offending, which coincides with Social learning theory (Chapter 2.3.1). The next sub-theme continues to explore the connection between antisocial behaviour and the school environment, specifically in relation to bullying.

2.2.2 Student and teacher bullying

The next sub-theme has been separated into two sections. The first section will focus on bullying in the school environment, and the second section will discuss teacher and workplace bullying. Both sections combine international and Australian literature regarding the issue.

Bullying in the school environment:

Historically, bullying by young people has not been seen as a specific problem but rather a fundamental and normal part of childhood/adolescence, which very few children miss seeing at some stage throughout their education (Campbell, 2005; Howe, 2007). Past research by Sutton, Smith and Swettenham (1999) stated that bullying is an antisocial and aggressive act, which is often thought to arise from deficits in social information processing. The statement ‘boys will be boys’ implies that
antisocial behaviour is a regular part of male development (Kowalski, 2003, p. 74). Farrell (1998) and Morrison (2002) acknowledged that there has been increasing public awareness of bullying within the education system and it has now been categorised as a serious form of violence (Rigby & Johnson, 2007). Wurf (2009) described school bullying as one of the most insidious and notorious expressions of childhood aggression and a major influence on rejection and acceptance of peers.

Rigby (2005) quoted that at least 50 per cent of children/adolescents have experienced bullying at one time at school in Australia (see also Slee, 2004). During 2002, Kids Help Line (KHL) (2003) received about 6,000 calls about bullying across Australia, which was the third most common reason why children under 15 years of age accessed the service. Research by Edith Cowan University reported that about 100,000 Australian children are bullied on any given day at school (Tomazin, 2007).

Past research in the UK by Eslea and Smith (1994) reported that 10 to 30 per cent of children were bullied in the playground through name-calling followed closely by physical violence. Similar to schools abroad the most commonly reported method of bullying within Australian secondary schools has been noted as verbal harassment, as physical bullying tends to decrease with age (Rigby, 1997; Wurf, 2009; Rigby, 2011). Murray-Harvey, Slee and Taki (2010) reported that in Australian schools indirect bullying is so entrenched that it is typically underreported. A study conducted by Wurf (2009, p. 6) across four schools in Hong Kong reported that verbal harassment represented 36 per cent of all reported bullying. Similarly, a comparative study between Japan and Australia conducted by Murray-Harvey et al., (2010) stated that Japanese students reported more verbal bullying compared to Australian students. Kowalski (2003) suggested that these acts of antisocial behaviour are utilised to control social interactions to both harm and humiliate the victim (McConville & Cornell, 2003).

A survey conducted in the UK on 7 and 11-year-old participants, found that 67 per cent of 7-year-old children and 57 per cent of 11-year-old children reported being victimised by teasing (Kowalski, 2003). Teasing can be an ambiguous interpersonal interaction, because although teasers often joke with the best intentions, those intentions tend to be less relevant to the target, because they often view teasing as a negative appraisal (Kruger, Gordon & Kuban, 2006). Crick and Grotpeter (1995 cited in Niu, 2009, p. 1) referred to this type of antisocial behaviour as relational aggression which also includes exclusion and rumours. A study conducted by Owens, Shute and Slee (2000 cited in Niu, 2009, p. 2) reported
that year 10 students described behaviours such as spreading rumours as second nature. Despite the type of bullying, a victim is seldom bullied in private, in 85 per cent of situations other people are present or can witness the victimisation (Kowalski, 2003, p. 73).

Past research by Rigby (1997) stated that males (30.6 per cent) are more likely to be either the bully or the victim of bullying, compared with females (20 per cent), especially within secondary school (see also Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Goldstein (cited by Writer, 2009) contradicted this, and revealed that 70 per cent of females had been bullied at least once. In relation to which gender is more likely to be the instigator of bullying Rigby and Johnson (2006) reported that in secondary school males (24 per cent) are more often identified as a bully compared with females (7 per cent).

Males are more likely to bully each other by either physical means or threats to exert power, compared with females, who often bully each other indirectly through exclusion and ostracising in an attempt to be more popular (Kowalski, 2003; Atkinson, 2006; Wurf, 2009; Writer, 2009). A study conducted across Hong Kong schools reported that males (23 per cent) experience significantly more physical bullying than females (16 per cent) (Wurf, 2009, p. 3). Research by Owens, Shute and Slee (2005) studied bullying among genders and revealed that males can also be verbally aggressive towards females. Aggressive comments tended to be about the female’s physical appearance or about their sexual reputation. The male participants in the study stated that such comments are often made in jest or to flirt, but ‘females take things too seriously’ (Owens et al., 2005, p. 146).

When comparing statistics between different age groups, school violence is more acute from years 8 to 10, due to the various biological and social changes that adolescents experience at this time (Li, 2005). Wurf (2009) reported that one in five year 7 students reported being bullied at some point in Hong Kong schools. Past research by Siegel (2002) reported that lower grade students in the USA are more likely to be bullied by children in higher grades. Ten per cent of students in years 6 and 7; five per cent of students in years 8 and 9; and; two per cent of students in years 10 to 12 reported being bullied by older peers (Siegel, 2002). Wurf (2009) contradicted this and stated that students were just as likely to be bullied by someone in their own class and age.
A comprehensive Australian study conducted by Rigby and Johnson (2006) on 400 students in Adelaide between years 6 and 9 revealed that 60 per cent of primary school students had experienced physical bullying at least once, whereas 72 per cent of secondary students had been physically bullied. In relation to verbal bullying 92 per cent of primary school children have experienced it at least once, compared with 97 per cent of secondary students. The study further revealed that verbal bullying on a regular basis also differed between primary (22 per cent) and secondary (40 per cent) schools. Name-calling was identified as the main type of verbal bullying for both primary (68 per cent) and secondary (81 per cent) schools (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Younger children are more likely to report face-to-face bullying by their peers, as opposed to adolescents, who have more contact with technology and experience more cyber-bullying (Campbell, 2005).

There have been a number of research undertakings studying cyber-bullying internationally and in Australia. This sub-category of bullying is harder to escape, there are often more bystanders, the bully remains anonymous, people can cyber-bully people they do not know and it is easier to cyber-bully teachers than to engage in face-to-face bullying (Dubecki, 2006b; McGrath, 2009). A survey conducted in the USA reported that cyber-bullying had increased from 28 per cent to 48 per cent between 2000 and 2005. The survey also revealed that 50 per cent of cyber-bullying occurs at school, 17 per cent on the weekend and 21 per cent after school (Hanewald, 2008). A study conducted in Canada revealed that 22.7 per cent of cyber-bullying victims had been bullied via email, 36.4 per cent via chat rooms, 40.9 per cent via a combination of technology and that 41 per cent did not know the identity of their bully (Li, 2005).

In line with international statistics Australian adolescents seem to be more willing (90 per cent) to participate in cyber-bullying as opposed to face-to-face victimisation (Smith, 2007). A number of quantitative studies have measured the level of cyber-bullying that occurs amongst Australian adolescents:

- Campbell (2005) reported that at least 25 per cent of year 8 students have known someone who had been bullied via technology.
- A survey conducted by the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne revealed that 32 per cent of students aged between 12 and 17 have been victim to cyber-bullying. Thirty per
cent of those victims experienced cyber-bullying several times throughout a school term (Dubecki, 2006b, p.6).

- The Australian Federal Police (AFP) reported that 31 per cent of 14 to 17-year-olds have been cyber-bullied (Smith, 2007).
- Microsoft/Galaxy in 2008 established that 21 per cent of 10 to 13-year-olds had experienced cyber-bullying (Betts, 2010, p. 14).

Cyber-bullying often includes footage of female adolescents naked or semi-naked bodies being posted on the internet, or in forums where students vote for the ugliest, fattest and most hated girl. Victims are also often bullied through their own Myspace web page or through video footage on the YouTube website (Dubecki, 2006b; Smith, 2007). Dubecki (2006b, p. 6) further reported that 72 per cent of females and 28 per cent of males are cyber-bullied. In comparison the National Coalition Against Bullying stated 42 per cent of females reported being intimidated online (Tomazin, 2007).

Unfortunately, physical, verbal and cyber-bullying are not restricted to students in the school environment, as victims and perpetrators of antisocial behaviour can be staff, pupils or complete strangers (Shaw, 2002).

**Workplace and teacher bullying**

Before the 1980’s there was minimal awareness of workplace bullying (Coyne, 2011). In today’s society it has almost become an epidemic, and it has been predicted that it would be similar to the level of bullying in childhood and adolescence, but can be referred to as either intimidation or domestic violence (Kowalski, 2003). Coyne (2011) further reported that 1,095 adults from Australia, Canada, USA and UK defined workplace bullying as negative acts with harmful effects, power imbalance, deliberate and intentional. Gender, status and level were specified as risk factors for workplace bullying.

A study conducted by Moreno-Jimerez, Munoz, Salin and Morante Benadero (2007) in the UK provided some insight into the existence of work-place bullying. The study revealed that 26 per cent of transport and communication employees had been the victim of bullying. Similarly one in five Australian employees will experience bullying in their workplace (Field, 2010). Moreno-Jimerez et al., (2007)
further reported that females, younger and casual workers were more often subjected to bullying, compared with males, permanent and older workers. The research also reported that 52.5 per cent were bullied by superiors - 18.6 per cent bullied by colleagues and 7.1 per cent were bullied by both. The most common form of bullying in the workplace was jokes being made about the victim’s physical appearance and lifestyle (78.2 per cent), closely followed by spreading gossip (71.5 per cent) and being subjected to insulting and offensive remarks (71.4 per cent). Bullying in the workplace also took on the following forms: excessive control and monitoring of work (34.3 per cent); ignoring opinions and questions (27.2 per cent); receiving hostile answers to questions/comments (27.8 per cent) and being ordered to work below their level of competence (29.4 per cent) (Moreno-Jimenez et al., 2007).

Teacher bullying is another dimension of workplace bullying and relates to a situation where teaching staff are either the perpetrator or the target of bullying (Riley, Duncan & Edwards, 2009). Results have shown that 99.6 per cent of staff experienced bullying in the school environment (Riley et al., 2009, p. 3). Duncan and Riley (2005) stated that various individuals were identified as bullies including executives (85.4 per cent), parents (80.7 per cent), the principal (78.5 per cent) and students (74.1 per cent). Past research by Siegel (2002, p. 219) reported that in the USA teachers are victimised by adolescents at a rate of 83 out of 1,000 teachers annually. Personal confrontation or negative comments, unreasonable expectations/deadlines (87 per cent) and isolation were the three main forms of staff bullying (Duncan & Riley, 2005). The same research further reported that since 1996 Victorian teachers and principals have received $3 million in compensation for stress and injury related to bullying (Duncan & Riley, 2005, p. 48). The size of the school, school type and teaching experience have also been noted as factors that influence staff bullying (Riley et al., 2009). Staff bullying tends to occur more predominantly in larger secondary schools, and towards staff with more than 16 years of experience compared with teachers with less than 5 years experience (Duncan & Riley, 2005).

Workplace bullying highlights the need for employers to involve staff in constructing policies and procedures about bullying, to educate staff and develop interventions (Field, 2010). Similarly governments have a responsibility to ensure that legislation adequately covers workplace bullying (Kieseker & Marchant, 2000). With the current legislation it is difficult to prove a case of bullying, because often the victim does not report it. This became apparent to the McGregor family when they approached the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Workcover formally known as WorkSafe to step in after their son Stuart was being bullied at his chef apprenticeship. Even
though Workcover substantiated Stuart’s claims they believed there would not be enough evidence to take the bullies to court. Subsequently Stuart ended up committing suicide because of his lack of options (Western, 2010). Victims often fear that if they report workplace bullying they will be labelled a troublemaker; be dismissed, lose promotional opportunities or be transferred to a dead-end or mundane position (Kieseker & Marchant, 2000). Other consequences of workplace bullying include poor morale, motivation, productivity and absenteeism. Overall the effects of workplace bullying are the same as in the school yard, even if the victim is different in terms of age or position in the organisation (Kieseker & Marchant, 2000). In Australia it is estimated that the economic cost of workplace bullying is more than $13 billion a year, and includes the costs of staff absence, loss of productivity, litigation, staff turnover, compensation claims and counselling costs (Kieseker & Marchant, 2000; Howse, 2004; Stevens, 2010). Whether a bully is a student in the school environment or an adult in the workplace it is presumed that such an individual will have similar characteristics. Hence the next sub-theme will be reviewing the literatures descriptions of the individuals affected by bullying.

2.2.3 Bully, victim and bystander

The next sub-theme focuses on the various individuals who are involved in the bullying process; bully, victim and bystanders. They will be discussed in that order.

Bully

The image generally associated with a bully is a male who is physically strong, impulsive, hyperactive and has no loyalties except to himself (Hare, 1996; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003). Regardless of gender or type bully uses their physical size and strength to deliberately cause constant physical, psychological and emotional harm, in an attempt to promote fear amongst victims (Rigby, 2003). Rigby’s (2003) research also showed that there are different types of bullies, such as a serial bully who is a practised liar and gains gratification from bullying others. They appear to have no conscience or empathy and have been found to have limited sympathy towards a victim (Eslea & Smith, 1994; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003). If questioned about their behaviour they show signs of impatience,

3 In Victoria Nicholas Smallwood and Rhys MacAlpine were charged with workplace bullying and were described as ‘relentless in their efforts to demean her [Brodie Rae Constance Panlock]’ by the judge after Brodie committed suicide (Butcher, 2009). The company that Smallwood and MacAlpine worked for were fined $220,000 (Stevens, 2010).
irritability and aggression. Bullies are also thought to act randomly and impulsively, and do not plan ahead more than 24 hours (Rigby, 2003).

Past research by Rigby (1997) stated that often bullies do not have a reason for their antisocial behaviour, especially amongst females and younger students. More recently reasons for bullying in Australia have been noted to not be for tangible gains, but rather a response to annoying behaviour or for entertainment (Wurf, 2009). Kowalski (2003) reported that often bullies victimise individuals for a reaction, as they enjoy watching their victim cry or get upset. It has also been noted that bullies who behave antisocially for an extended period of time become even more desensitised to their victim’s pain, and that such behaviour can become integrated into their everyday life (Kowalski, 2003). Parker-Pope (2011) recently stated that bullying is the result of students competing to improve their social status amongst their peers (see also Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). Faris (cited in Parker-Pope, 2011, p. 15) reported a correlation between teenager’s aggressive behaviour and their efforts in gaining popularity.

Espelage and Swearer (2003 cited in Kulig et al., 2008, p. 926) reflected that in the USA bullying is not isolated to the school environment, as a study revealed that 40 per cent of children also bully their siblings. Siegel (2002) described bullying as the only way that an individual knows to gain self-respect and power, because they are generally not academically-minded (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003). Students who do not achieve high academic marks are more likely to commit negative acts, as they tend to leave school before completion and become involved in antisocial behaviour and substance use due to frustration and rejection (Farrell, 1997; Weis, Crutchfield & Bridges, 2001; Morrison, 2002; Li, 2007). Li (2005) stated that only 35 per cent of cyber-bullies reported academic marks that were above average.

Salmon, James and Smith (1998 cited in Dautenhahn & Woods, 2002) stated that some bullies can also be anxious, depressed and insecure. Bullies can think negatively about their education, behaviour, family and other related areas of life (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001). McGrath (2009) reported that cyber-bullies are four times more likely to be a victim of bullying themselves. Kowalski (2003) supported the notion that bullies have low self-esteem and are sensitive, so they victimise others to feel better about themselves. Bullies achieve this by focusing attention on other people, as it draws interest away from their own faults and reassures them that the problem is the victim’s and not theirs. This notion coincides
with control theory, which will be discussed later (Chapter 2.3.3). In contrast, past research by Olweus (1993 cited in O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001) claimed that individuals who bully do not suffer from poor self-esteem, but rather hold positive views regarding their physical appearance and popularity.

The federal agency of Developmental Crime Prevention Consortium in Australia has recognised that bullying in early childhood is predictive of later bullying, delinquency and criminality (Kieseker & Marchant, 2000). Past research has shown that 60 per cent of males who were labelled as a bully were convicted of at least one crime by the age of 24 years. A further 40 per cent of this category had three or more convictions by the same age (Rigby & Slee, 1999a). The Australian Temperament Project (ATP) (cited in Bor et al., 2004, p. 365) supported the connection between antisocial behaviour and the development of criminal behaviour. They established that early childhood aggression like bullying, association with antisocial peers, poor school adjustment and substance use were important predictors of criminal behaviour.

According to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM) (DSM-IV, 2002) another early warning sign that an individual may be headed towards more serious antisocial behaviour is if they are diagnosed with Conduct Disorder5, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)6 or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)7 (Hare, 1996). Since the diagnosis of Conduct Disorder is restricted to adolescence, continued antisocial behaviour into adulthood is often associated with Antisocial Personality Disorder8. A study conducted by Dautenhahn and Woods (2003) in the UK reported that approximately 2 million people can be included in the criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder.

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4 The DSM-IV is the psychological manual utilised when establishing whether an individual follows the set criteria of a specific disorder.

5 Conduct Disorder is a psychological term utilised to describe aggressive conduct that causes/threatens physical harm to other people or animals; damage to property; deceitfulness or theft and serious violations of rules. There are two sub-types of Conduct Disorder - Childhood-Onset Type and Adolescent-Onset Type (DSM-IV, 2002).

6 A child with ODD has an ongoing pattern of defiant and hostile behaviour towards authority figures that interferes with their day to day functioning. Behaviours include frequent temper tantrums, blaming others for their mistakes and questioning rules (DSM-IV, 2002).

7 There are two main criteria used to make a ADHD diagnosis - symptoms of inattention (not listening and difficulty organising tasks) and symptoms of hyperactivity (fidgeting and interrupting others) (DSM-IV, 2002).

8 Antisocial Personality Disorder is a psychological term utilised to describe an individual who follows a pattern of disregard and violation of the rights of others since the age of 15 years as indicated by three (or more) of the criteria (DSM-IV, 2002).
Individuals who embrace elements of this diagnostic criterion can be further labelled as sociopaths (individuals who express violence psychologically) and psychopaths (dysfunctional and violent) (DSM-IV, 2002). Past research by Hare (1996) described sociopaths as having higher intelligence and socio-economic status (SES) compared with psychopaths, which does not fit the description of the bully, who are noted to have below average academic achievements. Individuals who are labelled as a psychopaths lack impulse control and empathy and are also skilful in manipulating and deceiving others. Such individuals are often described as being superficial and egocentric (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Berger et al., 2009). When people are diagnosed with a personality disorder they are unaware that their behaviour is problematic, which fits well with a bully’s lack of insight into their behaviour and its effects (Hare, 1996; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003). The application of one of the above mental health diagnoses to an individual can influence the development of antisocial behaviour, because the individual then views themself in accordance with that label (Becker, 1963), this will be discussed in more detail later (Chapter 2.3.2). Now that the term bully has been defined, the next section will describe the characteristics of a victim.

Victim

Overall the transition from primary to secondary school has been reported to be the main age group where victimisation of bullying occurs (Rigby, 1997, p. 23). Obvious changes from primary to secondary college include school size, the range of new subjects and increased number of teachers. With an increased number of teachers, students can experience less care and nurturance as they have less one-on-one time with a particular teacher (Howard & Johnson, 2004). A recent study by Rigby and Thomas (2010, p. 12) reported that teaching staff recognise that many students can also see themselves as being bullied by staff. Past research by Rigby and Slee (1999b) reported that from grade 6 to 10, one in six students were victims of bullying on a weekly basis each year (see also Rigby, 1997; Campbell, 2005). Professor David Bennett, the head of the New South Wales (NSW) Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health, agrees with this statistic (Wurf, 2009). A study conducted by Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin and Patton (2001, p. 483) revealed that two thirds of the students who were bullied in year 8 were also reportedly bullied in year 9. Slee (2002) concurred that bullying in secondary school was at its highest in years 8 and 9. Field (cited in Tarica, 2011) similarly stated that years 7 to 10 were the most critical time for bullying.
Rigby (1997; 1999, p. 28) reported that victims of bullying tend to be ‘physically weak, relatively introverted, socially unskilled, unassertive and have few if any friends’. In a later study Rigby (2000) questioned whether victims are initially physically weak or whether it is a symptom of consistent bullying. In comparison research by Bond et al., (2001, p. 483) established that poor emotional health does not initiate victimisation nor is it a vicious cycle. Wurf (2009) stated that empirical research has failed to clearly define any particular characteristic for either victims or bullies, in fact victims can be bullied for any reason including being artistic, sensitive, shy or introverted, intelligent, having a different religion or having acne or speech problems (Writer, 2009). The same research went on to acknowledge that students who are seen as different from the majority or have no support are more at risk of being bullied.

Less than 25 to 30 per cent of victims actually report bullying behaviour as they feel too humiliated and embarrassed (Campbell, 2005). Fear of the bullying escalating can also make victims more hesitant to inform an adult. This happened to Alex Teka - when she sought assistance from the school, her bullies branded her as a ‘dobber’ and the bullying intensified (Tomazin & Smith, 2007, p.6). Campbell (2005) reported that year 8 students do not report bullying because they believe that adults have no idea about what cyber-bullying is, nor can they do anything about it. Victims of cyber-bullying feel that if they report their victimisation the adults will take the technology away from them. This type of ‘disconnection’ for some children is more of a punishment than the bullying itself, as the internet is a vital part of their social life (Tomazin & Smith, 2007, p. 6). Wurf (2009) also acknowledged that bullying rarely occurs directly in front of adults, which limits their ability to contain the problem (Parker-Pope, 2011). Although bullying does not generally occur in front of adults, often other student bystanders are present. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

**Bystander**

Rigby and Johnson (2004b) reported that bullying is not only the outcome of individual differences, but is also a process amongst peers and social groups. Hence, bullying does not only involve just the perpetrator and victim, but also any bystanders or witnesses, to a certain degree. Eighty-five per cent of the bullying incidents that occur in the school environment are in the presence of other students (Rigby, 1996; Rigby, 1999). Salmivalli (2010, p. 114) reported that there are four roles that a bystander may play in the bullying process – assistant, reinforcer, outsider and defender. Assistants will join the bully
and reinforcers will provide positive feedback (laughing) to the bully. On the other hand, outsiders withdraw from the bullying situation and defenders will take sides with the victim (Salmivalli, 2010, p. 114). The common response by onlookers is to ignore the situation and allow the bullying to continue.

Past research by Levine (1999) developed the term Bystander Effect which reflects that victims are more likely to receive help when a single bystander is present, as opposed to a group of bystanders. It is believed that in a group environment an individual’s degree of personal responsibility is decreased. Whether a bystander intervenes after witnessing antisocial behaviour also depends on if the involved parties were seen as a couple or strangers. Shutland and Shaw (1996 cited in Levine, 1999) stated that people were 65 per cent more likely to intervene if they believed the altercation was between two strangers, compared to only 19 per cent who would assist if they believed the people involved were in a relationship or related. The research reported that people are reluctant to become involved if they feel that the parties are related, because the situation is viewed as a family problem that is not of their concern.

Bystanders play a major role in encouraging the cycle of bullying, as the silence of such individuals is often seen as encouragement (Campbell, 2005). Hawkins, Pepler and Craig (2001 cited in Rigby & Johnson, 2006) stated that in 57 per cent of situations of bullying, bystander interventions were effective in stopping the antisocial behaviour (see also Rigby & Johnson, 2007). Salmivalli (1999 cited in O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001) stated that individuals who defend bullying have greater self-esteem compared to bullies and victims. According to Burke (cited in Rigby & Johnson 2007, p. 17) ‘all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing’.

An observation study conducted by Rigby and Johnson (2004b) discovered that primary school children (30 per cent) and females are more likely to intervene if they witnessed bullying in the school grounds. Bystanders often remain uninvolved for numerous reasons such as feeling powerless, lack of self-confidence, emotional instability or fear of going against the norm (Campbell, 2005; Rigby & Johnson, 2005; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Dubecki, 2006b). Wurf (2009) stated that when students do seek assistance they usually tell a friend or their parents before informing their teacher. Teachers in the education system are generally the last to be informed about example of bullying, as adolescents have reflected a lack of confidence in their ability to intervene or successfully stop it (Wurf, 2009).
A more recent study conducted by Rigby and Johnson (2007) had primary school children view videos of different types of bullying. Responses from the children included finding the violence attractive, ignoring it or displaying empathy for the victim. Atkinson (2006) reported that children are often conformists; hence they might develop a sense of belonging by siding with their peers in all situations including antisocial behaviour. Thus, whether a bystander supports a victim of bullying tends to depend on the expectations of their friends and family (Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Rigby & Johnson, 2007).

The literature has revealed that bullying is not isolated to just the bully and victim, but bystanders also play a role in the existence of bullying. The influence that a bully, victim and bystander has on bullying is best understood by recognising the theories that have been utilised to explain the development of antisocial behaviour and will be discussed in the next theme.

2.3 Theories that influence antisocial behaviour

The previous theme demonstrated that antisocial behaviour and bullying are not only an issue in the school environment but also the workplace. Since bullying is so widespread it is important to understand the theories that have been associated with the development of antisocial behaviour. By acknowledging the various theories also helps recognise what factors need to be considered when developing interventions to deal with bullying which will be discussed later. Over the years many social and cultural theories have been developed in an attempt to explain adolescent antisocial behaviour (Cairns & Stoff, 1996). This research will focus on social learning theory; labelling theory; control theory and social development model. These four theories were chosen because the researcher believes that they each provide a unique view on the development of antisocial behaviour and bullying. According to Cairns and Stoff (1996, p. 338):

A focus on either social or biological factors can yield only part of the story of aggressive and violent behaviour: Integrative investigations are essential to complete the picture.
Social learning theory will be presented first as it is the theory that will best assist in answering the first research question about peer influence.

### 2.3.1 Social learning theory

The debate of nurture versus nature has existed in the field of psychology for generations, in regards to the development of an individual's personality and behaviour. Social learning theory states that bullying does not occur in isolation but rather is learnt behaviour, which sufficiently supports the nurture aspect of the psychological debate. This theory acknowledges that social, non-social and cultural factors motivate and dictate behaviour (Akers & Jenson, 2008).

A number of researchers and academics have contributed to the development of social learning theory. Albert Bandura has completed several studies on the development of aggressive behaviour, and is one of the major motivators behind social learning theory (Hart & Kritsonis, 2006). To coincide with the terms classical\(^9\) and operant conditioning\(^{10}\) developed by Ivan Pavlov, Bandura coined the term observational learning which is when behaviour is learnt by seeing another person being rewarded for that behaviour (Hart & Kritsonis, 2006, p. 3). Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) studied 96 young children (35 to 69 months) behaviour after being shown a visual segment of aggressive behaviour. Participants were divided into three experimental groups and one control group and were asked to observe various forms of aggressive behaviour. The experimental groups included a real life aggressive model, a film displaying an aggressive film and aggressive cartoon character. The research established a connection between screen violence and juvenile aggression, but was later discredited due to various limitations (Jewkes, 2004). Children do not necessarily replicate the behaviour they observe immediately, but rather it can happen over a period of time. Observed behaviour can be from parents, siblings, friends, teacher, sporting heroes and television characters (Hart & Kritsonis, 2006).

\(^9\) Classical conditioning is a process of behaviour modification by which an individual responds in a desired manner to a previous neutral stimulus that has been repeatedly presented along with an unconditioned stimulus that elicits the desired response (Berger et al., 2009, p. 104).

\(^{10}\) Operant conditioning is a process of behaviour modification in which the likelihood of a specific behaviour is increased or decreased through the positive or negative reinforcement each time the behaviour is exhibited, so that the subject comes to associate the pleasure of displeasure of reinforcement with the behaviour (Berger et al., 2009, p. 104).
The connection between media, television and antisocial behaviour has strongly been debated by academics. Jewkes (2004, p. 5) reported that media images are responsible for the decrease in moral standards and the corruption of young minds. It is believed that society has become more violent with the development of modern media and the constant display of violent and antisocial behaviour on television screens. A political dispute about censorship occurs periodically when a high profile crime is committed, especially crimes perpetrated by children or adolescents. Such a circumstance occurred in the UK on the 12 February 1993, when two 10-year-old boys, Jon Thompson and Robert Venables, were convicted of assaulting and killing two-and-half year-old James Bulger. At the time there was speculation that the two boys had watched *Child's Play 3*, a violent movie about a psychopathic doll, and had re-enacted the violent scenes from the movie against James Bulger (Jewkes, 2004).

Ronald Akers (cited in Berger et al., 2009, p. 138) has also contributed to social learning theory by merging the principles of differential association theory with behaviourist psychology to examine the process of criminal behaviour. Akers attributed the development of crime to three distinct but interrelated social processes - differential association, differential reinforcement and imitation. Differential association refers to direct association and interaction with individuals who engage in certain kinds of behaviour and have values and attitudes that support their behaviour. Similarly, differential reinforcement refers to the balance of anticipated or actual rewards and punishments that follow behaviour. Lastly, imitation is the engagement of behaviour after direct or indirect (television) observation of similar behaviour by others (Akers & Jenson, 2008). Thus, if an individual believes that a bully has gained something (respect/item) from behaving antisocially, the individual could repeat that behaviour in an attempt to receive the same result in another situation.

Weis et al., (2001) stated that antisocial behaviour can be both reinforced and deterred through social interactions depending if the contact is positive or negative. Morrison (2002) further developed this point and separated responses to antisocial acts into two categories, adaptive and maladaptive shame management. Poorly managed shame affects an individual’s ability to regulate the appropriateness of their social behaviour, which induces further antisocial behaviour. Therefore individuals, who believe that aggression and bullying are acceptable are more likely to engage in negative behaviour as they think it is a reasonable response to a problem (McConville & Cornell 2003). If a child’s interactions with family and friends are negative, their unhealthy conscience affects their ability to regulate appropriate
behaviour and define acceptable behaviour during adolescence (McConville & Cornell, 2003). Field (cited in Miletic, 2006, p. 6) summarised;

Let’s not just blame the kids. Let’s look at the families and the communities – where are the kids picking up these despicable habits?

Since parents are seen as the primary source of socialisation in early childhood, interactions between infants and their parents contribute to how a child first makes contact with the social world (Muncie, 1999). Families and schools have been strongly associated with juvenile crime, because they are the main means of socialisation and development of children (Cunneen & White, 2002; Morrison, 2002). Social learning theory explores all socialisation processes - parent, sibling and peers to establish their impact on the development of bullying. Parenting styles also influence the extent of antisocial behaviour, as research shows that negative behaviour originates from the interactions between children and their parents (Eddy, Reid & Fetrow, 2000). Past research by Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie and Saylor (1999) found that individuals who perceive their families to be less interrelated and caring for each other tend to behave antisocially at school (Victorian Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003). Parenting styles which are coercive, irritable and ineffective (conflict-amplifying parents) are also consistently linked to the development of conduct disorder and antisocial behaviour in childhood (Eddy et al., 2000; Slee, 2002). In comparison parenting styles that are over-protective/sensitive to sibling conflict (conflict-avoiding parents) can also influence the development of antisocial behaviour because these children do not have an opportunity to vent their frustration (Slee, 2002).

Individuals who have aggressive siblings are also more likely to interact with their peers in a similar manner, as it is the only way they know how to interact with people around them (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Rigby, 2003). Exposure to antisocial influences early in life has been reported to have a lasting influence on behaviour, as does prolonged exposure (Weis et al., 2000). According to Rigby (1999; 2003) if a child feels over-controlled by their parents, they can also begin to act aggressively at school, and in turn frequently target individuals who are introverted and have low self-esteem (see also Vassallo et al., 2002; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Adams, 2007). Children’s substandard relationships with their parents have also been noted to promote victimisation at school, due to the negative impact
such a relationship would have on the child’s physical and mental well-being (Rigby, 1999; Vassallo et al., 2002).

According to social learning theory, the socialisation process that occurs in the school environment is the foundation of how young people interact, especially females (Weis et al., 2000). Children between the ages of 8 to 14 years are more influenced and emotionally supported by peer groups than family members (Siegel, 2002; Cunneen & White, 2002; Bahr, Hoffmann & Young, 2005). Weis et al., (2000) stated that an adolescent is unlikely to acquire antisocial friends before the age of 13 years. On the other hand, Hayward and Sharp (2004) stated that between 10 and 16 years of age is an important time in the development of antisocial behaviour. The various interactions that adolescents have with their peers can influence both their behaviour and attitudes towards antisocial behaviour. Weis et al., (2000) also acknowledged that loyalty and importance of friendships are major influences in the development of negative actions. Individuals are often influenced by perceptions and attitudes, thus it is not uncommon that small groups within secondary schools tend to bully in an attempt to be accepted by their friends (Rigby, 2003). If an individual interacts with antisocial peers who have poor social adjustment skills or if the relationship is strained, they are more likely to turn to criminal offending (Cunneen & White, 2002; Morrison, 2002; Siegel, 2002). Illegal behaviour also tends to be committed in small peer groups rather than individually (Cunneen & White, 2002). Unlike social learning theory which focuses on the interactions of family and peers in relation to antisocial behaviour, the next theory acknowledges how interactions can be used to develop either a positive or negative identity.

### 2.3.2 Labelling theory

Labelling theory was developed in the 1960s when criminologists Howard Becker and Edwin Lemert studied deviance in relation to social structure, as opposed to other theories which studied the characteristics of offenders (Plummer, 1999). Labelling theory was intended not to be a theory of causation but rather an analysis of human activity (Kubrin, Stucky & Krohn, 2008). Labelling theory is based on societal and community reactions and responses to criminal behaviour by individuals and groups, thus the criminal act itself is less significant than the social reaction (Cunneen & White, 2002).
Labelling according to Becker (1963), is when society associates a specific label to a group of people who differ from the majority of society. Labelling theory focuses on the process by which individuals develop a sense of personal identity or self through interaction with others (Berger et al., 2009). Labels can become a self-fulfilling prophecy and can potentially affect the way that information is processed and change an individual's identity to coincide with the label given (Plummer, 1999; Cunneen & White, 2002; Kubrin et al., 2008). When applying the concept of labelling to this research, the impact that the label bully has on an individual's behaviour was examined. Becker (1963) utilised the concept of labelling in his study of deviant behaviour, and stated that the term deviance is a label applied to social groups who do not behave according to those who hold positions of power.


Deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others, of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label. (Becker, 1963, p. 9)

This infers that the legal system essentially creates crime by deciding what behaviour should be called criminal. This coincides with Marxism, which recognises how capitalist institutions such as the legal system and the media operate in the interest of class and SES. It is believed that the media plays a crucial part in determining what behaviour is accepted by society as normal and what is considered to be deviant (Lawson & Heaton, 1999). Further Jewkes (2004) reflected that the media rarely covers white collar or corporate crime, as they do not fit the general profile of criminal behaviour (Berger et al., 2009). Jewkes (2004) also believed that isolating deviant acts to certain societal groups will reduce the chances of moral panic11 occurring amongst the general population (Jewkes, 2004). Wenz (1978 cited in Kubrin et al., 2008) acknowledged that labelling is not isolated to the legal system or the community. In fact, informal labelling by parents and peers can also have a negative effect and on some occasions increases the probability of suicide attempts amongst youth (Kubrin et al., 2005).

According to labelling theory societal reaction is what causes a one-off deviant act to become a deviant career (Kubrin et al., 2008). Lemert (1951 cited in Kubrin et al., 2008) reported that there are two kinds

11 Moral panic refers to public or political reactions to minority or marginalised individuals or groups (generally adolescents) who to appear to be some kind of threat to consensual values and interests (Berger et al., 2009).
of deviant behaviour - primary and secondary. Primary deviance occurs when an individual violates norms, but does not identify themselves by such an action. Secondary deviance occurs when individuals identify themselves by their antisocial behaviour, and are often linked to a deviant career (Plummer, 1999; Carrabine, Cox, Lee, Plummer & South 2009). Kubrin et al., (2008) reported that there are three ways that the use of labelling can lead to secondary deviance or a deviant career. These are by altering an individual’s self-concept, limiting access to conventional opportunities such as job options and securing a partner, and by reducing interactions with people outside the deviant subculture. The construct of primary and secondary deviance is explained in Figure 1 on the following page. Overall, despite what crime the individual commits, the label of deviant is a constant to people who break the law. In relation to this research the label of bully will be examined regardless of whether they have utilised physical, emotional or cyber-bullying.

Figure 1: Primary and secondary deviance (Conklin, 1992, p. 296 cited in Kubrin et al., 2008, p. 212).

The process by which an individual is labelled a deviant or any other label plays an important role in understanding an individual’s behaviour in a situation (Becker, 1963). According to Tannenbaum (1938, p. 19-20)
The process of making the criminal, therefore the process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing and evoking the very traits that are complained of...The person becomes the thing that he is described as being...The way out is a refusal to dramatise evil.

The above quote suggests that being labelled segregates a person from society, so they may begin to internalise their labels and begin to react to society's response. This occurs by the individual continuing to engage in similar behaviour that they believe is now expected of them, or by associating with other negative peers that have also been segregated from the community (Kubrin et al., 2008). Past literature has also associated incarceration with continuous antisocial behaviour and recidivism (Lawson & Heaton, 1999). Kubrin et al., (2008) further reflected that the affects of labelling depend on the individual, because although a label can affect a person's self-concept, they also have the choice to reject and fight that label.

The concept of labelling is a primary focus of symbolic interaction theory (Chapter 3.2.1), which refers to the notion that meaning and past experiences are attached to social interactions (Becker, 1963; Patton, 2002; Kubrin et al., 2008). Cunneen and White (2002) stated that according to labelling theory individuals are not known by their current behaviour, but rather in terms of any label that has been connected to them or their family from past experiences (Patton, 2002). Past research by Hagan and Palloni (1990, p. 267) reported that labels can also pass from parent to child and is known as intergenerational labelling. Individuals who have been labelled tend to feel like an outsider in mainstream society and in an attempt to belong generally only associate with other people who hold the same label (Becker, 1963; Siegel, 2002). For example, when a student fails academically, it is predicted by society that they are destined to fail again, which makes them feel like an outsider in the school environment, and leads to leaving school prematurely (Siegel, 2002). No matter what the label, the process of being labelled can strongly affect existing and future relationships with parents, friends, teachers and potential employers.

The use of labels is common practice within the medical and psychological fields, when describing an individual's illness or behaviour such as Conduct Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder or psychopathy, as discussed earlier. Carrabine et al., (2009) reported that throughout the 1970s labelling
theory was criticised because it did not consider the initial motivations towards deviance, but according to Becker (1963, p. 26):

Instead of deviant motives leading to the deviant behaviour, it is the other way around; the deviant behaviour in time produces the deviant motivation. Vague impulses and desires – in this case – are transformed into definite patterns of action through the social interpretation of a physical experience which is in itself ambiguous.

Critics also state that although labelling theory refers to the influence that SES has on the development of deviance, it ignores the overall issues of inequality, power and poverty (Lawson & Heaton, 1999). According to recent literature, critics state that labelling theory also fails to recognise neighbourhood and community values that are renowned in control theory (Kubrin et al., 2008).

### 2.3.3 Control theory

The underlying concept of control theory is that deviance occurs when an individual's decisions or choices do not coincide with community values. According to control theory it is not deviance that needs to be explained, but rather the concept of conformity (Lynch, McGrame, Ogilvie & Western, 2005). Hirschi (1969 cited in Carrabine et al., 2009) stated that conformity occurs from four types of social control - attachment, opportunity, involvement in legitimate activities and a strong belief in morality. These connections can be made by referring to Figure 2 below. If a student does not feel connected to their school, they do not value the same rules as that institution but rather appreciate the benefits that are associated with bullying (Weis, et al., 2001; Cunneen & White, 2002; Kubrin et al., 2008).
Figure 2: Complex model of social bond (Kubrin, et al., 2008, p. 192).

Catalano and Hawkins (1996) reported that antisocial behaviour occurs when an individual’s bond with social institutions such as family, schools, religions and political groups are weak or broken. Broken and weak bonds or limited moral order\textsuperscript{12} reflect when obedience of collective rules is not being effectively enforced (Lawson & Heaton, 1999). According to Hemphill et al., (2004), an individual with a strong level of moral order has 80 per cent less chance of participating in antisocial behaviour.

Vassallo et al., (2002) reported that children who have a positive relationship/attachment with their parents and peers are less likely to participate in bullying, because antisocial individuals are not only detached from the elements of society but also friends and family members (Weis et al., 2001; Kubrin et al., 2008). It has also been recorded that adolescent offenders are more likely to come from single parent families, regardless of their social class or ethnicity (Lynch et al., 2005). Siegel (2002) reflected that a strong correlation exists between broken homes and adolescent crime (see also Cunneen & White, 2002). Biddulph (2008 cited in Johnson & Tonkin, 2009, p. 8) reported that between 1976-2006, the proportion of one parent families has increased from seven per cent to 11 per cent of all families.

\textsuperscript{12} Moral order is an unwritten sense of right and wrong convictions which serve to maintain societal order (Lawson & Heaton, 1999).
Since the school environment is the main institution that can influence an adolescent's behaviour patterns, a student's connection and attachment to their school is vital to their development. Vassallo et al., (2002) established that low levels of attachment and bonding significantly influence the development of antisocial behaviour (Rigby, 2003). The size of the school and the ratio between students and teachers can also influence an individual's level of attachment to their school environment. In larger schools where interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are non-existent, antisocial behaviour is more likely to occur (Weis et al., 2001). Kubrin et al., (2008, p. 181) further reported that a separation from societal norms also tends to occur around the transition time of moving from middle to upper college in the USA, especially between the ages of 15 to 17 years.

Muncie (1999) and Welsh (2001) explored the concept of attachment to school in the UK and the USA respectively. Their studies reported that if the adolescent has a positive relationship with their school and attend after school activities they were less likely to be involved in antisocial behaviour (Simon-Morton et al., 1999; Weis et al., 2001; Siegel, 2002). A further study conducted by Thornberry, Moore and Christenson (2000, p. 133) in Philadelphia, USA looked at the long-term effects of dropping out of school. The study concluded that dropping out of high school is positively correlated with negative activity. The social structure of the school environment regulates antisocial behaviour when an individual regularly attends. A negative or low level of attachment is also known to occur if a student struggles academically. Students who are more academically minded are more conscious that participation in antisocial behaviour could jeopardise their future goals of further education or future career (Kubrin et al., 2008). According to Cunneen and White (2002, p. 87) Australian adolescents with below-average intelligence show characteristics of antisocial behaviour within school. When applying control theory to this research the impact that an individual's attachment level to their home and school environment has on the development of bullying was reviewed.

It is believed that it is the absence of strong attachment levels that encourages antisocial behaviour. Hence if a person was attached to society, they would not wish to go against society's norms and commit a crime, but rather conform to the rules of society so as not to jeopardise their future (Kubrin et al., 2008). An individual with a strong bond would also be actively involved in the community and believe in the rules and regulations constructed by the law (Weis et al., 2001; Kubrin et al., 2008). On the other hand, when the relationship between an individual and society is strained such as, low SES, antisocial behaviour is thought to be the most efficient way to achieve short and long term gratification.
Individuals from low SES are more likely to be arrested for street crimes such as burglary and motor vehicle theft. However it is difficult to determine whether poverty leads to crime or whether crime affects a person’s SES (Hayes & Prenzler, 2009). Durkheim (1895 cited in Lawson & Heaton, 1999) described crime as being inevitable in society as there will always be those whose immediate desires outweigh their commitment to collective rules (see also Siegel, 2001; Lynch et al., 2005; Kubrin et al., 2008).

The concept of self-control is also strongly linked to control theory, as it argues that crime and deviance exists when individuals are unable to control their own needs without coming into conflict with the structure of society (Lawson & Heaton, 1999; Lynch et al., 2005). It is believed that self-control is developed early in life, and that once that skill is learnt it remains throughout life. Since people are naturally aggressive and manipulative this often impacts their level of self-control (Lynch et al., 2005). Due to the correlation between self control and crime, control theory states that crime is not planned but rather occurs in response to presented opportunities.

This contradicts choice theory, which states that decisions are based on calculations, reasoning and rational considerations of choice (Shoemaker, 2005). An individual’s choice not only includes a consideration of consequences, but also the level of pleasure derived by the decision. It is also important to acknowledge that individual’s choices and reasons may vary and can be influenced by emotions, environmental factors and SES (Mellers, Schwartz & Cooke, 1998; Shoemaker, 2005). When an individual’s environment/experiences are positive they are less likely to favour risky alternatives. On the other hand, when they are negative the individual decides that the benefits of committing the crime far outweigh the consequences and risks of their actions (Mellers et al., 1998; Siegel, 2002). Thus Felson and Clare (1998, p. 7 cited in Western, Lynch & Ogilvie, 2003) stated that ‘offending is purposive behaviour’. Pilaven (1986 cited in Shoemaker, 2005) reported that an individual’s behaviour is influenced more by the prospect of an opportunity to commit a crime as opposed to the danger of being caught and punished. According to choice theory, punishment is an essential part of deterrence from crime because it establishes personal responsibility and punishment has a symbolic impact on society through stigmatisation (Cunneen & White, 2011). Choice theory reflects that negative behaviour occurs when an individual is unable to achieve their goals through legitimate avenues, so to protect themselves from failure the individual’s attitude and behaviour may become antisocial (Simons-Morton et al., 1999; Adams, 2007). Hayward and Sharp (2004) reported that if an individual lives in a high crime and low income area, they are more prone to behave antisocially. Delinquency has been found to
be at its highest when an individual’s aspirations and expectations are low. For example, if an individual struggles academically at school, they may turn to antisocial behaviour in an attempt to gain power and control in the classroom (Weis et al., 2000; Hayward & Sharp, 2004).

A factor that can affect an individual attachment with family, friends and community is their maturity level. The importance of maturity and biological changes on the development of antisocial behaviour will be discussed in relation to the social development model in the next sub-theme.

2.3.4 Social development model

Similar to social learning theory, the social development model acknowledges that antisocial behaviour begins in early childhood (Kowalski, 2003). In comparison to social learning theory, the social development model supports the nature side in the psychological debate and states that antisocial behaviour is a part of the developmental passage. According to the social development model, children in primary school begin to assert themselves physically at the expense of others to achieve social dominance and increase their self-esteem (Rigby, 2003). Alternatively Berk (2004) reported that children as young as nine months of age can display forms of bullying such as teasing other babies, by holding out a toy and then withdrawing it. Others believe that children do not participate in the act of teasing or bullying until they have a more developed sense of self. According to Farrington and Loeber (2000 cited in Berk, 2004) this generally does not occur until three years of age, which is when children realise the effect their behaviour has on others. In comparison Kowalski (2003) reported that bullying typically begins later, amongst children who are entering kindergarten or the first grade.

According to Berk (2004) there are two phases of aggression: instrumental and hostile aggression. Instrumental aggression occurs when a child reacts after an object/privilege has been taken away. This display of aggression becomes less apparent as the child grows older and becomes better at identifying sources of anger and frustration (Brown, 2005). In comparison hostile aggression is more purposeful with the intent to hurt someone and occurs more in early and middle childhood and decreases in adolescence and early adulthood. Aggression in middle childhood has been connected to the hormonal and cognitive changes that occur in puberty (Carr-Gregg, 2010). This type of aggression is often shown in the form of bullying.
According to Susman and Rogol (2004) puberty is one of the more profound transitions in a person’s lifespan, as individuals go through a variety of biological and social changes, such as the move into secondary college (Li, 2005). Developmental changes that occur in adolescence include adjusting to social, emotional and intellectual changes, developing independence and feelings of self-esteem and establishing a sexual identity (Howard & Johnson, 2000b; Beck, 2004; Tarica, 2011). With these changes an individual starts to develop their own values, and decide how they are going to interact with those around them. If aggression and anger are valued these emotions will be expressed through bullying and antisocial behaviour. Earl (1999, p. 4) stated;

This [adolescence] is a tough and challenging time as young people try out a whole range of persona, push the envelope on limits set by others [parents and teachers] and struggle to evaluate the social implications of their personalities, the peer group they choose and the values and standards they hold for themselves.

The biological aspects of puberty include growth changes, problem behaviour, physical maturation, cognition development and increase of sexual activity and hormones. Males are exposed to higher levels of testosterone (20 times) and androgens compared to females, which explains the more aggressive behaviour and dominance in males (Susman & Rogol, 2004; Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). Testosterone levels tend to increase substantially from early to late adolescence, but also decrease during adulthood (Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). Bullying is a specific way in which an individual would be able to achieve dominance in the school environment. The biological changes connected with puberty are universal, but the timing and social significance of these changes varies across history and cultures. This is why there are many debates in the literature about the age in which puberty begins. Puberty has been described to take place as early as eight or nine years of age (Berk, 2004). In comparison Li (2005) reported that such biological changes and development of antisocial behaviour occurs when a child is in years 8 to 10.

Adolescence, as opposed to childhood, is also known as the expected age of deviance and disruption, and is when the adolescent fulfils the negative stereotypes associated with youth. In adolescence the act of teasing is believed to have a more nasty tone as opposed to in childhood, which is often referred to the age of innocence (Kowalski, 2003). This stereotype actually contradicts the meaning of
adolescence which comes from the Latin word *adolescere* which means ‘to grow to maturity’ (Carr-Gregg, 2010). Hayward, Killen, Wilson, Hammer, Litt, Kraemer, Haydel, Varacly and Taylor (1997 cited in Susman & Rogol, 2004) state that early maturation of both males and females promotes more interactions with deviant peers. Early maturing females have also been found to have more negative emotions, in comparison to males who have higher levels of externalised hostile feelings and internalised distress symptoms.

In comparison, adulthood is generally portrayed as a time of maximum respectability and productivity in the community (Brown, 2005). Past research by Kowalski (2003) reported that bullying is not isolated to adolescence, which means that there is not one stage in development that aggression occurs, but rather that it can occur at any time throughout a person's life (see also Berk, 2004). Past research by Cauffman and Steinberg (2000, p. 756) surveyed more than 1,000 adolescents and adults between the ages of 12 and 48 in Philadelphia, USA and reported that antisocial decision-making is more strongly associated with one's level of maturity and social intelligence as opposed to age (see also Lawson & Heaton, 1995). The study further reported that adolescents and adults go through the same cognitive and psychosocial process when making a decision. Carr-Gregg (2010) further reported that the brain matures from back to front, and the development of the frontal lobe, which is responsible for cognitive processes such as reasoning, impulse control and prioritising, is not complete until 21 to 23 years of age for females and 28 to 29 for males (see also Richards, 2011). Physical aggression decreases with age because with maturity, individuals decide to no longer use physical aggression to achieve results (Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). Mature judgement reflects three broad categories - responsibility (independence and self-identity), perspective (ability to consider different points of view) and temperance (limited impulsivity and evaluation of situation) and tends to develop between 16 and 19 years of age due the priorities of the individual changing (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000, p. 743).

Piaget (1965 cited in Berk, 2004) states that there are two broad stages of moral understanding - heteronomous and autonomous morality. Heteronomous morality occurs between five and 10 years of age, and is when a child sees rules being handed down by authorities as being permanent, unchangeable and requiring strict obedience. Autonomous morality happens after 10 years of age,

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Social intelligence describes and individual’s social cognition to understand themself, others and a social situation. It plays a crucial role in decision making as it reflects the ability to review the situation and select a more socially acceptable behaviour (Niu, 2009).
when the child no longer view rules as fixed but rather principles that can be revised when there is a need to. A truly moral individual does not just do the right thing when around adults, but are consistently compassionate and empathetic towards other people (Berk, 2004). Recent research by Kubrin et al (2008, p. 181) reported that a separation from societal norms tends to occur around the transition time of moving from middle to upper school, especially between the ages of 15 to 17 years. Hence, if an individual does not develop positive morals, they are more likely to behave antisocially.

Antisocial behaviour has also been said to be caused by physical and psychological traits that guide behavioural choices (Siegel, 2002). Individuals who are more hyperactive, impulsive and lacking in concentration are more prone to antisocial behaviour (Hayward & Sharp, 2004). An individual’s ability to control and contain their emotions is also a trait that influences the extent to which an individual may partake in negative behaviour (Hemphill et al., 2004). When applying the social development model to this research, individual age and maturity levels were acknowledged to establish their impact on the development of bullying. Other consequences of bullying will be discussed in the next theme.

2.4 Consequences and resilience

The purpose of this theme is to build on the previous theories towards developing practical and comprehensive interventions for dealing with bullying. The consequences of bullying and the development of resilience are also important factors to consider in the application of interventions. Thus, this theme has been separated into three sub-themes: consequences, resilience and interventions. The first sub-theme acknowledges how bullying impacts the victim. The second discusses the impact that bullying has on an individual’s resilience level.

2.4.1 Consequences of antisocial behaviour

Bullying has both short-term and long-term consequences and includes physical, psychological and emotional problems (Siegel, 2002; Victorian Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003; Wurf, 2009; Rigby, 2010). Bullying has consequences not only for the individual, but also their family and surrounding society (Morrison, 2002). In the past two decades there has been progress in
understanding and reducing bullying, but according to Smith and Brain (2000) dealing with antisocial behaviour, such as bullying, successfully is not an easy task.

Kochenderfer-Ladd and Skinner (2002) stated that the way that an individual responds to victimisation can influence both the duration and emotional impact of the experience. More recently Kochenderfer-Ladd (2004) reported that ineffective/maladaptive responses to bullying can predict future victimisation and increase psychological problems. Maladaptive coping strategies tend to be driven by emotional responses such as anger. In comparison adaptive responses such as; asking friends or adults for help and problem solving can reduce the risk of chronic harassment (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Rigby (2000) indicated that males and females tend to react differently to repeat bullying, as females are more inclined to seek help and talk about the problem (see also Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Courtney Grave, a student who was a victim of bullying at Korumburra Secondary College, supported this view when revealing her own personal experience.

In the end I talked to my teachers, and even my parents, and they sorted it out. I got over it eventually, but at the time I got fairly upset by it all, and it certainly does impact your life.

(Cited in Tomazin, 2009, p. 6)

Bond et al., (2001) stated that the impact of bullying on an individual’s mental health is more noticeable for females. Due to the fact it significantly impacts their future independence and social relations in compared to males.

Rigby (1997, p. 30) interviewed 777 secondary school students and established that 15 per cent of those who had experienced bullying on a weekly basis were more likely to display symptoms of poor mental and physical health. Rigby (1999) further stated that individuals who experienced bullying reflected that they have a low level of psychological well-being and felt either angry (32 per cent) or sad (37 per cent). Australian students who are frequently victimised are also more likely to show high levels of anxiety, social dysfunction, maladaptive coping strategies, depression, school maladjustment and loneliness (Rigby, 1999; Bond et al., 2001; Dautehnah & Woods, 2003; Rigby, 2003; Tomazin &
Smith, 2007). Bond et al., (2001) also found a stronger correlation between depression and victimisation, compared to anxiety, loneliness or general self-esteem. Children who experience face-to-face bullying are five times more likely to experience psychological distress such as depression and low self-esteem (Bond et al., 2001).

Consequences of cyber-bullying are yet to be fully researched, but it would seem that they could be more severe than face-to-face bullying. Although cyber-bullying mainly includes threats of danger, it has potential for a much wider audience when compared with schoolyard bullying. Cyber-bullying is often more repetitive, as the victim can read the written words over and over (Li, 2007). In addition, there is less chance to escape from this type of bullying, as it can occur 24 hours and continues even after the victim has gone home (Campbell, 2005; Tomazin & Smith, 2007). McGrath (2009) reported that if a victim does not know who their tormentor is they may find it more difficult to respond to what is happening to them.

A victim’s self-esteem is also impacted by bullying as they often have negative emotions about themselves, such as shame, embarrassment and humiliation (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Kowalski, 2003; Rigby, 2003). It has also been recorded that victims of bullying view themselves as having lower intellect and being less popular and physically attractive compared with those who have not been bullied (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001). Although a significant association between self-esteem and bullying exists, it is unknown whether individuals who are unwell or experience low self-esteem invite bullying or whether it is a symptom of bullying (Rigby, 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1999a; Rigby, 2003).

Peer victimisation has been found to promote negative attitudes towards school disengagement from classroom activities, concentration and poor academic outcomes (Rigby, 1999; Iyer, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Eisenberg & Thompson, 2010). Iyer et al., (2010) linked low levels of academic achievement to being the victim of bullying because victimised children lack specific social competencies that not only put them at risk of victimisation but also makes it hard for them to perform well academically. Strom, Thoresen, Wentzel-Larsen and Dyb (2013) further stated that students who attended schools with high levels of bullying reported lower grades than those in schools with less bullying.
High levels of victimisation can also result in poor physical health such as headaches, sore throats, obesity, addiction and sleep deprivation (Tomazin & Smith, 2007; Bond et al., 2001; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Rigby, 2003). A more recent study conducted by Rigby and Thomas (2010, p. 12) reported an absentee rate of 20 per cent due to bullying, which was higher than expected. Thus absenteeism from school is not uncommon when an individual is being bullied, as six per cent of males and nine per cent of females stay away from school at least once due to bullying (Rigby, 2003). When bullying becomes more frequent (more than once a week), absenteeism increases to 19 per cent for males and 25 per cent for females in Australian schools (Campbell, 2005). Kowalski (2003) showed that it has been estimated that 160,000 school aged children are truant from schools in the USA due to the fear of being bullied.

Olweus (1993 cited in Bond et al., 2001) stated that males victimised between the ages of 12 and 16 years also had increased levels of depression as young adults. Rigby (2003, p. 588) supported this theory and reported that constant victimisation during the first two years of secondary college leads to high levels of psychological distress continuing into their early twenties. This type of psychological distress is also referred to as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (DSM-IV, 2002). Past research by Mellor (2000) stated that children who are seriously bullied are also more likely to have future relationship issues and will not achieve full career potential as adults. Overall, the impact that bullying has on the mental health of a young person depends on the extent of bullying an individual experiences at school, and the degree to which they feel supported in their school environment (Rigby, 2000).

Rigby (2003) also reported that continued bullying has been connected to suicide or attempted suicide. Three studies conducted by Rigby and Slee in South Australia between 1993 and 1996 discovered that adolescent students who have been the victim of bullying are more likely to experience suicidal thoughts and attempt to harm themselves, compared with their peers (Rigby, 1997, p. 32). The Australian National Coalition Against Bullying suggests that 20 per cent of youth suicide can be connected to bullying and has been referred to as bullying-cide (Howse, 2004). Similarly in Norway, England and Japan there have been media reports of children committing suicide after being bullied at school (Rigby, 1997). Mellor (2000) reported that up to 12 children commit suicide every year in the UK

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14 PTSD is a psychological term used to describe the symptoms developed after exposure to an extreme traumatic event involving direct personal experience of actual or threatened death or serious injury (DSM-IV, 2002).
because of bullying. Some case examples of this occurring around the world will now be presented chronologically:

- Rachel Neblett, a 17-year-old in Kentucky, USA shot herself after being bullied via Myspace (Dubecki, 2006b).
- Aimee Jade Jenkinson, a 14-year-old in Hoppers Crossing, Victoria, Australia killed herself after being bullied on a school excursion in August 2003 (Howe, 2007).
- Tim Winkler, a 15-year-old in NSW, Australia, killed himself in 2004 after he was bullied by his peers at Kadina High School (Writer, 2009)
- Alex Teka, a 12-year-old in New Zealand committed suicide after a group had threatened her via text message (Dubecki, 2006b; Tomazin & Smith, 2007, p. 6).
- Allem Halkic, a 17-year-old in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia jumped off the West Gate Bridge on February 2009 after being cyber-bullied by a former friend (Milovanocic, 2010).
- Chanelle Rae, from Geelong, Victoria, Australia, committed suicide in July 2009 after someone threatened to reveal information about her and ‘ruin her life’ over the internet (Wilson, 2009).
- Phoebe Prince, a 15-year-old in Massachusetts, USA, hung herself after being taunted, heckled and threatened by two groups of teenagers at South Hadley High (Ellementand, 2010).

In these case examples the consequences of bullying do not stop with the death of the victims, but continue to impact upon the lives of their family members as they go through life without their loved ones (Morrison, 2002).

Victims of bullying have also been known to get so angry that they explode and seek revenge against the bully either immediately or some time afterwards (Bartol & Bartol, 1998; Kowalski, 2003; Li, 2005). According to Kochenderfer-Ladd and Skinner (2002) revenge seeking and retaliation are reported to increase victimisation in bullying. The most well known example of bullying retaliation was a school shooting on 20 April 1999 in Littleton, Colorado, USA. Students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (17 years of age) shot dead 12 students and one teacher, and injured at least 24 others. Reports suggest that Harris was routinely taunted by his peers at school, and he and Dylan organised a revenge attack on Columbine High School (Nimmo, Scott & Rabey, 2000). A similar situation occurred at the Virginia State University, USA on 16 April 2007 when Seung-Hui Cho, 23 years of age killed 32 people and injured
29 before committing suicide. It is believed that Cho had a history of problems at school including being bullied due to speech problems (Patchin & Hinduja, 2008). An example of a victim of bullying seeking revenge in Australia occurred at St Patrick’s College in northern Queensland, where a 13-year-old victim allegedly returned to the school with a knife to scare his tormentors and ended up stabbing another student to death (O’Brien, 2010). A more recent example of retaliation – captured and uploaded onto the YouTube website – involved 12-year-old Carey, who dropped another student 12-year-old Richard on his head, after being tormented physically and verbally at a secondary college in Sydney, Australia (Kerin, 2011).

Communities have also been known to negatively react towards a school where bullying has occurred. Miletic, in The Age (2006) reported on a community retaliating against Werribee Secondary College, Victoria, Australia after some of their students harassed a 17-year-old girl. Students from the school stated that they had rocks thrown at them, were verbally abused and had people spit at them in response to their school being linked to bullying. Schools have also had law suits filed against them after an incident of bullying has occurred. Milovanic (2009) reported that 13-year-old Druian Woodward’s parents were suing the Education Department after their son was bullied for having a severe speech problem at Montmerency Secondary College, Victoria, Australia. More recently Russell and Craig (2010) reported a case where a mother from Tinterns Southwood Boys Grammar, Victoria, Australia, sued the Anglican school after they accused her son of 15 incidents of harassment and expelled him, in November 2006. The case was settled out of court as the school agreed to pay the mother $10,000 with no admission of liability (Russell & Craig, 2010, p. 1).

Rigby (2003, p. 586) surprisingly reported that despite the large extent of consequences connected to bullying, some individuals stated that they were unaffected by bullying (53 per cent). Even a small percentage felt better about themselves (seven per cent), because they had the resilience to get through such a difficult time in their life. Kowalski (2003) concurred with this statement and revealed that some victims claimed to be tougher, stronger and more resilient after been bullied at school. The next sub-theme will continue to discuss the importance of resilience when dealing with antisocial behaviour and bullying.
2.4.2 Resilience

Resilience comes from the Latin term *resilii*, which means to spring back (Deveson, 2003). It occurs when an individual survives and continues functioning cognitively, socially and behaviourally, after they have endured a traumatic or stressful incident such as bullying (Howard & Johnson, 1999; Gilligan, 2000; Deveson, 2003; Mutimer, Reece & Matthews, 2007). Oliver, Collin, Burns and Nicholas (2006) stated that resilience does not imply a vulnerability to stress, but rather the ability to recover from negative experiences.

According to Theobold (cited in Deveson 2003, p. 19), ‘resilience is organic, not mechanical; it is a part of the immune system’. Oliver et al., (2006) contradicted this and stated that resilience is not a totally innate attribute or permanent state, but is more of an adaptive process involving interaction between both the risk and protective factors of an individual’s experience (Johnson & Howard, 2007). Hence theories of resilience have concluded that resilience is not achieved through instruction but rather through life experiences (Oliver et al., 2006). More recently Mutimer et al., (2007) stated there are three common protective factors of resilience: child characteristics/temperament, family characteristics and community factors (see also Johnson & Howard, 2007). Oswald, Johnson and Howard (2003) also acknowledged two additional protective factors: school and peers. No single combination of protective factors can be identified as better than the others. What is a known factor is that the more protective factors an individual has the more likely they are able to display resilient behaviour (Howard & Johnson, 2000b). Howard, Dryden and Johnson (1999 cited in Russo & Boman, 2007) stated that children’s resilience levels vary at different points of their lives, depending on interactions and environment factors. If a child experiences a negative situation, their resilience level will always be affected to a certain degree, but they still continue functioning (Fuller, 2001). Children are generally able to cope under the strain of one or two negative situations, but if they are affected by three or more circumstances their well-being begins to suffer (Gilligan, 2000).

Adolescents who are resilient tend to have strong attachment levels with school, family and friends (Gilligan, 2000; Fuller, 2001). In reference to the family, resilience is developed when there is a consistency and a quality of care within the family home. For example, constant moving during adolescence and family breakdown can affect resilience as it promotes disconnectedness and increases vulnerability (Howard & Johnson, 1999). If an individual is part of a disadvantaged
household, resilience can still be established through their school (Howard & Johnson, 2007). A study conducted by Mutimer et al., (2007) across 11 kindergartens in Northern Melbourne revealed that resilient children tended to have less stressful living environments and higher functioning families. Resilient students are more likely to communicate with family members and have chores and tasks to do at home (Howard & Johnson, 2000a).

The school environment also plays an important role in the development of a child’s level of resilience, as a positive school experience can influence a young person’s development and commitment to the school community. A sense of belonging to a school can improve academic performance, motivation and emotional well-being, which in turn assists a child in dealing with an adverse situation such as bullying (Gilligan, 2000; McGrath & Noble, 2010; Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2010). Teachers who are attentive and caring can also promote and encourage resilience levels (Johnson & Howard, 2007; McGrath & Noble, 2010). Previous research by Oswald et al., (2003) reflected that often teachers tend to undervalue their degree of influence and the input they have on providing protective factors for non-resilient students.

Past research by Howard and Johnson (1999, p. 7) reported that non-resilient individuals tended to have poor literacy and study skills. Communities that are disadvantaged socio-economically can still contribute to the development of resilience in young people, by providing them with strong social support through social service and welfare agencies (Howard & Johnson, 1999). Resilience coincides with control theory, which acknowledges the importance of attachment levels to various institutions such as family and education.

Howard and Johnson (1999) conducted a study considering what attributes resilient adolescents possessed, as opposed to non-resilient adolescents. Students between 13 and 16 years of age were interviewed from five public secondary colleges and one Catholic college in South Australia. Students were classified as resilient and non-resilient and placed into two different groups and participated in a semi-structured interview. The results showed that resilient students reflected more accomplishments, personal achievements and future plans as opposed to non-resilient students. Resilient students also expressed a sense of connectedness to individuals and institutions more than non-resilient children (Howard & Johnson, 1999).
Some other characteristics of a resilient adolescent are social competence, the ability to problem solve, autonomy and a sense of purpose (Howard & Johnson, 1999). Fuller (2001) further explored the foundation of resilience and stated that emotional regulation, self-efficacy, realistic anticipation of consequences, empathy, understanding of social concepts and coping strategies were important aspects of developing resilience. It is important to remember that individuals with high self-esteem do not naturally have resilience as it depends on their coping strategies (Fuller, 2001).

Past research by Gilligan (2000) reported that how children spend their free time has also been connected to enhancing young people’s resilience. He outlined five beneficial spare time activities for children. These include cultural pursuits, care of animals, sports, volunteer and part-time work. Spare time activities are valuable in building resilience as they encourage the development of social skills and enhance a young person’s sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem. The next theme reviews interventions that could assist in enhancing resilience and deal with bullying abroad and in Australia respectively.

2.5 Preventative and intervention measures

This theme reflects what preventive measures and intervention methods have been developed to help contain and control the issue of antisocial behaviour. International and Australian preventative and intervention measures have been separated into two sub-themes to enable a comparison of the way different societies attempt to manage a worldwide issue.

2.5.1 International research: Preventative and intervention measures

Muncie (1999) and Welsh (2001), in reflecting on the UK and USA experience, support the concept that schools offer a primary opportunity for prevention and intervention strategies to deal with bullying. Educators play a significant role in constructing and implementing these interventions and procedures, to create a safer school environment and surrounding neighbourhood (Astor et al., 2004). The first step for individual schools when establishing preventive measures for containing bullying is to acknowledge that bullying occurs within the school (Mellor, 2000). Parents also need to acknowledge that bullying exists, as they are often reluctant to admit that their child may be involved, in case they are judged as
bad parents (Kowalski, 2003). Dautenhahn and Woods (2003) expressed concern that while intervention strategies are successful in the short-term, they are limited when reducing and eliminating bullying issues in the long-term. They contend that interventions are not successful in the long-term as each individual, school and member of the teaching staff react differently towards bullying, which means that interventions are not consistently followed through (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003).

Snell, Bailey, Carona and Mebane (2002) stated that the best approach when dealing with bullying involves educating and providing teachers and staff with relevant information regarding prevention and intervention methods. It is believed that children who bully would benefit more from rehabilitative and monitoring programs rather than punitive approaches (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Shaw, 2002). Prevention programs focus on the development of social and cognitive, problem solving, friendship skills, self-confidence and self-esteem (Astor et al., 2004). An example of such a program is the No Blame Approach, which focuses on attempting to have antisocial individuals understand the view-point of their victims. Looking at ways to make amends has also been effective in reducing bullying (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003). This approach acknowledges the principles of restorative justice which emphasises on repairing harm between bullies and victims through a constructive and positive approach (Cunneen & White, 2011).

Three other main intervention models that have been used to decrease bullying are: Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Linking the Interests of Families Teachers (LIFT), and Incredible Years: Parents, Teachers and Children Training (Rigby & Slee, 1999a). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was first developed in 1983 after Dan Olweus was approached by the Norwegian Government to establish an intervention program for dealing with bullying after three adolescent boys’ suicides were linked to being bullied (Limber, 2002). The program has since been utilised internationally, including in the USA, UK and Germany (Wurf, 2009). The program is designed to prevent and reduce bullying between students ranging from six to 15 years of age. This intervention measure addresses the victim’s distress as well as identifying and counteracting aggressive behaviour. The program works on the basis of three levels of intervention school-wide (parent training and information sharing); classroom level (students attend regular meetings about bullying and peer relations) and individual (behaviour modification and counselling) (Limber, 2002). Results from the program have shown an improvement in peer relations and a reduction of between 30 to 70 per cent of reported bullying (Limber, 2002; Wurf, 2009).
Eddy et al., (2000) reported that LIFT was established in 1990 and was designed to decrease aggressive behaviour in adolescents, and improve ineffective parenting such as inconsistent and inappropriate discipline and supervision. LIFT associated antisocial behaviour with negative interactions between a child and their parent at home, this notion coincides with social learning theory (Chapter 2.3.3). Similar to the Olweus' program, LIFT has three components - classroom-based child social skills training; the Good Behaviour Game (rewards are earned by individual children for demonstrating positive interactions) and parent management training (10 to 15 parents). Evidence suggests that LIFT can be a useful tool for promoting positive parenting in the home, which in turn decreases negative peer interactions at school (Eddy et al., 2000).

The Incredible Years: Parents, Teachers and Children Training program was developed by Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton in the USA, but is now utilised internationally including the UK, New Zealand and Australia (Webster-Stratton, Mihalic, Fagan, Arnold, Taylor & Tingley, 2001). Like the title suggests this program is educationally-based and provides parents and teachers with useful information and practical skills for dealing with children's antisocial behaviour, similar to LIFT. The program is targeted towards children between the ages of four and eight years. The objective of the program is to strengthen children's social skills; teach children self-control strategies; increase emotional awareness; boost academic success; decrease defiance and aggression; increase self-esteem; and strengthen families and the connections between home and school (Webster-Stratton et al., 2001).

More intensive responses to bullying utilised in the USA and the UK include the installation of metal detectors, locker searches, zero tolerance policies, increased security and strict enforcement of regulations and suspension (Mellor, 2000). Siegel (2002) stated that the problem with suspending offenders is that it provides the adolescent with an abundance of free time without adult supervision. Statistics show that students who have been suspended at least once are five times more likely to participate in negative behaviour (Siegel, 2002).

Other strategies utilised in the USA to create safer schools include applying pressure on the local police to develop community safety programs, strengthening laws on school safety and involving parents in policy making (Siegel, 2002). Snell et al., (2002) also believed that police contact with schools helps to regulate antisocial behaviour and enforce school policies and regulations. For example, in an attempt to
contain cyber-bullying in schools, the UK government have developed the *Education and Inspections Act 2000*. This policy allows education staff to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site (McGrath, 2009). Mellor (2000) challenged that these heavy-handed approaches to bullying would drive it underground. Despite whether a parent, teacher or the police become aware of an act or threat of antisocial behaviour, it is important that interventions are initiated in all situations, to reduce the situation from escalating. Columbine High School is an example of a situation escalating out of control, because prior to the shooting Eric Harris created a website that made threats against his fellow students. The authorities did not follow up these threats and 12 students and one teacher were killed while attending school (Dubecki, 2006b). The next section will review the interventions that are utilised in Australian schools.

### 2.5.2 Australian research: Preventative and intervention measures

Research states that greater understanding of the development and causes of physical, emotional and cyber-bullying (Chapter 2.3) will aid in establishing successful prevention and intervention strategies (Tomazin & Smith, 2007, p. 6). Programs for dealing with bullying can include both preventative and intervention procedures, but usually only focus on one or the other (Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004). Unfortunately past attempts to reduce bullying in schools have fundamentally failed (Rigby & Slee, 1999b; Rigby & Johnson, 2007; Rigby, 2011). Reasons why anti-bullying programs have had limited success include that teachers are unaware of the extent of bullying and programs are not effectively supported by children or followed by staff (Rigby & Johnson, 2007; Rigby & Thomas, 2010; Rigby, 2011). Since cyber-bullying occurs outside of school hours, this also makes it difficult for educators to establish intervention and preventative strategies (Campbell, 2005; McGrath, 2009). In contrast Rigby and Smith’s (2011) analysis of past empirical research from a variety of countries including Australia between 1990 and 2009 reported that there has been a decrease in traditional bullying in many countries. However, there are some indications that cyber-bullying has increased during this period of time. It was concluded that such decreases in traditional bullying could be linked to the implementation of anti-bullying programs.

Morrison (2002) stated that schools promote health, resilience and social responsibility. Thus according to Slee (2004), school-based preventive strategies are the most effective and include discussions about bullying and role-playing with students about what they can say or do after witnessing bullying (Howard
& Johnson, 2000a; Rigby et al., 2004; Rigby & Johnson, 2007; Rigby, 2010a). Past research by Rigby (1997) has acknowledged that adolescents, especially those between 14 and 16 years of age, are less likely to participate in a discussion regarding bullying. Further research shows that early primary school years would be the most appropriate time for intervention methods to be applied, in order to prevent the development of persistent negative behaviour (Vassallo et al., 2002; Hemphill et al., 2004).

The Commonwealth Government in Australia has developed an intervention program known as the Preparation, Education, Action, Coping and Evaluation (P.E.A.C.E) pack to reduce bullying within Australian schools (Slee, 2004). This preventive measure recognises that bullying is interrelated with friendships and social interactions. Instead of focusing on changing a bully’s behaviour, the P.E.A.C.E pack acknowledges how relationships, roles and interactions contribute to the existence of antisocial behaviour (Slee, 2004). Similar to LIFT mentioned previously, this intervention program acknowledges the principles of social learning theory (Chapter 2.3.3), that negative interactions and relationships are the key influences to the development of antisocial behaviour.

Swedish psychologist Pikas established a process of dealing with bullying that has been implemented in England, Spain, Finland and Western Australia known as Shared Concern (Rigby et al., 2004; Rigby, 2005; Rigby, 2010a; Rigby, 2011). Shared Concern also follows the principles of restorative justice as it involves working with both perpetrators and victims of bullying, in an attempt to develop an acceptable solution through the use of interventions and discussions with the parties involved. Interviews with the bully and victim are conducted, followed by a meeting with a group of suspected bullies. Once the group discussion and dynamics become positive the final step is to bring the victim into the group (Rigby, 2005). The principles of Shared Concern are similar to a mediation session, which has also been utilised in Australian schools (Wurf, 2009; Rigby, 2010a). One of the objections to Shared Concern and mediation is that both methods assume that bullies are empathetic towards the victim, while according to Eslea and Smith (1994) and Dautenhahn and Woods (2003) bullies have no conscience or empathy and have been found to have limited sympathy.

The Victorian State Government has also developed a booklet offering advice on managing and preventing bullying. It also includes various areas of training (Leung, 2006). This booklet includes ideas such as social, cognitive and problem-solving training for children. Other training that students could
benefit from includes social support training, which covers the development of alternative behaviours and establishing acceptance and positive regard towards other individuals (Rigby, 2000; Morrison, 2002). Conflict resolution programs have been recorded to give adolescents important skills for decreasing harmful behaviours in schools (Fuller, 2001; Morrison, 2002).

The Safe Schools and Effective Schools program draws attention to the impact that bystanders have on bullying. Rigby and Johnson (2004a) support the development of anti-bullying programs for bystanders, which could include open discussions about bystander behaviour and focuses on the protection of informants as a priority (see also Rigby et al., 2004). Bystander Training focuses on being supportive of victims and developing methods for how to intervene whenever possible (Victorian Department of Education, 2006, p. 12). A program called Bullying. No Way! was developed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, and Catholic and independent educators to assist in gaining support from the community in relation to bullying (Henderson, 2002). Parents can assist in the prevention of bullying by encouraging their children to be good bystanders, by expressing disapproval of bullying when they see it happening (Rigby & Johnson, 2004b).

With an increase in the level of cyber-bullying and the suicide of 14-year-old Geelong student Chanelle Rae, the Brumby Government organised the state’s first cyber-bullying summit in 2009. The conference involved 240 year 10 students who represented 60 public and private schools. Rather than the options of blocking access to particular websites and updating bullying guidelines, the forum revealed that students believe that adults and young people should be educated about how to use technology carefully (Tomazin, 2009, p. 6). The Victorian Government initiated a pilot program to tackle the huge issue of cyber-bullying. Senior Constable Susan McLean co-ordinates this program and aims to educate students, teachers and parents about cyber-bullying and track incidents as they occur on the internet (Smith, 2007). Despite a cyber-bully’s attempt to remain anonymous, law enforcement has the authority and tools to identify/track the digital footprints that remain after a cyber-attack. E-crime is a relatively new term that covers criminal offences committed with a computer or other electronic device. Legislation states that the perpetrator of a cyber-attack can receive seven months jail if convicted (McGrath, 2009). McGrath (2009) further reported that authorities face issues such as an individual’s freedom of speech when dealing with cyber-bullying.
The previous State Education Services Minister Jacinta Allan quoted in Tomazin and Smith (2007, p.6) acknowledged that the Victorian Department of Education needs to review anti-bullying guidelines for schools to ensure that they include cyber-bullying. Prime Minister Julia Gillard admitted during her appointment as federal Education Minister, that there was no quick fix to cyber-bullying, but reflected that it was addressed in the National Safe Schools Framework review in June 2010 (Betts, 2010). One thousand and six hundred state schools, including Melbourne’s Methodist Ladies College, restricted access to websites such as Myspace and YouTube at school, as a way of dealing with cyber-bullying (Dubecki, 2006b). Experts such as Dr. Carr-Gregg reflect that banning websites may not actually be that beneficial as ‘children are too technologically savvy for even the most complex filters’ (Tomazin & Smith, 2007, p. 6).

Morris, Sallybanks, Willis and Makkai (2003) reflected that sporting activities are another useful intervention for reducing antisocial behaviour within our schools, as sport and physical activities can assist in the development of personal and social growth. Two important aspects of sport are that it decreases both boredom and unsupervised leisure time, and provides a source of entertainment in a controlled environment. Kubrin et al., (2008) disagreed with this view and stated that playing sport does not deter individuals from behaving antisocially as such behaviour takes very little time to complete.

Leung (2006) reported in The Age that other preventative strategies for bullying include the development of school house systems, which allow different year levels to work together. House systems can also provide structured activities throughout lunchtime and promote strong school values which aid in creating a safe school environment. The Alannah and Madeline Better Buddies Foundation is an example of such a program, as it provides a support system for younger students by linking them with a senior mentor for support upon entering secondary college (Howard & Johnson, 2000b; Howe, 2007). Basically any programs such as orientation camps and home groups aim to promote a positive environment and improve socialisation amongst adolescents (Morris et al., 2003; Howard & Johnson, 2004). The NSW Parliament completed an inquiry into bullying and also made the following recommendations: establishment of a national anti-bullying week which will continue to bring awareness to the issue, and random audits of schools to make sure bullying and harassment policies are on their website (O’Brien, 2010).
Some educational institutions choose to suspend misbehaving adolescents rather than apply preventive interventions (Cisłowski, 2002; Rigby, 2010a). The NSW Education Department has released policies stating that the only suitable punishments for bullying are suspension and expulsion (Campbell, 2005). Despite the various policies developed by the Victorian Department of Education reflecting the positives of mediation in regards to bullying, some schools have adopted NSW’s suspension policy as a way of dealing with bullying in their schools. Tomazin (2007) reported in The Age that Xavier College in Melbourne suspended five students for schoolyard bullying. This incident of bullying involved putting a student into a garbage bin and kicking it, and then sending the video footage via mobile phones and email to other adolescents. Another example of suspension in Victoria was in response to bullying situation in Werribee, where students harassed a 17-year-old victim (Miletic, 2006).

Hemphill et al., (2004) opposed punitive measures and reported that suspension does not assist in containing the level of bullying in the education system, but actually directs students towards antisocial behaviour due to lack of structure and supervision. Hemphill et al., (2004) also acknowledged that suspension also contradicts the objective that preventive and intervention methods for bullying should not interfere with a student’s studies. A study conducted by Rigby and Thomas (2010) reported that parents often appear to be more punitive in their attitude towards the way bullies should be treated at school. Students in the USA have been reported to be three times more likely to experience school suspension in response to their behaviour compared with Australian adolescents (Hemphill et al., 2005). Past research by Rigby et al., (2004) reported the importance of bullies receiving non-physical penalties such as withdrawal of privileges, as acknowledgement of their inappropriate behaviour.

Rigby (1997) reflected that although principals and teachers in Australian schools must make daily decisions on discipline and bullying prevention methods, a safe school environment does not happen automatically but requires a whole-school approach (see also Rigby et al., 2004; Rigby & Thomas, 2010; Rigby, 2010b). The Victorian Department of Education and Training (2006) also developed a policy known as Safe Schools and Effective Schools, which supports the notion that effective leadership and a whole-school approach are the foundation for preventing bullying from occurring in Victorian schools. The development or update of a Student Code of Conduct is recommended as the first step as it allows teachers, parents and students to participate in the development of a school’s expectations in reference to bullying. This is to ensure that all parents, staff and students are aware of appropriate behaviour and guidelines of the school. Teacher and parent training in behaviour management include monitoring behaviour, effective discipline and promoting positive behaviours. Maree Stanley quoted in Leung (2006, p. 4) stated ‘it’s not an individual’s problem – if bullying is
happening to someone, it’s actually happening to the whole school’. Hence, a whole-school approach is generally characterised by co-ordinated action between the individual student, classroom, the school and the broader community (Henderson, 2002; Cisloewski, 2001; Howe, 2007; Wurf, 2009).

Carcache (1997) suggested that increased police presence in schools also assisted in preventing the development of adolescent antisocial behaviour. Further research by Rigby and Slee (1999) indicated that eight out of ten schools have changed their disciplinary actions within the past five years and developed close contact with the local police department for additional support. Increasing adult supervision and security by installing extra surveillance cameras and alarms is also another common way of dealing with crime in schools, and has been noted to be successful in enhancing safety in NSW (Cisloewski, 2002; Rigby et al., 2004; Campbell, 2005). This approach is quite difficult for rural schools to achieve and maintain because they often have limited resources and staff available (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 1999). The acknowledgement that interventions are not successful unless everyone is involved including students, lays the foundation for this research, which emphasises the importance of student and teacher views on the issue of antisocial behaviour and bullying.

2.5 Conclusion

Dividing this chapter into three main themes allowed an opportunity to explore the concept of antisocial behaviour from a range of perspectives. It also established a solid foundation to aid in understanding the impact that bullying has on the community, school, family and individual. It was important to distinguish bullying from juvenile crime and antisocial behaviour at the beginning of the chapter, to aid in establishing a focal point towards bullying and acknowledge that it is a relevant issue within our education system and the workplace.

Past and present research showed that antisocial behaviour in schools does not exist in isolation but is influenced by a variety of factors depending on which theory is applied. Social learning theory focused on the socialisation process, stating that negative interactions influence antisocial behaviour and bullying. Becker’s labelling theory and control theory both acknowledged that society contributes to the development of antisocial behaviour and bullying. Becker recognised that how society described and acknowledges people determines how an individual interacts. Control theory draws attention to the fact
that societal norms and procedures affect attachment and resilience levels to different institutions, which in turn influence an individual’s behaviour. In comparison the social development model acknowledged the biochemical changes that contribute to the development of bullying.

Despite what may influence the existence of bullying within the education system, it does not change the fact that bullying can affect a victim physically, psychologically and emotionally. The severity of the consequences depends on an individual’s resilience level. The acknowledgment of existing interventions and preventive measures revealed that bullying cannot be dealt with in isolation but rather requires the assistance of students, parents and teachers in collaboration. This understanding assisted in establishing the foundation for the direction of the research. Now that an analysis of the relevant literature has been conducted, the next chapter will introduce the participants and methodology of the current research.
Chapter three: Methodology

...qualitative research focuses on identifying, documenting, and knowing (by interpretation) the world views, values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and general characteristics of life events, situations, ceremonies and specific phenomena under investigation, with the goal being to document and interpret as fully as possible, the totality of whatever is being studied in particular contexts from the people’s viewpoint or frame of reference.

(Leininger, 1985, p. 23)

3.1 Introduction

The above quote from Leininger (1985) reinforces the importance of understanding the issue of bullying not just from a theoretical basis, but also from the viewpoint of students and teachers. This chapter will review the methodology that was utilised in the research to enable an exploration of the relationship between the school environment and antisocial behaviour.

The chapter consists of four sections. The first section will discuss the theoretical framework of interpretivism, specifically in regards to symbolic interaction theory, which will provide a deeper understanding of the participant’s views on the issue of bullying. The second section will provide a description of the research design and methodology, and is broken into six sub-sections. The first three sub-sections will focus on the format of the research (case study, qualitative and focus group) and will be discussed in that order. The following sub-sections will review the process of engaging the secondary college and then recruiting participants, and will also provide a description of how the focus groups were conducted. The last section will review the ethical and confidentiality considerations that arose during the completion of the current research, and will then outline how the collected data will be presented in the upcoming chapters.

3.2 Conceptual framework for the research

This section focuses on the theoretical framework for the current research, interpretivism and symbolic interaction theory, and will be discussed in that order.
3.2.1 Interpretivist approach

Crotty (1998) described theoretical frameworks in five main streams; positivism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism and postmodernism. For the purpose of the current research the interpretive theoretical framework was utilised. Interpretivism can be traced back to Max Weber, who argued that social science needed to study the meaning behind actions (Evans & King, 2006). This framework is an appropriate methodology to apply when a researcher wishes to discover a more comprehensive description of the interrelationships between an individual and their environment (Vrasidas, 2001; Thomas, 2009). Interpretivism as a framework is only successful when researchers put themselves in other people’s shoes and try to understand the world from their perspective (Evans & King, 2006).

Such a framework often uses qualitative measures such as interviews, biographies/autobiographies, participant observation and fieldwork research to gather in-depth understanding of different meanings associated with past and present interactions and activities (Crotty, 1998; Vrasidas, 2001; Scott & Morrison, 2006). Interpretivism acknowledges both verbal and non-verbal behaviour no matter which qualitative measure is utilised (Thomas, 2009). It is important to recognise that no knowledge or observation can be independent of interpretation or reasoning. Data gathered through an interpretive approach can not be value free, as the researcher’s preconceptions often guide the process of inquiry with participants (Klenke, 2008; Thomas, 2009).

Interpretivism tends to adapt a more practical orientation compared to other theories, by concentrating on how individuals interact and what meaning is placed on different experiences (Neuman, 2000). According to the interpretive framework the social world can-not be described and understood without acknowledging how people use language, symbols and meaning to construct their interactions (Klenke, 2008). Blumer (1969, p. 2) stated that this is:

…either taken for granted and thus pushed aside as unimportant or it is regarded as a mere neutral link between the factors responsible for human behaviour and this behaviour as the product of such factors.
Interpretive theory argues that if we understand the meaning and motivations behind an individual’s actions, we are better able to predict how individuals are likely to act in different circumstances or changes to their environment (Evans & King, 2006). Individuals can often attach various meanings to different situations, all of which are equally valid (Scott & Morrison, 2006; Thomas, 2009). This means that interpretations need to be understood in context (Klenke, 2008). Meaning and understanding of situations varies across cultures and across different timeframes (Evans & King, 2006). In relation to social development model (Chapter 2.3.4) an individual’s view of a situation or topic can differ with the development of maturity.

The interpretive approach does not recognise rules and regulations, but rather reflects the social phenomena associated with leadership (Klenke, 2008, p. 24). According to Vrasidas (2001) interactions may be socially constructed to fit within a particular context. Whenever an individual’s behaviour differs from the norm, a label is often used to describe that person and their behaviour. This supports labelling theory which will be discussed in more detail later (Chapter 2.3.2).

When this theoretical framework was applied to the current study, it assisted in understanding the meanings and interpretations that both students and teachers associated with bullying. This is an important aspect of research, as it establishes whether student and staff definitions/views of bullying coincide with the literature. The research will focus on the impact that peer influence, school attachment, academic achievement and school disciplinary actions have on the development of antisocial behaviour. Crotty (1998) further divided interpretivism into additional sub-categories phenomenology, hermeneutics and symbolic interaction. This research specifically utilised a symbolic interactionist approach when interpreting the data from the student and teacher participants.

### 3.2.2 Symbolic interaction

Symbolic interaction theory is a social-psychological approach that was developed by George Herbert Mead in 1937 (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Greene, Ephross, Saltman, Cohen & Kropf, 2009). It focuses on the principle that reality is not a given, but rather occurs through participation in social groups (Greene et al., 2009). In a society full of communication, symbols and interactions, this theory focuses on the meaning and interpretation associated with these interactions (Patton, 2002; Stryker &
Vryan, 2003). Vrasidas (2001) described interactions as a process of actions conducted by two or more people within any given situation. Symbolic interaction is also not only observed interactions between individuals, but also the interactive process between an individual and an event (Fernandez, 1996, p. 56). It focuses on how interactions develop both societies and institutions (Greene et al., 2009).

According to symbolic interaction theory, when establishing the meaning behind an interaction there are three important aspects to meaning. First, individuals act on the basis of meanings; second, meaning occurs through social interaction with others; and, finally, meanings are continuously changing due to new experiences and interactions (Klenke, 2008). People can adjust their behaviour in response to how they interpret others and their actions (Smit & Fritz, 2008). The impact that peer influence has on the way actions are interpreted also changes over time (Berger et al., 2009). According to Blumer (1969, p. 4-5):

...symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact.

Individuals uniquely respond to different objects and people based on the symbols and meanings they have developed through past interactions and experiences (Fernandez, 1996; Smit & Fritz, 2008; Berger et al., 2009; Greene et al., 2009). Thus if an individual has been given a label, this will have a definite influence on the meaning and interpretation that others will give to that person and their behaviour (Patton, 2002). There is never a unified perspective of a situation, because no individual has the same history or holds the same assumptions and concepts as someone else (Cohen et al., 2007). When utilising symbolic interaction as a conceptual framework, it must be remembered that no interaction can be taken from the bigger picture and examined individually. Each interaction needs to stay in context to achieve the most accurate interpretation of the information. The context of a variable is important as it provides a history to the situation, past interaction sequences and future interaction patterns (Vrasidas, 2001). To ensure that this occurs in the current research each comment and statement will be analysed in relation to the surrounding conversation and by recognising the corresponding body language.
Symbolic interaction theory also contends that shared meanings or experiences can shed light on what is important to most people, and assist them in understanding themselves and their situation from interactions with others (Fernandez, 1996; Patton, 2002; Smit & Fritz, 2008). It acknowledges that people are self-conscious thinking individuals, whose reactions to a particular situation reflects their personality and how they view the world (Vrasidas, 2001; Cohen et al., 2007; Greene et al., 2009). Past research by Mead (1934 cited in Kubrin et al., 2008) concurred that an individual’s identity, self concept, values and attitudes exist only in the context of interaction with others.

The application of this theoretical perspective to this research can provide an insight in to the meanings and experiences that students and teachers associate with bullying and antisocial behaviour. Symbolic interaction theory assisted in understanding the similarities and differences between the participants’ views on bullying and the literature.

3.3 Research design and methodology

This section describes the methodology used in this research (case study, qualitative and focus groups) and the difficulties that the researcher experienced while conducting the research. Complications included gaining access to a secondary college and recruiting student and teacher participants. The last part of the section provides a description of the participants, and the structure and format of the focus group interviews.

3.3.1 A case study approach

Case studies provide researchers with a unique understanding not only of individuals, but also groups and phenomenon (Stake, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Merriam, 2009). Case studies document multiple perspectives and can assist in explaining how and why things happen through actual situations as opposed to preconceived ideas (Mustafa, 2008; Simons, 2009). Despite the focus or type of case study, their distinguishing feature is that they are made up of a collection of traits (Sturman, 1997, p. 61). A case study can be a method, technique, an approach to social reality or a way of describing data in terms of a chosen unit (Mustafa, 2008; Merriam, 2009). The researcher used a case study approach
in the current research by using focus group discussions to understand the social reality of antisocial behavior and bullying. According to Yin (2008, p. 18 cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 40):

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Stake (2000) divides the case study approach into three groups: intrinsic, instrumental and collective case study.

- An intrinsic case study is when the researcher hopes to achieve a better understanding of a particular case. This type of case does not necessarily represent other cases, but is chosen because it is an interesting case. Although the case may have some unique aspects, generalisation can still be applied (Stake, 2000). This type of case study has also been described as a single case study (Mustafa, 2008).

- An instrumental case study is when a particular case is studied to help provide insight into a particular issue or to make a generalisation. Such a case is usually chosen to support and facilitate an understanding of a specific topic, but is still looked at in-depth and scrutinised. An instrumental case can seem typical of other cases, but can also be unique in its own right (Stake, 2000). Similarly Mustafa (2008) described such a case study as deviant. If a researcher needs to study various cases in order to investigate a particular phenomenon, population or general condition, this is called a collective case study. They may be similar or dissimilar, and are chosen because studying them will lead to better understanding or theorising (Stake, 2000).

- A collective case study has also been described as a comparative or multiple case study (Mustafa, 2008). A collective case study has also been described as a comparative or multiple case study (Mustafa, 2008).

This research uses the instrumental case study, as each focus group has provided insight into the extent in which peer influence and other factors in the school environment contribute to antisocial behaviour and bullying.
A case study approach is one of the most common methods used in qualitative research, as it provides a choice of what is to be studied, whether it is a unique case or one that can be generalised (Stake, 2000). Case study information can be established through a variety of methods, for example observation, interviews or focus groups (Shaw & Gould, 2001). The current research will utilise focus groups as a research format. The data collected from these various methods are usually raw descriptive data, which then can be generally divided into themes, categories and case examples (Labuschange, 2003). Case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not possible when conducting a numerical analysis, or presenting abstract theories or principles (Cohen et al., 2007). This type of methodology allows participants to engage in the research process and recognises the importance of their input on the phenomenon or situation (Simons, 2009, p. 23).

According to Yin (1994), case studies can be used for three purposes: exploratory, descriptive or explanatory, depending on the chosen research question. A case study approach was utilised in this research for the purpose of exploring the connection between the school environment and antisocial behaviour. Case studies are quite valuable in capturing individual experiences amongst participants, as they provide an in-depth analysis (Patton, 2002). According to Stake (2000), case studies must be examined using the holistic approach, which examines all complexities of a case, including the type of group and the occasion. The holistic approach acknowledges that cases are influenced by many factors. The case study approach also recognises that all factors of an issue are interdependent and inseparable, thus one element, such as bullying, cannot be labelled as a high predictor of crime without acknowledging that peer influence may also be a contributing factor (Sturman, 1997).

Triangulation is another process of acknowledging multiple perceptions through the use of case studies. In an attempt to clarify meaning, verify observations and interpretation it provides a different way that phenomenon can be viewed or observed (Stake, 2000). According to Denzin (1979, p. 248 cited in Switzer, 2006) there are four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory and methodological. Data triangulation is when the researcher uses a variety of sources to collect data. In comparison, investigator triangulation is when more than one researcher is investigating a phenomenon. Theory triangulation occurs when multiple theories and/or perspectives are utilised when interpreting the data. This type of triangulation was utilised in the current research as a variety of theories were acknowledged and used for interpreting the data. Lastly, methodological triangulation is when the researcher uses multiple methods to study the problem. By combining multiple perceptions,
observations, theories and methods it enhances the trustworthiness of the analysis and reduces chances of biases and problems (Switzer, 2006). It also allows the limitations of each research method to be complemented by the strengths of other methodologies (Chernatony, Drury & Segal-Horn, 2002).

Case studies allow conclusions to be drawn from the similarities and differences between the various points in relation to a specific study objective (Mustafa, 2008). Past research by Sturman (1997) states that researchers who use the case study approach seek both what is common and what is unique. When analysing cases researchers also examine the following - the nature of the case, the historical background of the case, physical setting, economic or political contexts and other cases in which a similar theme is recognised and the participants involved in each case (Stake, 2000). In regards to the current research some of the major factors to consider when analysing this case study are the rural setting of the case study and also the unique qualitative information that the student and teacher participants provide.

### 3.3.2 Qualitative research

The decision to use either a qualitative or quantitative paradigm in research depends on the research questions (Neuman, 2000). Neither paradigm is superior to the other, as they can both be used to compliment each other (Sturman, 1997). According to Evered and Louis (2001 cited in Iacono, Brown & Holtham, 2009, p. 42) quantitative studies provide an ‘inquiry from the outside’ by interpreting data through numbers and frequency. In comparison qualitative research presents an ‘inquiry from the inside’ seeks to establish depth from the data, and is generally more valid and relevant. The most significant difference between quantitative and qualitative research is the approach taken in the analysis stage. In quantitative research a clear distinction can be made between data collection and analysis, because an analysis cannot be conducted before all data is collected. In contrast research collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting are often carried out in parallel for qualitative research (Iacono et al., 2009). More recently, Stake (2010) reported that the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is twofold; firstly quantitative research aims for explanation, whereas qualitative research aims for understanding. Secondly quantitative methodology takes on a more impersonal role compared to a qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research has also been described as naturalistic, interpretive, situational and experiential (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010). Qualitative research paradigm is widely utilised across many research fields ranging from anthropology to biology (Stake, 2010).
Rather than focusing on the cause and effect or source of a phenomenon, qualitative research emphasises the importance of understanding the social world and the complexities of a situation (Vrasidas, 2001; Patton, 2002; Ospina, 2004). This is achieved through exploration and discovery of the meanings and experiences that individuals associate with a topic or issue, which follows the principles of interpretivism (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research provides more opportunities to follow unexpected ideas and explore processes more effectively (Ospina, 2004). Van Maanen (1979, p. 520) described qualitative research as:

...an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not frequency... naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.

Process and meanings cannot be measured in terms of quantity or frequency, but rather through descriptive words and images that provide depth and detail to a particular issue (Labuschange, 2003; Ospina, 2004; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research emphasises intimate firsthand knowledge of an issue or topic, by placing great confidence on individual personal accounts (Sturman, 1997; Neuman, 2000).

Qualitative research occurs in the form of observation rather than experiments, using unstructured interviews to document the world from various people’s points of view (Neuman, 2000). Neuman (2000) further describes qualitative research as a cyclical process, as it does not follow a direct path, but can go through the information an unlimited amount of times, collecting new data each time. Data is presented in a combination of documents, interview quotes, and field notes (Merriam, 2009). Results from qualitative data are also presented in the form of themes, categories, concepts, tentative hypothesis and the development of theories that emphasise the process and sequence of a specific issue (Neuman, 2000; Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009). Researchers not only search for patterns and themes across individual experiences, but also draw attention to any unique variables (Patton, 2002).

This research utilised a qualitative research method because as the literature in the previous chapter showed there is limited qualitative research in Australia about antisocial behaviour and bullying. Using a
qualitative methodology also allowed the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of student and teachers’ perspectives on the issue. This provided a solid foundation in which to apply the interpretive and symbolic interaction framework. To best ensure that patterns and themes are recognised within the present study, focus groups were utilised to gain information about individual experiences in the area of bullying.

3.3.3 A focus group design

The primary purpose of a focus group is to bring together four to 10 participants from a specific chosen population to evaluate and explore a subject in a group setting (Ressel, Gualda & Gonzales, 2002; Finch & Lewis, 2003; Cohen et al., 2007). Focus groups provide a social context for research, as they allow an opportunity to explore how peoples’ views and definitions are shaped through conversation (Finch & Lewis, 2003). When focus groups are used it is essential to provide an environment in which participants feel comfortable sharing their opinions and thoughts (Ressel et al., 2002). This is better achieved if the focus group consists of relative strangers rather than friends (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants in the current research were from a variety of year levels and classes to assist in creating a safe environment to discuss such a sensitive issue.

A focus group is an interview that is not just a conversation between the researcher and the group, but also allows the participants to interact with each other (Cohen et al., 2007). The interaction between participants provides an opportunity for reflection and refinement, which can intensify the insight into the topic (Finch & Lewis, 2003). This format can also decrease any hierarchy that may exist between the researcher and the participant. How participants interact in focus groups, as well how they respond provides important data for the researcher, which can-not be achieved through individual interviews (Ressel et al., 2002).

There are some negatives when utilising focus groups in research. The number of people involved tends to be small, which may affect participation levels of some members in the group. Other limitations of a focus group are that less information may be achieved compared to a survey and the variety of topics covered might be limited (Cohen et al., 2007). In contrast, if the participation in a focus group
discussion is quite in-depth and detailed, this could prevent all research questions from being asked and answered.

For this research the focus groups followed a semi-structured format to establish consistency among the different focus groups. To assist in creating a safe environment in the focus groups and to elicit different views on the topic of antisocial behaviour and bullying, participants were separated into three different groups; year 7/8 students, year 9/10 students and teachers. The interactions between participants in the focus groups also provided the researcher with a wealth of knowledge that could not have been achieved through the use of individual interviews, given the small scale of the research. The use of focus groups was also time and cost effective. The next sub-section will outline the process of gaining access to a secondary college for the purpose of conducting the focus groups.

3.3.4 If at first you don’t succeed...

Prior to starting this research there was extensive media coverage about antisocial behaviour occurring in various Victorian metropolitan schools, such as Werribee and Xavier Secondary Colleges, Melbourne, Australia, so the researcher initially planned to conduct the research in a metropolitan school. Unfortunately obtaining access to an urban secondary college to undertake this research proved to be more difficult than the researcher expected. According to Cohen et al., (2007, p. 55) despite ethics approval being granted, education staff are reluctant to participate in research, as it causes disruption to class schedules and can be viewed as intrusive.

The researcher attempted to gain access to a metropolitan secondary college by utilising personal connections. Approaches were made to two secondary colleges in the eastern and northern suburbs with the initial contact varying between the two schools. When approaching the school in the eastern suburbs the researcher sent an email to the principal about the current research and asked to make an appointment to discuss it in more detail. The principal declined the offer and explained that this particular school was often approached by research students to conduct studies at their school, but due to time commitments for staff, students and parents this was not a possibility. When the researcher first approached the principal in the northern suburbs the response appeared to be positive, but when the researcher attempted to arrange a meeting via several phone calls and emails, no further response was received. Delamont (1992) stated that access to a school or organisation is not negotiated once and
then settled, but rather can take enormous amounts of time to achieve. This is due to access being a process of steps rather than a simple decision.

Since the researcher was unsuccessful obtaining access to a metropolitan school she then approached the secondary college that she had attended KSC\textsuperscript{15} in northern country Victoria. The researcher sent an email to KSC staff with an outline of the research and asked whether they would consider allowing the research to be conducted in their school. An outline of the research, as opposed to the interview questions, was attached to the email so that if there were any concerns about the content of the questions they could be discussed in person (Delamont, 1992). The researcher received a reply from the assistant principal within the same week, stating that the school was interested in the direction of the current research project and would like to arrange a time to meet with the researcher.

The assistant principal of KSC and the researcher met to discuss the objectives and dimensions of the current research in more detail. During the meeting it was decided that the best way to recruit student participants was by promoting the research project in the school’s fortnightly newsletter (Appendix B: Copy of Newsletter Advertisement). Any students or their parents who were interested in the research were to contact the school for further information and a consent form. In contrast teachers were informed about the research via internal email and at their staff meeting. Interested staff members forwarded their signed consent form to the assistant principal. The researcher and assistant principal also scheduled a date for the researcher to return to KSC and conduct the focus group interviews.

### 3.3.5 Participant recruitment

When the researcher returned to KSC to arrange times to conduct the focus groups, she was informed that no parents or students had expressed interest in participating in the study. In response, the assistant principal stated that over the following two days she would approach various students about participating in the focus groups. Three teachers had expressed interest in the research project and had returned their consent forms.

\textsuperscript{15} The researcher obtained permission from the assistant principal to name KSC in the current study as the school was interested in the findings from the research (Appendix A: Letter from KSC).
When the researcher returned to KSC two days later, the assistant principal had approached and obtained signed consent forms from a number of students in various year levels. It became apparent to the researcher that some students’ motivation to participate in the research, was that it provided an opportunity to be absent from class. Despite an individual’s reason for participating, it did not affect their level of participation in the focus group discussions.

The three focus groups in the research consisted of 13 students and 3 teachers. The students were divided into two focus groups; years 7/8 and 9/10. Students from year 11/12 were excluded from the research due to their extensive workloads, and also because past research shows that antisocial behaviour tends to occur more frequently in the lower year levels (Rigby, 1997). The configuration of the focus groups was as follows:

**Focus group one:** (Four students)
- Two year 7 students
- Two year 8 students

Will be referred to as the year 7/8 focus group

**Focus group two:** (Nine students)
- Five year 9 students
- Four year 10 students

Will be referred to as the year 9/10 focus group

**Focus group three:**
- Three teachers

Will be referred to as the teacher focus group

Both of the student focus groups consisted of a combination of male and female participants, compared with the teacher focus group, which consisted of only female participants. Each focus group discussed
the connection between school environment and antisocial behaviour, utilising a semi-structured interview format. The information gathered in the focus groups was a combination of the discussion derived from the questions and the interaction between the participants. The procedure for conducting the focus groups will now be presented.

### 3.3.6 Conducting the focus groups

Prior to attending the focus groups, participants were provided with the following documentation:

1. A plain language statement explaining the research project and the purpose of the study. The name and number of a psychologist who could provide additional support, if necessary, was also included in the information (Appendix C: Student Plain Language Statement & Appendix D: Teacher Plain Language Statement).
2. A consent form to be signed by the participant or their parent or legal guardian, if they were under the age of 18 (Appendix E: Consent Form).

At the beginning of each focus group confidentiality and anonymity were discussed and signed consent forms were gathered. Participants were then provided with a copy of the questions that would guide the discussion in the focus groups (Appendix F: Student Focus Group Questions & Appendix G: Teacher Focus Group Questions).

The researcher conducted all interviews to ensure consistency across the groups and utilised open ended questions to gain as much information as possible. Even though all participants were generally asked the same questions, the direction of the discussion varied for each group. The interviews were completed on the school premises, during class time and were 50 to 60 minutes in length. This provided a time constraint that the researcher was unable to avoid, because the end of period bell unfortunately affected the discussion in the year 9/10 student and teacher focus groups, as some questions could not be asked and no summary of the discussion was provided for these groups.
With participant consent the focus group discussions were tape recorded to ensure that the information provided was documented accurately. This process enhanced the validity and reliability of the research. Upon completion of the data collection the tapes were transcribed by the researcher to assist in acknowledging all themes that emerged from the data. Additionally, the researcher’s background in psychology also assisted in providing a rich and in-depth view to the data collected from the participants. Anonymity and the well-being of the participants are not the only ethical and confidentiality issues that needed to be recognised as the next section will reveal.

3.4 Ethics, reliability and validity

This section will discuss the ethical and confidentiality issues that the researcher had to consider while completing the current research. The concepts of reliability and validity will also be outlined.

3.4.1 Ethics and confidentiality considerations

Prior to commencement of the research, approval and authorisation were obtained from the ethic committees involved with this study, including RMIT Ethics Committee (Appendix H: RMIT Ethics Approval) and the Victorian Department of Education (Appendix I: Department of Education Ethics Approval). An ethical concern for this research project was that the students were under 18 years of age. This was overcome by gaining parental consent for the student participants prior to commencement of the focus groups.

Cohen et al., (2007) reported that confidentiality is of critical importance when conducting qualitative research. In the current research it was established that confidentiality and anonymity would occur through the use of pseudonyms. Confidentiality was further ensured by having only the researcher transcribe the interviews.

The final ethical issue that needed to be considered when conducting this research was the sensitivity of the topic. The interviews were conducted in a non-threatening manner to ensure that the participants would feel comfortable in disclosing their honest opinions, and on some occasions their own personal
experience. All participants took part in the study voluntarily and could withdraw at any time. Details of a psychologist were provided in case the participants experienced any distress whilst discussing the connection between antisocial behaviour and the school environment. For this research to be credible it is important to establish reliability and validity for the data obtained and this will be discussed next.

3.4.2 Reliability and validity

There are many definitions and types of reliability and validity in both quantitative and qualitative research, but they often vary depending on the research methodology. In quantitative research reliability and validity are viewed separately, whereas in qualitative research they are combined and are often referred to as credibility, transferability and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). In quantitative research the credibility of the research depends on instrument construction, but in qualitative research credibility of the study depends on the ability and focus of the researcher (Patton, 2002; Golafshani, 2003). Credibility in qualitative research is achieved by utilising semi-structured interviews, summary verification and thematic analysis to ensure that each participant's experience comes alive for the reader (Araneta, 2011). The terms transferability and transparency refer to the process in which data is documented and transferred to the readers (Flick, 2008). In relation to the current research the researcher was involved in all aspects of the research process including conducting the focus groups, transcribing the data and developing the analysis of the data.

According to Creswell (2002) reliability plays a minor role in qualitative research, and validity is considered the strength of this type of research methodology. This minor role is irrelevant in qualitative research because repetition in the evaluation of interviews would more likely be a 'constructed/rehearsed' version as opposed to reliability (Golafshani, 2003, Flick, 2008). Joppe (2000, p. 1 cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 599) described validity:

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit 'the bull’s eyes’ of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions and will often look for the answers in the research of others.
Cohen et al., (2007) and Araneta (2011) reported that qualitative researchers achieve validity by gathering rich and substantive descriptions known as triangulation from participant’s accounts of their lived experiences. According to Creswell and Miller (2000, p. 126 cited in Golafshani 2003) triangulation has been described as:

...a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study.

Validity can be further separated into internal and external validity. Internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event or issue can be substantiated by data (Cohen et al., 2007; Flick, 2008). In comparison, external validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population (Cohen et al., 2007). Validity for the current research will be achieved in Chapter 5, which conducts an analysis of the data collected and the literature on the issue.

3.5 Analysis and development of themes

The first step of data analysis for qualitative research is carefully transcribing the individual focus group interviews (Patton, 2002). Glaser and Strauss (1967) reflected the importance of fully understanding the content of the interviews before analysis occurs, to ensure that emergent patterns and themes are grounded for the specific focus group and in context. Finding themes and patterns across multiple interview transcripts cannot be reduced to a formula or a standard series of steps, because they are developed through various sources - concrete and detailed observations, quotations and documents (Patton, 2002). A theme captures something important about the data and represents some level of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis of data typically fall into two categories, known as content and thematic analysis. Content analysis is when the researcher evaluates the frequency of particular words or phrases used throughout the original text, which can often limit the richness of the data (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). In comparison, thematic analysis focuses on identifying both implicit and explicit ideas/themes in the data, and by also observing how the participants interact. Thus this type of analysis is seen as a
fundamental method for qualitative studies due to its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is what was utilised for the analysis of the data for this research project.

There are two separate approaches for thematic analysis: inductive and theoretical approaches (Patton, 2002). The inductive approach is when the themes are identified from the data without any pre-existing ideas or conclusions, thus the analysis is data driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest & MacQueen, 2008). Data driven approaches are considered to have greater validity because they are more flexible and open to themes that may not have been previously considered. In comparison theoretical approaches where the analysis is directed by the researcher’s specific ideas or hypothesis have less validity (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). This form of analysis tends to provide a less rich description of data overall and a more detailed analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest & MacQueen, 2008). The thematic analysis for the current research project applied the inductive approach as neither student nor teacher views on the topic have not been extensively explored, as far as the researcher can determine.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Applying a qualitative methodology to the current research provided a unique opportunity to report the meanings and interpretations that both students and teachers associate with antisocial behaviour in the school environment. Utilising symbolic interaction theory further assisted in establishing whether the participant’s views on antisocial behaviour are similar to or different from the literature.

The research aims and questions were utilised as a guideline for the semi-structured focus groups and to encourage the participants to share valuable insight and understanding on the topic of bullying. The interactions between participants in the focus groups also provided the researcher with a wealth of knowledge, which could not have been achieved through the use of individual interviews.

Now that the methodology has been established, the next chapter will present a profile of the participants, and their views on the relationship between the education system and antisocial behaviour.
Chapter four: Antisocial behaviour and bullying: The participants discuss

...Sometimes you don’t see the beginning but rather deal with the retaliation… There is always a ball of wool unravelling.

(Teacher A)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a presentation of the findings from the research. As Teacher A in the quote above reflects, there are many dimensions and elements to acknowledge when discussing antisocial behaviour and bullying. Participant responses will be presented in the following order; year 7/8 responses, year 9/10 responses and then finally the teacher’s responses. The chapter has been structured this way because the focus of this study is primarily about young people’s views on the issue of antisocial behaviour within the education system. A profile of the participants in each focus group, and how they interacted as a group will be provided at the start of the chapter. The findings are organised into three themes. The first theme identifies the different dimensions of antisocial behaviour and bullying, and is presented in three sub-themes: antisocial behaviour, physical bullying, and emotional and cyber-bullying. The second theme draws attention to not only to the bully and victim but also bystanders, and how they respond to witnessed bullying. The last theme looks at bullying specifically in relation to KSC and has been separated into two sub-themes; policies and procedures utilised at KSC, and the limitations that exist when trying to control bullying.

Throughout the chapter descriptions of the interactions and dynamics observed by the researcher are reflected. These observations have been acknowledged as they provide another dimension to the research, because the way each different group interacted contributed to the depth and content of the topic.
4.2 Participant profiles

Since the participants’ responses are the foundation of this research it is important to provide a brief description of who they are. General information regarding the participants has been provided in three different tables, representing the three focus groups. The details provided in the first two tables represent the participants from the student focus groups and include information such as their gender and year level. Other descriptive data about the participants has been provided in the paragraphs following the tables. The last table reveals basic details about the teacher participants and includes their gender and years of experience. As with the student tables other descriptive information regarding the teachers has been included in the paragraph following the table. All participants have been given a pseudonym of letters A to M, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Table 4.1 shows the characteristics of the four respondents in the year 7/8 focus group. The small focus group and the inconsistency between male and female participants could be explained by the fact that this was the first focus group conducted; hence participants were unsure of what to expect so did not want to participate.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the participants from the Year 7/8 focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year level</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Despite the limited amount of participants in the year 7/8 focus group each participant played a vital role in the discussion due to their differing experiences. It was revealed during the group interview that both Students A and B had been victims of bullying the previous year. Both were open about their experience and readily expressed their opinions and views about bullying. Although Students C and D
were less vocal during the interview and had not experienced bullying on a personal level, they were also able to provide valuable insight into the issue of bullying at KSC.

Table 4.2 below presents information on the nine participants from the year 9/10 focus group, eight of whom were male participants. The more participants in this focus group could be due to the fact that the older students were given the choice to either participate in the researcher’s study or attend class.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of the participants from Years 9/10 focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
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<td>M</td>
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The majority of participants in this focus group were observed to be more forth coming with their answers, compared with the year 7/8 focus group. The different energy levels between the two student groups could possibly be explained by the older group’s different experience of bullying, as no participants in the older group revealed that they had been the victim of bullying. Similar to the younger focus group, not all participants in the year 9/10 group were as vocal in their opinions. Students F and J
did not contribute to the conversation as much as the other participants, but when they were asked a direct question they both gave insightful answers.

Table 4.3 represents the participants from the teacher focus group. The small number of participants could reflect both the teaching staffs extensive workloads and their limited time to participate in extra activities or projects.

Table 4.3: Characteristics of the participants from the teacher focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Yrs of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each participant in the teacher focus group was female, which in the researcher’s opinion could reflect the fact that the staff at KSC is predominantly female. The participants reported varying years of experience - Teachers A and B had both been year level co-ordinators in the past and had worked in at least three different public schools throughout their teaching careers. The remainder of the chapter will now present the data from the participants, starting with their definitions of antisocial behaviour and bullying.

4.3 Types of antisocial behaviour and bullying

This theme reflects the participants’ definitions and views on the topic of antisocial behaviour and bullying. The theme has been separated into three sub-themes reflecting the different types of negative behaviour. The first theme discusses antisocial behaviour in general, and then the last two sub-themes focus on physical bullying and emotional and cyber-bullying respectively.
4.3.1 Antisocial behaviour

In the year 7/8 focus group a warm-up question explored the link between negative and antisocial behaviour. Such a broad question was initially used by the researcher as a way of introducing the students to the discussion, and also to gain an understanding of their knowledge about the topic. Various negative behaviours in relation to the education system were described by the younger students. Students B and C suggested cheating and lying, but all of the year 7/8 participants described wagging school as a negative behaviour that occurs regularly. The main type of negative behaviour that was mentioned in the younger focus group was the action of picking on people. All the participants in the 7/8 focus group reflected that if someone became upset by another person’s actions or comments, this is being picked on. The year 7/8 participants also felt that picking on people can include when a joke has gone too far. The participants reflected that it is often difficult to recognise when a joke has gone too far and is no longer funny, due to everyone having a different sense of humour.

Sometimes it is fun, when you are laughing around and it is a joke… It might be bullying or it might be a joke. Don’t know depends on the situation (Student A).

Students B and C stated that when a joke is directed towards someone they do not consider to be their friend or someone they don’t know, then that could be classified as bullying because it could easily be taken out of context.

When the year 9/10 group was asked about negative behaviour, the responses included Students G, H and I considering wagging school as a type of negative behaviour. Another type of antisocial behaviour that was recognised by Student J was stealing. In contrast, Student G felt that stealing should not always be classified as a negative behaviour, particularly if an individual was stealing in reaction to other antisocial behaviour. When this view was explored in more detail, the majority of the older focus group participants supported Student J’s original view and agreed that even stealing in retribution should be considered as antisocial behaviour.

Students E, G, I, and L also recognised that sometimes a joke can be classified as bullying. Student H reflected:
They say picking on a friend would be like joking as opposed to bullying, it is joking around. When it is someone you don't know it gets a bit more serious.

Unlike the student focus groups the teacher participants were not asked a warm up question, and instead were asked to describe antisocial behaviour. Two of the teachers’ descriptions of this behaviour were similar to the students, as Teachers A and B also acknowledged wagging school as a type of antisocial behaviour. All teacher participants also recognised that what starts off as a joke can often turn into bullying:

…bullying could be that if I was having a joke with you and you were not laughing, then that is bullying because that person is not feeling comfortable with the humour (Teacher A).

What interested the researcher was that one participant in the teacher focus group also stated that compared to previous generations, adolescents today are less likely to see particular actions as a joke but rather describe them as antisocial.

…we are bringing up a generation of people who are too sensitive, who can not take a joke and take everything as bullying… some kids can't bounce back …a lot of people are lacking the resilience to fight back (Teacher B).

Each focus group had similar views on what behaviours could be defined as antisocial behaviour. When the discussion moved towards describing specific types of bullying the answers across the focus groups started to vary.

### 4.3.2 Physical bullying

When the year 7/8 students were asked to describe what they viewed as physical bullying a variety of examples was given. They suggested actions such as throwing rocks, using spit balls, kicking, pushing
and hitting as examples of physical bullying. Students A, B and C further stated that such physical bullying tended to occur around the year 7 lockers on a regular basis.

Because the year 7 lockers have a very small gap to walk through and they just push you out of the way. If you are in front of their locker they will make you hit your head on the locker (Student A).

Descriptions of different types of physical bullying became more specific as the conversation developed. Student A described hiding an individual’s bag as a particular form of bullying. Student C further suggested that pulling a chair out from under someone was another type of physical bullying.

When you stand up they pull your chair out so you have to sit on the floor... It is bullying if the person doesn’t like that person and do it for a laugh (Student C).

Student C also described following an individual home from school as a type of physical bullying. Other ways in which bullying moves outside of the school environment into a victim’s home and community will be explored in more detail later in the chapter. Two of the year 7/8 participants also tended to view physical bullying as a more targeted approach towards a particular victim, which could be seen on a daily basis at KSC.

Similar to the year 7/8 focus group Students E and L suggested behaviours such as hitting and pushing as different types of physical bullying, but this is where the similarities end. Five of the year 9/10 group viewed physical bullying as any physical altercation, which generally occurs between two individuals of equal strength, and according to Student J only occurred on the odd occasion. Students G and H further suggested that physical bullying and altercations can sometimes occur between females, because of relationships or to gain male attention. Such altercations are often viewed as entertaining by bystanders. Student M reflected:
No guy is going to jump in with two girls fighting…watching two girls fight over them is probably every guy’s dream and they wouldn’t want to stop that.

The entertainment value of watching a physical fight between two or more people was not restricted to females, as Student I reflected that two males fighting would also be entertaining.

Physical bullying as a source of entertainment in the school environment was also acknowledged by three participants in the teacher focus group. Teacher B recalled that when she was completing her education if there was a fight between two people, others would run from all areas of the school to watch. Two teacher participants also stated that physical bullying can occur on a daily basis at KSC, as adolescents often interact in a physical manner which can then escalate into antisocial interactions. Teachers A and B reported that physical bullying towards one particular individual does not occur as much in the school environment, but rather takes on the form of playful pushing and shoving in the corridors particularly between males.

Boys will wrestle each other to the floor… rather than say you are my best mate (Teacher A).

The discussions about physical bullying varied across the different focus groups, which the researcher believes is a reflection of each different focus group’s personal experiences. The next sub-theme reflects the participants’ views on both emotional and cyber-bullying.

### 4.3.3 Emotional and cyber-bullying

Three participants from the 7/8 focus group acknowledged that emotional bullying has different facets and no real limitations. Participants stated that although emotional bullying occurs more frequently than physical bullying in the education system, it is often less obvious. Despite the subtlety of emotional bullying, participants in the focus group were able to provide various definitions of emotional bullying. Name-calling and negative comments were suggested by Student A and this was supported by Student B.
The act of passing notes about another student was also regarded by two participants in the 7/8 focus group as a form of emotional bullying. Student C stated that notes provide an opportunity for bullies to write offensive information about other students which can be shared amongst their peers, often without the victim’s knowledge. It was at this point in the discussion that Student B shared her experience of being the victim of bullying:

… someone was writing notes about me and they were sitting right next to me, and I seen them do it. I sort of got angry pretty much. I got this really rude note in my locker that was telling me to go away in a different way. I also got this email saying that I was a bitch and all this.

Students A and B believed that females are more likely to be emotional bullies. At first the 7/8 participants were unaware of the term cyber-bullying, however, once a definition was provided by the researcher, two of the participants stated that this type of bullying was more prevalent than emotional bullying.

Five participants in the 9/10 focus group, Students E, G, I, K and M, recognised that emotional bullying such as negative comments and put-downs occurred more frequently than physical bullying. Student H further believed such bullying was not segregated to younger year levels but could also happen between older students.

Does happen in year 11, because as girls get older the bitchier they get… which can be classified as bullying because they are saying negative things towards another person (Student H).

Student M also referred to emotional bullying being planned, compared with the spontaneity of physical interactions.
Females go out of their way to bully someone, males just [physically] bully if they come across the person (Student M).

Students E, G, H, I, K and L also believed rumours were another form of emotional bullying. The six participants stated that rumours could include derogatory comments about someone or their family, racial statements and exaggerated observations about an individual’s personality and behaviour. According to Students J and K, rumours were the most frequently used type of bullying at KSC, as it could occur anywhere that a group of people sat down and talked. Students K and L further commented that rumours are not isolated towards a particular group, but can be started about anyone from year 7 to 12. The action of spreading rumours as being a type of emotional bullying was not mentioned in the year 7/8 focus group. This could either be because they were not aware of the level of rumours that occur at KSC or that they did not classify rumours as being a form of bullying.

As with the younger focus group the topic of cyber-bullying was only discussed in the year 9/10 group once prompted by the researcher. Students H and L acknowledged that cyber-bullying often occurs more easily than physical and emotional bullying, because there is more opportunity and it could also occur away from the school environment. Behaviour such as ringing someone at home and continuously hanging up on them was an example suggested by Student H. Four of the year 9/10 participants believed there were benefits for perpetrators of cyber-bullying, such as complete anonymity and limited or no consequences for their actions. Student E further stated that the audience of such bullying increases from one to any number of individuals.

Five people can send the email to a person or text message and you just don’t know who that person is (Student E).

Student F stated that individuals who participate in cyber-bullying cannot classify themselves as powerful or threatening, because the anonymity associated with this type of behaviour means that they don’t even own what they are saying.
It [cyber-bullying] is a weak bullying (Student F).

Like the student focus groups, Teachers A and B recognised that emotional bullying occurs more regularly than physical bullying, and it is not as readily identified.

There is certainly more emotional bullying. There is still physical bullying especially in corridors in a school situation...you see that physical play of pushing in the corridor but you don’t see the physical ‘let’s get so and so’ (Teacher B).

Girls are less likely to fight and show physical bullying but they are very good at the quiet undermine… they become very good at intimidating and showing disapproval and the teacher has no idea (Teacher A).

The concept of rumours being a specific type of emotional bullying was also mentioned by two participants in the teacher focus group, for example, spreading rumours about an individual’s love or personal life was suggested by Teacher A. Two participants believed that the use of rumours as a tool to exclude someone from a group or conversation was also prevalent. Teachers A and B also reflected that the act of exclusion is often influenced by peers as it is more effective when carried out by multiple people. The teachers also noted that students often participate in exclusion techniques in an attempt to be accepted by his/her peers. Teacher A reflected:

Say with year 8 girls where it is hip to dislike and spread rumours about the same girl at the same time...Groups often like to dislike the same people...after three or four weeks that changes and someone else is disliked.

More exclusion in the group, where they will stand around in a group and block someone out with body language...To conform and to want to feel accepted and feel cool…they [students] do
it as a group, as they get that strength from a group. Peer pressure is a really big thing that they have to deal with, until they find their inner self and they feel comfortable (Teacher B).

Three teacher participants also believed that cyber-bullying occurs more readily than other types of bullying. For example, Teacher A stated:

Even with text bullying someone would rarely text and bully without sharing the text with their friends and forwarding onto them. Generally the group knows what the text was; the only person who does not know is the poor victim.

Teachers A and B also recognised that cyber-bullying was not restricted to the school environment and often occurred out of school hours.

A child may have been crying at home and the parent asks why, and they say this is what others have been saying about me. Parents may then contact the school although it didn’t happen at school but rather on the weekend. But often the implications are that it is a school-based issue (Teacher A).

Unlike in the student focus groups the teacher participants were able to articulate that the increase in cyber-bullying is due to the advancement in technology. Teacher A recognised programs and technologies such as msn chat-rooms, the Myspace website and mobile phones as places where cyber-bullying occurs. Neither the student nor teacher participants mentioned the Facebook social media service as an arena where cyber-bullying occurs. The participants in the teacher focus group also recognised that since cyber-bullying often tends to be words on a screen, as opposed to face-to-face interaction, messages can often be misinterpreted due to lack of emotion and facial expressions:

…I think with ‘text bullying’ and things like that you can’t show emotion (Teacher A).
Overall the focus groups revealed that there is no set type of bullying that occurs amongst students. It is present throughout the school environment and sometimes within the home and community. The next theme explains how participants view a bully, victim and bystander.

4.4 Let’s paint a portrait: Bully, victim and bystander

This theme examines the different individuals involved in the bullying process - the bully, the victim and the bystander. The first and second sub-themes ascertain whether a bully or victim can be described in a certain way, and the last sub-theme acknowledges the impact that bystanders have on bullying. Each sub-theme will first reflect the participant’s descriptions of the individuals involved, and then explore the reasons for and responses to bullying from each different perspective.

4.4.1 Being a bully

Various suggestions about specific characteristics of a bully were made by all four participants in the 7/8 focus group. According to Student A, a bully can look scary, be one of the cool kids or a popular student. Students A and C further acknowledged that people who have negative attachments to school are more likely to participate in bullying, compared with others.

Yep, because you don’t want to go to school and stuff and you are sick of it. You don’t want to learn so you annoy other people who are trying to learn (Student A).

In comparison Student D stated that a bully is often not a specific person but can be an ordinary person at any point in their life. It was further stated that this contradicts how bullies are represented in novels and movies.

You see on TV shows that they have just one bully, but that doesn’t actually happen that there is one person that everyone is scared of (Student A).
Reasons behind why someone would become a bully were also discussed. A variety of reasons for bullying were suggested by all participants ranging from:

People may think that he is cool (Student A).

It makes them sort of feel happy, because they like to see people feel bad (Student B).

They don’t get anything, they do it so they are not the ones who are getting bullied (Student D).

Two of the 7/8 participants did not believe that labelling individuals as bullies influences bullying, because it does not impact or change their behaviour. However, the two participants had no problem labelling particular people/groups as bullies, as they specifically referred to year 9 and 10 students bullying year 7s, and year 11 and 12 students bullying year 9 and 10s. Student A reflected:

They [year 11s and 12s] are the older ones in the school, older than all the other people so there is no one to push them around.

In addition the younger students also acknowledged that parental absence and limited structure/responsibility in the home environment influence the development of antisocial behaviour. Student D reflected that even if parents are home, it doesn’t mean they are necessarily a positive influence and could bully their child which in turn can be repeated in the school environment.

They don’t take care of them. They show them bad things and stuff (Student A).

Students A, C and D reflected that if an individual has been a victim of bullying either at home or school, they can also become a bully so as not to be a victim anymore. The individual could either
repeat the same behaviour towards someone else to achieve similar results and benefits, or in retaliation towards the original bully. Student A shared an example of this happening in the group discussion:

I know a kid that was bullied so bad that he actually really hurt the person that was bullying him.

In comparison to the year 7/8 focus group’s descriptions of scary and cool kids being a bully, six of the year 9/10 focus group classified any individual who uses physical harassment as a bully. This difference could be associated with the fact that the younger participants tended to have a more simplistic view of a bully. However, Students H, K and L agreed that anybody could become a bully including the victim of bullying.

No, I couldn’t pin point anyone. Just anyone or everyone does it (Student J).

People just take it too far sometimes, they just like go up and attack someone who has shoved them. If you say ‘stop’ they will walk away (Student L).

Student M also reflected that television programs often display bullying with only one person acting in an antisocial manner. It was also mentioned here that television often dramatises bullying to make the storyline more interesting. According to Students E and I television can also influence people’s views on bullying and the extent of the problem.

Makes me think it [television] is real, but then you realise that you have never seen that in your school (Student E).

...so it [bullying] is a worse scenario in comparison to your life (Student K).
One positive factor connected to how bullying is depicted on television was that since bullying is dramatised, bullying that occurs in a student’s own school environment was not as bad in comparison.

Makes you feel better because they are getting bullied more than what you have. So it is a worse scenario in comparison to your life (Student K).

Students E, F, G and L stated that power is one of the main reasons behind bullying.

... the only way to enjoy themselves is by picking on someone else. Someone smaller and younger because they don't know how to do it on anyone else (Student H).

Other comments made in the year 9/10 focus group about why people bully included to keep occupied, and to achieve a particular reaction from the victim.

Sometimes they [bullies] want you to react, the bullies want you to do something back to them (Student G).

Students E and I agreed that insufficient rules and responsibilities in the home environment were key contributors to the development of bullying.

Some parents just let their kids run wild (Student I).

Some parents don’t really care and let them go wherever they want. They come back to school and say that I have been here and there (Student E).
Additionally three participants from the year 9/10 focus group also reported that antisocial behaviour is not only learnt from parents but can also be influenced by siblings. According to Student H:

> Sometimes brothers and sisters can influence, if they are right into picking on all the other kids you want to be like them.

When the researcher questioned the year 9/10 students whether labelling someone as a bully would influence their behaviour, only Students E and L agreed with the younger students that such an action would not change their behaviour. In comparison the other seven year 9/10 participant’s stated that students can be judged and labelled by teachers, based on that student’s past behaviour or after a rumour about them has spread throughout the staff room.

> They judge you if you say bully somebody twice [in the past] they make a big deal, they see you and judge you. No matter what else is happening they bring it up every time (Student L).

> From the staffroom, they go in there and talk about all of us and what they have heard, and that changes how they treat you (Student I).

The teachers’ definition of a bully coincided with the year 9/10’s focus group’s view that a bully can be an ordinary person.

> This [bullying] is so wide spread to the severe physical bullying and emotional bullying right down to joking… I would have to reverse the question and say who isn’t a bully? (Teacher A).

The changing of roles from being a victim, to becoming a bully, was also considered within the teacher focus group discussion.
The victim can become a bully within a week. They fight back and they get an inkling of the reverse and I’m sure that happens quite often with the victim ‘I have had enough of this’ or ‘I am going to fight back and do that because you never get caught’ (Teacher A).

Teachers A and B also stated that the main reason that individuals participate in bullying is their need or desire for a reaction from their victim.

…in a class situation they get to know each other so well they get to know what buttons to push and what triggers it. Especially in year 8, they will go through each member of the group and they will exclude them for a while (Teacher B).

As with the student focus groups, the three teacher participants supported the view that often students learn their behaviour from their parents.

…learned behaviour that you hear from the television or from around the dinner table. ‘That teacher sucks, what does she know?’… that filters through into their attitude…Sometimes in parent teacher interviews you can see a child’s behaviour in their parents. The child may be argumentative when they are wrong and can’t meet you half-way on a discussion, you sit down with the parent to discuss why the student is not going too well and you see the same behaviour is exhibited (Teacher A).

Additionally two teachers believed that antisocial behaviour witnessed by children/adolescents does not only occur between family members, but can also be directed towards other families.

… I can think of a couple of families in this town where parents will ring up someone else and have a go because someone said something about their kid. Then they will be the bullies as well and that is how it perpetuates in some families (Teacher B).

…it [bullying] may be based on the history that the family didn’t get on with that family (Teacher A).
The discussion in the teacher focus group around the use of labels was quite informative for the researcher. All the teacher participants acknowledged that labelling or singling out an individual as a bully was a part of KSC policy and procedure.

The kids are surveyed by the welfare coordinator each year and asked about incidents of bullying in the classroom...a staff member calculates the data...profiles put up...these kids as victims, these kids as perpetrators...(Teacher A).

The researcher was informed that the purpose of listing particular students as bullies or victims was to provide teachers with more detail about the students and to identify any problem or vulnerable students. There were a number of similar themes across the three focus groups, but each group provided a unique view on the definition of a bully and the reasons behind their actions. The next sub-theme explores how the participants view and describe a victim of bullying.

4.4.2 Being a victim

When the year 7/8 focus group students described a victim of bullying, Student D stated that similar to a bully any ordinary person could become the victim of bullying. Students A and B further stated that younger students tend to be bullied more compared to older students. Three participants from the year 7/8 focus group also felt that an individual’s level of academic achievement could influence whether a person is victimised. There were varying views about whether the victim would achieve or struggle academically. According to Students C and D people who are good at school are more likely to be victimised by their peers.

I think a person who isn’t good at school would pick on the smart kids because they are better than them (Student D).

In contrast Student A believed that students are more likely to bully someone who is not academically minded.
Like if you are not as smart as everyone else you get bullied (Student A).

It was at this point that the two other year 7/8 participants reflected that if a person does struggle academically at school, there is more of a chance of them being a target for bullying from teachers as well as their peers.

If a person doesn’t do their work and the teacher doesn’t like them, they will say things to them (Student C).

I know someone that when they came to this school the teacher bullied them and said that they were not smart enough (Student B).

The participants in the year 7/8 focus group also provided a unique view on how siblings can also influence victimisation. According to Students A and B friends of older siblings can often try to bully younger students.

Their friends might think that you are an easy target (Student A).

The impact that older siblings have on bullying was reported to be quite limited in the 7/8 focus group, despite three of the participants having older siblings who attended KSC either in the past or currently. In comparison, the participants’ responses about how a victim reacts to bullying were quite enlightening. General comments, such as victims being scared and depressed, were made by Students A and D.

They [victims] feel scared of them [bullies] and stuff. They sometimes feel so scared that they don’t want to leave their home (Student A).

Students A and B reflected that when they were victims of bullying they responded to the situation by informing their parents. Despite the positive outcome that occurred when their parents contacted the
school, they both recognised that parental involvement can also have negative consequences. The other two participants also acknowledged that if a parent intervened it often made the situation worse for the victim.

You get picked on because your parents come down (Student A).

They will pick on you more because you got them in trouble (Student B).

Like some respondents in the year 7/8 focus group, Students E and I stated that any ordinary individual could at some point in their life become a victim of bullying. In comparison Students G and K described a victim of bullying as being more reserved, scrawny and nerdy. The majority of participants in the 9/10 focus group were able to articulate more specific characteristics of a victim, compared with the 7/8 focus group, which appeared to have a more simplistic view of who could be a victim of bullying.

Students H, I, K and M also agreed with thoughts of the year 7/8 focus group that teachers can bully students. Students H and M further reported that teachers have pre-conceived ideas about a student’s abilities and academic achievement, based on interactions with their siblings.

Well they sometimes made reference to my brother when I first came into the school, that didn’t really have anything to do with where I was at in my classes (Student M).

Yeah, but in my case my older brother is not really that smart. I’m definitely not expected to be like him in any way as I am too different from him (Student F).

Additionally, four participants from the 9/10 focus group also supported the view that an older sibling’s reputation can also influence the development of antisocial behaviour. It was suggested in the group that often if an individual has an older sibling who has attended the same school, he/she is expected to behave and interact in the same way. Student M further stated that an older sibling’s status or reputation was a factor in bullying.
If an older sibling comes through the school and they were bullied, you tend to get bullied as well (Student M).

Unlike the younger focus group, five 9/10 focus group participants further reported that if a student’s parents worked at the school they were also treated differently by both students and staff. The majority of the participants in the year 9/10 focus group agreed that students in this particular situation were more likely to be bullied by other students.

They get picked on because their parent goes to the school (Student M).

Sometimes they say ‘Your dad gave me detention’ and they get bashed for it (Student H).

In comparison the group debated whether relatives of staff members receive preferential treatment from other staff, or if in fact other staff members have higher expectations regarding their behaviour:

They get treated better than other students (Student G).

A son of teacher also gets treated differently by teachers because they expect you to behave in a certain way. All the teachers know you and expect you to get good marks (Student I).

When the year 9/10 focus group was asked how victims react to being bullied, Student G and I cited reactions such as victims hiding and leaving the school. Similarly to the 7/8 group participants acknowledged that some victims of bullying are reluctant to leave their homes.

All of the participants in the teacher focus group believed that bullying tends to occur in the younger year levels (years 7 and 8). Three teacher participants further reported that this has changed over the years because in the past bullying tended to occur in the middle year levels (year 9). The three teachers attributed the change to maturity levels, and made the observation that students today appear to mature in years 9/10, compared to years 11/12, as observed in the past.
When I was at school it was year 9’s and 10’s, now I am noticing in the last two years of my teacher’s rounds that it is year 7’s and 8’s are the ones with attitude. It is unreal (Teacher C).

The conversation about sibling influence in the teacher focus group supported the 9/10 student’s perspectives, that the way an older sibling behaves can affect how their brother or sister may be treated in the same school environment. Two teachers further reflected that an older sibling’s status such as being labelled as victim or bully is often given to their younger siblings.

... they become very much a target and they have to work very hard and strong to break out of that mould (Teacher B).

It was also acknowledged that teaching staff often have certain expectations of how a student should behave or achieve academically, based on the behaviour of previous siblings who had attended the school.

In comparison to the student focus groups, Teachers A, B and C revealed that teachers can also be the victims of bullying. Teacher A reported that teachers are victimised on a more emotional and psychological level by students, rather than being subjected to physical bullying.

I have never been physically intimidated, but there have been incidents where I have been psychologically or emotionally intimidated, they [students] might try to dominate (Teacher A).

The general consensus (two out of three) from the teacher focus group was that the students tend to target specific teachers such as older teachers, non Anglo-Saxon teachers, or those who have a different teaching style. How the teacher reacted was also suggested as a motivator for students to bully their teacher.

Kids have a very set view in their mind, of what teachers should look like, act like and sound like...Often there is a whole class who has taken a dislike to a staff member who is getting a bit
older and his/her ways may not be what all the other teachers are doing. They will work very hard and work like a very well oiled machine to make life hard for that teacher (Teacher A).

... I think it was that group mentality. I had an incident this year, last semester where a class did stuff to try and push my buttons to get a reaction. I had to reinvent myself and approach things in a different manner. That’s what I thought they were doing, bullying me to get my reaction (Teacher B).

It was agreed by all the teacher participants that because the demographic of KSC is very middle class Anglo-Saxon, anyone from a different background who studies or works at the school is often a victim of bullying. Teachers A and B who have taught at KSC for a number of years provided the researcher with some specific examples of this occurring. It was revealed through the conversation that in one circumstance the bullying only ceased after the teacher got transferred to another district.

Not very multicultural at all. There was an issue one time where we had some Iranians come before they moved to Shepparton. We were not very tolerant towards them as a school. There was only a couple of families, they came here thinking it was a nice safe place. Before they moved to Shepparton the kids weren’t tolerant and didn’t respect them and bullying happened (Teacher B).

...bullying straight to your face and make your life hell is what they [year 9] did with the Indian lady... she was so well educated... eventually it started to evolve itself until she got transferred somewhere else. It got better as they got used to her. She got stronger and more resilient (Teacher A).

We have an Egyptian teacher... because he was slightly different they [students] were at him and at him. He had the resilience to stick it out. Now they are beginning to lose interest and it is not so bad, still bad in some incidents (Teacher A).

Two teacher participants also reported that similar to the bullying of peers, direct teacher bullying tends to only occur in the younger year levels. The two participants did not discount year 12 students from
participating in bullying but rather reflected that they challenge an individual’s teaching style by either going directly to the principal or a similar superior.

Less likely to be in year 12, because what they might do, I don’t know if you call this bullying or not but I do. What they might do is complain about your professionalism and go above your head. Because they don’t like your style or whatever it might be and try and pick at where you are unprofessional and take that to someone else. That might be seen as bullying. That would be the only example I have heard about or come across in VCE. In junior levels they will do it straight to your face and make your life hell (Teacher A).

The data revealed that bullying is not restricted between students, but teachers were also noted as being both a victim and/or bully on some occasions. The next sub-theme will present the participants’ descriptions of a bystander.

4.4.3 Being a bystander

The year 7/8 participants’ comments on bystanders were quite limited. The researcher believes this is a reflection of the student’s experiences of being on the receiving end of bullying as opposed to witnessing it. Despite the brief discussion on the topic, Students A and C bravely stated that they would walk up to the bully and tell the bully to stop it. In comparison Student D reflected that older siblings and their friends can also assist in supporting the victim:

… if you are being bullied and his friends come past, and they are older, they may stop it and stand up for you (Student D).

Similarly, three year 9/10 group participants stated that they would also go and tell an older student or teacher if they witnessed bullying.
Talk to someone in year 11 and 12, in some cases they could stop the bullying. Sometimes it works out, although sometimes they could be bullied more (Student E).

Students E, F, G, H and I also stated they would individually try to control and assist in a situation where someone was being bullied.

I would jump in if there was a guy sitting there picking on someone (Student E).

If it looks like someone is going to get hurt, it makes a difference from someone walking out with a cut as opposed to going to the hospital, better to step in (Student G).

The majority of the year 9/10 focus group (5 out of 9) acknowledged that such good intentions by bystanders sometimes have negative consequences. Some suggested negative outcomes related to stopping bullying, included making the situation worse for the victim, becoming the victim themselves, or in some circumstances, the victim could become angry because someone interfered.

Sometimes it makes it worse for the victim, because they get picked on because they can’t take care of themselves (Student L).

If it appears to be one-sided and a person is getting bashed up, then you start to think I don’t want to get bashed if I step in (Student E).

Yeah, but sometimes if you say something they will turn on you and start picking on you (Student K).

I’ve seen bullying broken up and the victim start fighting the person who broke it up. But sometimes they just walk away themselves (Student G).
Students F and J suggested that if they see bullying happening, they try and avoid the situation wherever possible. Reasons behind such an action included not wanting to be involved, fear for their own safety and not feeling as though they had the strategies to deal with such a problem.

Just walk away and ignore it. Say to them that you don’t want to get involved. Leave them be (Student F).

If it looks out of control you get a bit scared as well, go away and try to get help or just run away (Student L).

Five of the year 9/10 participants reflected that on some occasions bystanders can encourage both physical and emotional bullying. This can transpire by sitting back and watching a physical fight or by actually participating by passing on a rumour. It was also reported that even if they did not pass it on themselves, someone else would definitely do it. Prior to passing on a rumour, Students G, K and J stated that they would even add more information for entertainment value. Student G reflected:

...if you are saying it [rumour] to a mate you are going to make it more interesting.

This comment not only achieved support from the other members of the group, but it also generated laughter amongst the participants. Such a reaction in the older focus group suggested that they thought that some aspects of bullying were a joke. Once again, this may be linked to their limited personal experience of bullying, compared with the younger focus group.

An underlying theme in the older student focus group was that an individual’s level of maturity and confidence influences their response or interpretation of bullying. Student I reflected that such traits assist an individual with intervening when bullying is witnessed:
Some people might step in because they are more confident, but others just walk away and let it happen. If they know the person well they might step in and won’t care about the bully (Student I).

This view was also supported by Teacher A who had witnessed the development of maturity in at least two of her students over the past six to 12 months.

...there are only two that don’t support bullying and they were the two girls who are a bit more mature and centred and know what they are about...(Teacher A).

The discussion regarding bystander influences was limited in the teacher focus group. This is because the teachers tended to restrict their ideas of interventions to a more ‘whole school’ approach which will be covered in the next theme.

It became obvious to the researcher that there is not one set way in which students react to bullying, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5. The next theme will help to identify the interventions utilised at KSC and discuss their limitations.

4.5 Interventions to antisocial behaviour

This theme examines participant views on how the teaching staff at KSC manage and deal with bullying within the school grounds. Firstly, the participants’ awareness of the school’s policies regarding bullying will be reviewed. Secondly, the participants’ views on the limitations of the policies and procedures developed to control and minimise bullying at KSC will be presented.

4.5.1 Application of policies

All of the year 7/8 focus group participants acknowledged that KSC had a bullying policy and Code of Conduct (Appendix J: KSC Code of Conduct). The students stated that the Code of Conduct defines
acceptable behaviour for both students and teachers and is printed in each student’s diary. Students A and C further reflected that despite policy documents being easily accessible students tended not to read the documents of their own free will, but rather only read them in class when prompted by teachers.

When discussing how teachers respond to bullying, a variety of answers were provided by the 7/8 group participants. The types of punishment for bullying included sending a note home in the bully’s diary for their parents to sign, asking the parents to come in and have a meeting with the coordinators or having the bully suspended or expelled. Students A and C believed that having the bully suspended from the school reduces bullying, because it removes the bully from the school grounds. Student B disagreed, stating that suspension or expulsion does not change the bully’s behaviour but rather only moves it from one school to another.

Three participants in the 7/8 student focus group also recognised that teachers at KSC mainly respond to bullying by giving the bully detention. The three participants reported that in detention the bully is asked to write out the student Code of Conduct. According to Students A and B this process doesn’t impact the bully, because often the bully takes some-else’s previously copied Code of Conduct into detention and passes it off as their own. Counselling was also suggested by Students B and D as a way the teachers address bullying at KSC.

Due to time constraints, the year 9/10 group participants were not asked directly about KSC’s bullying policies or Code of Conduct, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Six of the 9/10 focus group participants deemed detention as an inappropriate form of punishment for bullying. Students E and H believed that suspension was not an effective consequence for bullies, because then the bully does not have the structure that a school environment provides.

A lot of students think that suspension is no big deal anymore… but just time off school (Student I).
Counselling for both the bully and victim was also suggested by Students G and M. According to these two 9/10 participants, another way that teachers try to reduce the existence of bullying is by encouraging the parties involved to be friends.

They sit down and talk to you about it and try to be friends and stuff, but it doesn’t work (Student M).

The teacher participants readily referred to the policies that KSC have in place. According to Teacher A the policies supply a solid foundation for staff to refer students to:

…in all schools that have a policy, they need to actively refer to it and have a document where everyone can read it…Certainly by the time they [students] leave they have done a lot of work about bullying (Teacher A).

Teacher B believed that the development of bullying policies makes both students and staff more aware of the issue, which in turn reduces the level of bullying that occurs in the school environment. Teachers A and B reported that policies and bullying are regularly discussed in KSC’s Thinking and Living Skills class which is compulsory for all students to attend.

In that forum you might look at bullying, not specifically that you are bullying him but all different forms of bullying. That is where I had this debate about if you are joking and the other person is not laughing. ‘Oh is that bullying, well I have done it then’. That is enough for some to change their ways, for others it is like water off a duck’s back (Teacher A).

Two teacher participants recognised that despite covering bullying in the course curriculum, they are not sure whether it gets through to the students. When the researcher began to explore whether the dynamics of multiculturalism were covered in the school curriculum since non-Anglo-Saxon teachers and students often appeared to be the target of bullying, it was revealed that such a topic was rarely discussed. Two teacher participants reported that the only forum in which different cultures were explored at KSC was restricted to the three different languages other than English (LOTE) subjects (French, Indonesian, and Japanese). Despite not having a set forum to introduce the topic of
multiculturalism the teachers stated that mutual respect and acceptance were constant themes within the school curriculum.

We have four guidelines that the whole school works under and one of them is mutual respect that recognises individual differences. On a multicultural level we don't but we do, do intense mutual respect material. All of us operate under those four themes, so on that level it is dealt with but not at a specific multicultural level (Teacher A).

Days such as multicultural and harmony day were also reported as other avenues in which multiculturalism was explored. As previously mentioned the teacher participants reported that another aspect of KSC’s interventions for bullying is to survey the students on a yearly basis about the issue. The survey is meant to assist teachers in identifying any problem or vulnerable students so that appropriate prevention strategies may be applied.

The kids are surveyed by the welfare co-coordinator each year about incidents in the classroom. Have you seen bullying? Have you participated in bullying? Have you been bullied? Is there anyone in your group that you believe are being bullied? (Teacher A).

It was further revealed in the teacher focus group that the survey allows teachers to become aware of bullying individuals, so that they can actively work with them in managing their antisocial behaviour. Similarly to the student focus groups Teacher A also acknowledged that suspension is used on occasions, but only if a student constantly behaves in an antisocial manner. Furthermore, she also reported that suspension does not happen in isolation, as the individual also receives counselling.

Other times it might involve visiting a psychologist within the school. We have had in the past some group work with some of the kids who had been bullied...[they] basically need a forum to vent their frustration (Teacher B).

Sitting down with the parties involved and discussing their behaviour was also suggested as a way to deal with antisocial behaviour.
You try and highlight that they are bullying and what they can do. Often there is force and encouragement to change their learnt behaviours. Some kids when it is bought to attention that they are bullying that is enough (Teacher B).

Another suggested way to deal with bullying within the classroom was to change the victim or bully’s timetable, by moving either victim/bully into a different class.

… to help them along the way and help them feel safe. Staff and students to feel safe (Teacher B).

Teachers reported that KSC utilises a number of different interventions when it comes to dealing with bullying. The following sub-theme acknowledges the limitations that both students and teachers believe affect the containment of bullying.

4.5.2 Limitation of interventions

Three participants in the 7/8 focus group recognised that there are many limitations to what teachers can do to regulate bullying. According to Students B and C teachers often take advantage of these limitations by not doing anything, or not following through with punishments for witnessed bullying. Student B reported that teachers would initially respond to witnessed bullying in the classroom by sending the bully out of the room at the time, but never follow up the situation. It was suggested by Student A that teachers need to become more aware and strict within the classroom.

So for your safety, they [teachers] need to be mean to try and stop it (Student A).

Students A and B referred to the impact that teacher limitations had on their own personal experience of being bullied. When no action was taken, their parents had to become involved in the situation.
... she [Mum] kept going up to the school and saying that you are not doing much about it (Student B).

Yeah it was so bad for me that my dad ended up going over to their [bully’s] house because the teachers didn’t do much (Student A).

Not only did three 7/8 group students view KSC’s interventions as unsatisfactory, but feelings of extreme helplessness were also reported.

I don’t think there is any real way of dealing with it (Student B).

It keeps going on and on until you die (Student C).

The controversial statement to ‘shoot them all’ from Student A when the group was asked how they believe bullying can be controlled, received a small amount of anxious laughter from the other three participants in the group, who seemed surprised by the remark.

Four participants within the 9/10 focus group also believed that teachers are very limited in how they can control bullying, but were able to articulate particular difficulties in controlling both physical and emotional bullying. Various students commented on a teacher’s inability to break up a physical fight between two students:

Because they [teachers] are older they can get hurt easier (Student J).

Generally I reckon a teacher would come off second best, they would either get more hurt or have to get more teachers to break up the fight (Student L).

Student M further recognised that often it is not a teacher’s lack of strength that prevents them from stopping two students from physically fighting, but rather the fact that they are restricted in how much contact they can have with students.
They can also get into trouble for touching students, because usually they have to grab them to pull them off each other and they would get into trouble for grabbing them (Student M).

It was also acknowledged by five participants in the year 9/10 focus group that emotional bullying was also difficult for teachers to regulate due to there often being no physical evidence that such an act had occurred.

There is not much they can do as most of it is talk and teachers can’t stop [people] thinking and talking (Student G).

Similar to the student focus groups all three teacher participants acknowledged their own limitations in being able to contain bullying.

You think you have your eye on everything and there is another level that you don’t see (Teacher C).

I think we are very aware. I don’t know if we really know what to do about it. Sometimes you don’t see the beginning but rather deal with the retaliation...There is always a ball of wool unravelling (Teacher A).

A lot of the time you deal with the end part and not the start of it. The start may be that they were bullied in previous years. Kids are very good at remembering that he did this to me, they remember and bring that up again. It just perpetuates and they can’t drop it and move on (Teacher B).

It was observed by the researcher that often there are some invisible boundaries surrounding bullying, which seem to determine who should intervene, staff or parents. Two teacher participants stated that if bullying happens outside of school hours it is not the school’s responsibility but the responsibility of the parents. Teacher A further reflected that often this does not occur as the parents are not sure how to handle the situation, so they bring their concerns to the school. If it has been brought to the school’s attention teachers are obligated to follow it up.
It’s our role if the parents bring the issue to the school. Generally they come because they don’t know what to do next. In public schools you serve the community…(Teacher A).

It was also acknowledged by Teachers A and B that the boundaries of intervention can also be blurred when parents object to the way teachers respond to bullying. This is particularly if they feel that their child is being negatively associated with the situation.

...bullying that happens outside the school affects what happens within the school and their social interactions...some parents may say that we shouldn’t get involved but because they bring that baggage to the school we end up dealing with it. A number of parents would say that it is not our job to get into it. Especially by the person who is bullying, their parent’s say the school shouldn’t get involved (Teacher B).

Especially of the children who are doing the bullying. Some parents say the school shouldn’t get involved...especially if it puts their kid labelled as a bully. In some cases, some parents will then bully other parents (Teacher A).

This theme provided an understanding of what interventions are utilised at KSC including both policies and application. It also showed that there are some discrepancies between what students and teachers view as appropriate interventions.

4.6 New knowledge and critical reflection

This section summarises key new knowledge that has emerged from this study. The participant’s views on who could be the victim of bullying provided an overview of the different levels of bullying occurring in our schools. The participants reflected that often victimisation can occur across generations of families. Whether this is unique to a rural environment is uncertain. The teacher participants also acknowledged the existence of staff bullying, particularly towards staff from a different culture. The realisation that there appears to be no limits to who individuals target is quite disheartening, as it reflects that students who bully have no fear of consequence or respect for the adults who dedicate
their time to educate them. The existence of racism in today’s multicultural society is disturbing and raises questions about how such bullying can be addressed.

The comment in the teacher focus group regarding today’s generation being too sensitive and lacking resilience was also an interesting observation. If reduced resilience is a contributing factor to the existence of bullying, this needs to be considered in the development of preventative measures for dealing with bullying. The participant’s responses to the types of interventions utilised for containing bullying also raised a variety of interesting responses. The teacher participants reflection that the use of labels such as bully and victim were used to identify particular students was a concerning approach, as such labels could further separate the bully or victim from the rest of their classroom.

The student participants also had reservations about the approach to dealing with bullying in their school environment. Student A in particular appeared to be discouraged about the benefits of interventions as he stated that the only way to deal with bullying is to “shoot them all”. This statement was a valuable piece of data as it shows the level of helplessness that victims feel about bullying and the importance of intervention strategies in dealing with the issue of bullying and providing comfort and support for the victims.

4.7 Conclusion

Discussing the topic of antisocial behaviour and bullying in small focus groups provided the researcher with a wealth of knowledge and some unique views on the topic. Reporting the year 7/8 focus group participant responses at the start of each theme provided a solid foundation, since some participants had revealed that they had been the victim of bullying and were able to offer valuable insight into the issue. The year 9/10 participants’ thoughts were also important as they provided a more in-depth discussion. The teachers’ responses were just as vital to the current research as they offered differing views on the issue, compared with the students.

The first theme on the dimensions of antisocial behaviour set the scene for the remainder of the chapter as it explored the complexities of defining what can be classified as antisocial behaviour and bullying.
The participants’ definitions of a bully, a victim or bystander were also an important aspect of the study. Finally, the participants' responses about the interventions utilised at KSC when dealing with antisocial behaviour provided a unique perspective on the issue of bullying. It allowed the researcher to present personal responses towards bullying for both students and teachers. This theme revealed that both students and teachers acknowledge that bullying is not only a school issue but also affects the whole community. The next chapter provides an analysis of the data in relation to the literature.
Chapter five: Antisocial behaviour and bullying: Clarifying the issue

[Bullying] seems to be a legitimate problem that we all have to face together. It is a part of society and certainly seems a legitimate concern here and we all feel very strongly about trying to stop it.

(Teacher B)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the students’ and teachers’ interpretation and observations of antisocial behaviour and bullying. Since both students and teachers are often at the frontline of schoolyard bullying, they provide valuable views and opinions on the topic. These findings are then supplemented and linked to the relevant literature to provide an integrative approach to understanding bullying. An integrative approach is essential because, as the above quote reflects, bullying is a legitimate problem, thus, it is vital to fully understand the complexities of issues such as antisocial behaviour and bullying.

This chapter will comprise of four themes. The first theme provides an analysis of the relationship between antisocial behaviour and bullying. The next theme examines and identifies the different characteristics associated with the various individuals connected with bullying, and is separated into three sub-themes - bully, victim and bystander. Bullies, victims and bystanders are each presented separately, to provide a thorough analysis of how each individual is linked or affected by the presence of antisocial behaviour and bullying. The third theme analyses the different theories that the participants believed influence antisocial behaviour and bullying. This then provides a foundation for the final theme, which analyses the benefits and limitations of the interventions applied at KSC in relation to bullying.

Throughout the chapter, the researcher’s interpretation of the similarities and differences of the participants’ responses to the topic compared to the literature will be reflected in relation to interpretivism and symbolic interaction theory. Interpretivism and symbolic interaction theory concentrate on the meanings and interpretation that individuals associate with their interactions and past experiences (Neuman, 2000; Patton, 2002; Stryker & Vryan, 2003). More recently Evans and King
(2006) reported that the meanings and understanding of situations vary across cultures and across different timeframes, because meanings are continuously changing due to new experiences and interactions (Klenke, 2008). Understanding the meaning behind the participants’ views will provide valuable information on the topic. There is never a unified perspective on any situation or issue, because no individual has the same history or holds the same assumptions and concepts as someone else (Cohen et al., 2007).

5.2 Antisocial behaviour and bullying

The majority of participants from all three focus groups (three from year 7/8; five from year 9/10; three teachers) acknowledged that often there is a fine line between when an interaction between two individuals can be identified as a joke, and when the action is either antisocial behaviour or bullying. The year 7/8 participants further acknowledged that a joke becomes bullying when the victim does not think the behaviour/situation is funny. Kruger et al., (2006) concurred that although teasers often joke with the best intentions, those intentions tend to be less relevant to the target, because they often view teasing as a negative appraisal. Literature also reflects the difficulties in distinguishing antisocial behaviour and bullying from typical teenage behaviour, because historically bullying has been seen as a fundamental and normal part of childhood, compared to a serious form of violence (Kowalski, 2003, p. 74; Campbell, 2005; Howe, 2007; Rigby & Johnson, 2007).

Teacher B further questioned whether one of the difficulties in identifying antisocial behaviour could be that today’s generation are too sensitive. Although the literature commonly links an individual’s level of resilience to traumatic experiences like antisocial behaviour, the researcher has not been able to locate any research that directly supports this notion (Howard & Johnson, 1999; Gilligan, 2000; Deveson, 2003; Mutimer et al., 2007). What the literature does acknowledge is that resilience is significantly influenced by an individual’s level of attachment to school, friends and family (Gilligan, 2000; Fuller, 2001). The teacher’s inability to articulate how to improve an individual’s resilience level supports Robert Theobold’s definition that ‘resilience is organic, not mechanical, as it is a part of the immune system’ (Deveson, 2003, p. 19).
When the focus group participants were asked to describe physical, emotional and cyber-bullying, their description of physical bullying coincided with the literature (Siegel, 2002; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Kowalski, 2003; Department of Education, 2006). Three year 7/8 students and five year 9/10 students described bullying as a distinct form of aggressive behaviour between at least two people which includes actions such as pushing and shoving. They also viewed it as a repeated action that occurs continuously over an extended period. When the conversation about types of physical bullying progressed, the examples provided by the year 7/8 students became more specific and included placing a victim’s bag out of reach and pulling a chair out from under them. These specific examples could be a reflection of the younger student’s personal experiences of bullying.

The participants’ descriptions of cyber-bullying were quite limited due to the year 9/10 and teacher focus group discussions being rushed, as was discussed previously in Chapter 3. Instead of recognising behaviours such as passing notes, exclusion and spreading rumours as also being types of cyber-bullying (Li, 2005; Department of Education, 2006; Writer, 2009), the participants’ tended to only refer to these actions as emotional bullying. The participants could have had different views of emotional or cyber-bullying than what is recorded in the literature, because to them specific actions/behaviours are more important than classifying/labelling the behaviour. The action of exclusion was specifically named as a type of emotional bullying utilised by girls in the teacher focus group. Teacher B reflected that this type of bullying is more obvious to the teachers, as they can see when an individual is being excluded from a group by observing the body language of the other girls in the group. The student and teacher participants’ observation that emotional bullying occurs more frequently than physical bullying also corresponded with the literature Research by Rigby and Johnson (2006) concurred that name-calling is the most commonly reported method of bullying in Australia (see also Murray-Harvey et al., 2010).

Despite the initial difficulty in defining cyber-bullying, two of the year 9/10 focus group students and teacher participants reported that cyber-bullying happens more readily than the other types of bullying due to it also taking place outside of the school environment (Smith, 2007). The participants also acknowledged other differences between face-to-face bullying and cyber-bullying that concurred with the literature. Some differences include that it is harder to escape cyber-bullying, and cyber-bullying has a bigger audience, is anonymous and has limited, if any consequences (Li, 2005; McGrath, 2009). Similar to the literature the participants recognised programs and technologies such as MSN chat
rooms, the Myspace service and mobile phones as avenues where cyber-bullying can occur (Campbell, 2005; Li, 2007). What surprised the researcher was that neither the student nor the teacher participants mentioned the Facebook social media service as an arena where cyber-bullying occurs. This omission could reflect that Facebook is not as utilised in a rural community compared with urban settings. Unlike the literature, the teacher participants recognised that since cyber-bullying occurs without body language, facial expressions or emotions, messages can often be misinterpreted.

The student and teacher observation that males are more likely to participate in physical bullying and females generally take part in emotional and cyber-bullying was supported in the literature. Research states that males are more likely to bully each other physically to exert power, compared with females, who are more likely to bully each other through exclusion in an attempt to be more popular (Kowalski, 2003; Atkinson, 2006; Wurf, 2009; Writer, 2009). In addition to the literature, Students G and H further acknowledged that physical altercations can occur between females, but are often influenced by males. The participants identified that relationships and male attention were the two main causes for physical bullying between females. This unique observation by the student participants emphasises the reality that each behaviour or action cannot be taken at face value but there is always a meaning underlying the action. The researcher questions whether the year 9/10 focus group participants acknowledged relationships as a cause for physical altercations because at that age group developing relationships are the main focal point in an adolescent’s life (Siegel, 2002; Cunneen & White, 2002; Bahr et al., 2005).

Now that the different types of antisocial behaviour and bullying have been presented the next theme will further analyse the different levels of bullying by focusing on the various individuals who are involved in the process bully, victim and bystander.

5.3 Lets paint a portrait: Bully, victim and bystander

This theme identifies the different characteristics utilised to describe the various individuals (bully, victim and bystander) associated with bullying. The descriptions of the individuals have been separated to get an in-depth understanding of how the participants and the literature describe and view them. The
characteristics of a bully will be presented in the first sub-theme, followed by the definition of a victim and, lastly, the characteristics of a bystander will be discussed.

5.3.1 Being a bully

Initially the participants’ descriptions of a bully were quite broad in the student focus groups, as they reported that anyone could become a bully at some point in their life. Eight participants reflected that everyone can harass or upset someone at some stage of their life; hence anybody could be classified as a bully. This consensus contradicts how bullies are portrayed in movies and books, where one specific person is generally made out to be a bully. Student A and the teacher participants further developed this point and stated even someone who has been the victim of antisocial behaviour can also become a bully. This corresponds with the literature that acknowledges victims of bullying have been known to get so angry that they explode and seek revenge against the bully, either immediately or in the future (Bartol & Bartol, 1998; Kowalski, 2003; Kerin, 2011). What concerned the researcher was that Student A stated that the only way to control bullying is to ‘shoot them [bullies] all’. This type of response is a concern because a similar situation occurred in Colorado in 1999, when two boys shot dead 12 students and one teacher after being taunted by their peers at school (Nimmo et al., 2000). Teacher A described the transition from victim to bully as another form of learnt behaviour which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

The year 7/8 focus group participants provided more specific characteristics of a bully including ‘scary and popular’. The researcher believes that the year 7/8’s simplistic view of a bully as “scary and popular” is a reflection of their own experience of being bullied. Students A and B associated their experience of being victimised with the symbol/word scary, hence they now relate the idea of a bully with the term scary. These detailed responses are supported by Olweus (1993 cited in O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001) who acknowledged that a bully generally has a positive view regarding their physical appearance and popularity. What surprised the researcher was that the participants did not acknowledge limited empathy or lack of positive regard towards the victim as a characteristic of a bully. According to Eslea and Smith (1994) bullies appear to have no conscience or empathy and have limited sympathy toward their victims (see also Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003). The researcher questions whether this omission shows a lack of victim awareness in general across the focus groups.
Students A and C further reflected that a bully tends to have a negative attachment to school, hence does not want to learn. This view coincides with Kubrin et al., (2008) who state that the absence of strong attachment levels encourages antisocial behaviour. If a student does not feel connected to their school, they do not value the same rules as that institution, but rather appreciate the benefits that are associated with bullying (Weis, et al., 2001; Cunneen & White, 2011). The researcher found it interesting that the year 7/8 group participants were quick to identify that bullies do not enjoy going to school, but they did not associate low academic marks as being a part of this disinterest. According to the literature bullies are generally not academically minded, hence they tend to leave school before completion and become involved in antisocial behaviour due to frustration and rejection (Weis et al., 2001; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Li, 2007). In contrast, the participants discussed the connection of academic achievement and bullying in relation to being a victim and this will be discussed in more detail in the next sub-theme.

According to seven student participants, one motivation behind bullying is that the bully may view such behaviour as a way of gaining power over someone. According to Student H, gaining power over someone can be a source of entertainment or the only way in which the bully knows how to get control over a situation. Similarly Dautenhahn and Woods (2003) stated that antisocial behaviour is the only way that the bully knows how to gain self-respect and power. A bully achieves this by focusing attention on other people, so it draws interest away from their own faults and reassures them that the problem is the victim’s, not theirs (Siegel, 2002). Parker-Pope (2011) more recently reported that bullying is the result of students competing to improve their social status amongst their peers. Two student and two teacher participants stated that another reason why individuals participate in bullying is to get a particular reaction such as crying or yelling from their victim.

Student F concluded that both these motivators were irrelevant when it came to cyber-bullying, because the anonymity associated with this type of behaviour means that the bully does not even own what they are saying and in turn cannot see the reaction that their words are having on the victim. Similarly, Li (2005) reports that cyber-bullying extends the reach of antisocial behaviour, because it moves beyond physical bounds. Overall the participants’ description of a bully coincided with the literature. The next sub-theme will provide an analysis of the characteristics of a victim.
5.3.2 Being a victim

Similar to the previous sub-theme all of the participants initially reflected that any ordinary person could become a victim of bullying. This broad definition of a victim concurs with the literature that states that victims can be bullied for any reason, including being artistic, sensitive, shy or introverted, having a different religion, or having acne or speech problems (Writer, 2009). It was in the year 9/10 focus group that the description of a victim became more specific and included characteristics such as ‘scrawny and nerdy’ and ‘more reserved’. Rigby (1997; 1999) similarly reported that victims of bullying tend to be ‘physically weak, relatively introverted, socially unskilled, unassertive and have few friends if any friends’ (Wurf, 2009).

As the previous section mentioned, the year 7/8 group participants linked academic abilities with being a victim of bullying (Farrell, 1997; Weis, Crutchfield & Bridges, 2001; Morrison, 2002; Li, 2007). Student A reflected that if an individual struggled academically this would make them a target of victimisation, whereas Students C and D believed that if a person was smart they were more likely to be the victim of bullying. The researcher believes that this diversity of observations could be a reflection of the participants’ personal experiences of victimisation. Students A and B may believe that they were bullied based on their academic achievements. Students H, I, K and M further reported that if an individual has low academic marks they could also be the victim of bullying from teachers. The notion of students being victimised by teachers was mentioned in a recent study by Rigby and Thomas (2010, p. 12) which reported that teaching staff recognise that many students can also see themselves as being bullied by staff.

In addition, five year 9/10 focus group participants also acknowledged that having a parent who works at the same school can also be a cause for victimisation, as that individual could be held responsible for the actions of their parent. For example, if the student’s dad gave someone detention this could create a bullying situation. The researcher believes that the student participants provided a unique view on students being victim to bullying because their parent works in the school environment, as there would be a high chance of this situation regularly occurring because KSC is a rural town.
Two participants in the year 7/8 focus group and all the teacher participants believed that younger students are more likely to be the victims of bullying, and are often bullied by older students. Since at least two of the participants in the year 7/8 focus group had been the victim of bullying this could have influenced their view that younger students are more likely to be the victim of bullying. Siegel (2002) reported that students in lower grades are more likely to be bullied by children in higher grades (Rigby, 1997, p. 23). Wurf (2009) contradicted this and stated that students were just as likely to be bullied by someone in their own class. The participants also supported this view when they acknowledged the different types of bullying that could occur in the classroom amongst peers. The year 9/10 focus group, specifically Students K and L stated that even year 11 and 12s could be the victim of emotional bullying.

In the teacher focus group the participants reflected that bullying is not restricted to between students, but rather teachers can also be the victim of bullying by students. Duncan and Riley (2005) reported that students are the instigators of bullying in the school environment 74.1 per cent of the time. Two teacher participants stated that students tend to target specific teachers based on their nationality, teaching experience and those who have a different teaching style. Similarly Riley et al., (2009) reported that teaching experience, school size and type are factors that influence staff bullying. Teacher participants suggested that the way a teacher reacted was also a motivator for students to bully teachers. Teacher A reported that teachers are victimised on a more emotional and psychological level by students as opposed to physical bullying. Riley et al., (2009, p. 3) has shown that 99.6 per cent of teachers in Australia have experienced bullying at least once in the school environment.

When the focus groups were asked to describe how a victim would react to being bullied, the responses varied across the two student focus groups. Two year 7/8 participants stated that a victim of bullying would become scared and depressed, one of the same participants also suggested that the victim would notify their parents about what was going on at school. The literature states that Australian students who are frequently victimised are more likely to show high levels of anxiety, social dysfunction, depression, school maladjustment and loneliness (Rigby, 1999; Bond et al., 2001; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Rigby, 2003; Tomazin & Smith, 2007, p. 6). In the year 9/10 focus group, the participants stated that a victim of bullying would hide and leave school because of the victimisation. Absenteeism from school for males (19 per cent) and females (25 per cent) is not uncommon when an individual is being bullied (Rigby, 2003; Campbell, 2005; Rigby & Thomas, 2010). Two year 7/8
participants and two year 9/10 participants also stated that is also difficult for victims of bullying to ask for help, out of fear that the bullying will escalate (Tomazin & Smith, 2007). Less than 25 to 30 per cent of victims actually report bullying behaviour as they feel too humiliated and embarrassed (Campbell, 2005). Bullying does not just cause reactions in victims but also surrounding witnesses. How witnesses respond is just as important and will be covered in the next sub-theme.

5.3.3 Being a bystander

When the focus group participants were asked how bystanders could respond to the bullying witnessed they provided various answers. Seven student participants (two year 7/8; five year 9/10) stated that they would intervene if they witnessed someone being bullied. The researcher believes that this was a positive response because Rigby and Johnson’s (2007) research shows that in 57 per cent of bullying situations, bystander intervention is effective in stopping antisocial behaviour.

The researcher observed that the female participants in each student focus group reflected that they would seek assistance if they had witnessed bullying. Rigby and Johnson (2004a) reported that females are more likely to inform an adult when witnessing bullying in the school grounds. The female participants and three male year 9/10 focus group participants reported that they would tell either an adult or an older sibling what they had seen. In comparison two year 9/10 group participants stated that they would try and avoid bullying situations as much as possible because they would not want to become involved. Participants reflected that when students do seek assistance they usually tell a friend or their parents before informing a teacher. Staff are generally the last to be informed about situations of bullying because students have reflected a lack of confidence in a teachers’ ability to intervene or successfully stop bullying (Wurf, 2009). Interventions will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

In contrast some students acknowledged that intervening in antisocial behaviour could have negative consequences for the victim and bystander. Literature (Campbell, 2005; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Dubekci, 2006b) reports that bystanders often remain uninvolved for numerous reasons such as feeling powerless, lacking confidence, emotional instability or fear of going against the norm. The researcher also found it interesting that in the current research the participants acknowledged the consequences of
intervening, but did not mention the consequences of remaining silent. This omission could be a reflection of the participants' lack of insight into the full impact/influence that bystanders have on the development of bullying. According to Campbell (2005) the common response by bystanders is to ignore the situation and allow the bullying to continue. Bystanders play a major role in encouraging the cycle of bullying, as the silence of such individuals is often seen as encouragement.

Five year 9/10 participants also suggested that on some occasions they would participate in bullying, by passing on a rumour and in some cases adding to it to make it more entertaining. In addition, the male participants stated they have also encouraged physical bullying, particularly between two females because they found it to be a source of entertainment. The researcher queries whether the student participants viewed physical fighting as entertaining, because it only occurred on rare occasions and would break up the monotony of school, or do they actually find the idea of someone being injured as entertaining because of, a lack of empathy towards the victim. Atkinson and Lennox (2006) reported that children are often conformists; they develop a sense of belonging by siding with their peers in all situations including antisocial behaviour. Thus, whether a bystander supports a victim of bullying tends to depend on the expectations of the friends and family members of that bystander who are present at the time.

It became obvious to the researcher when discussing the impact of bystanders on bullying that there is not one set way in which a student reacts to bullying. Rather, there are a number of different factors that can influence responses including entertainment value and maturity levels (Campbell, 2005; Rigby & Johnson, 2005; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Dubecki, 2006b). The next theme will discuss various theories that influence antisocial behaviour or individual responses to witnessed bullying.

5.4 Theories that influence antisocial behaviour

This theme focuses on the various theories that the participants believed influenced the development of antisocial behaviour and bullying - social learning theory, labelling theory, control theory and social development model and these will be discussed in that order.
Social learning theory

Eight participants reported that antisocial behaviour can be learnt from both parents and siblings within the family home. Individuals continue to behave antisocially outside of the family home to achieve similar results/benefits or to be like their family members (differential association). The research indicates that individuals who have aggressive siblings are more likely to interact with their peers in a similar manner, as this is the only way they know how to interact with people around them (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Rigby, 2003; Hart & Kritsonis, 2006). According to social learning theory learnt behaviour can occur through three distinct but interrelated social processes: differential association, differential reinforcement and imitation. Differential reinforcement refers to the anticipated or actual rewards and punishments linked to certain behaviour. Students A and B recognised the process of differential reinforcement when they stated that victims can turn to bullying because they believe that it will make them ‘cool’ and happy. Finally, imitation is the engagement of behaviour after direct or indirect (television) observation of similar behaviour by others (Akers & Jenson, 2008). The researcher found it interesting that although three year 9/10 focus group participants did mention television in the focus group discussion, it was not in relation to imitation but rather the participants felt that the bullying portrayed in the movies and on television did not reflect real life. This was unexpected because the connection between media, television and antisocial behaviour has strongly been debated amongst academics (Bandura et al., 1963; Jewkes, 2004; Hart & Kritsonis, 2006). The researcher questions whether this variation from the literature could reflect the student participants’ lack of insight into the various factors that could influence antisocial behaviour.

Consistent with the literature, the teacher participants acknowledged that loyalty and friendships are major influences in the development of antisocial behaviour (Weis et al., 2000). Children between the ages of 8 and 14 years of age are more influenced and emotionally supported by peer groups compared with parents (Siegel, 2002; Cunneen & White, 2002; Rigby, 2002; Atkinson, 2006; Wurf, 2009; Parker-Pope, 2011). It surprised the researcher that none of the student participants acknowledged peer influence in the development of bullying. This could be because the student participants’ prefer to think of themselves as individuals who make their own decisions, as opposed to being influenced by what their friends think of them. The importance of how people view/label others will be discussed in more detail below.
Labelling theory

In the research two year 7/8 focus group students were quick to identify/label older students as bullies, but also (as mentioned previously) believed that overall any ordinary person would behave antisocially at some point in time. Ten participants acknowledged that another situation in which individuals can be pre-judged/labelled is if a sibling has previously attended the same school. Four year 9/10 students reflected that teachers often have preconceived ideas about a student’s abilities and behaviour based on their interactions with that student’s siblings. The participants stated that preconceptions can include whether the individual would behave antisocially or would be the victim of antisocial behaviour. Teacher A reflected that ‘victimisation often runs in families’. The researcher was unable to find any research on bullying that specifically reflects this view, but this notion does coincide with the literature around labelling theory known as intergenerational labelling (Hagan & Palloni, 1990). This observation could, once again, be explained by KSC being a rural school where everyone knows everyone, potentially with a history of conflict between families.

According to labelling theory individuals are not known by their current behaviour, but rather by any label that has been connected to them from past experiences (Plummer, 1999; Cunneen & White, 2002; Kubrin et al., 2008). Kubrin et al., (2008) further reflected that the effect of labelling depends on the individual, because although a label can affect a person’s self-concept, they also have the choice to reject and fight that label. This was apparent for Students F and M, who reflected that they were unaffected by the labelling process due to rejecting the connection with their siblings. The teacher participants further acknowledged that labelling or singling out an individual as a bully was a part of KSC policy and procedure. Students at KSC are surveyed on a yearly basis about the issue of bullying and asked if they have been the victim of bullying, witnessed any bullying and who they believed was a bully. According to the literature, being labelled segregates a person from society/school, so they then internalise the label and continue to engage in similar behaviour that they now believe is expected of them (Kubrin et al., 2008). The researcher questions whether KSC’s labelling policy may in actual fact influence the development of antisocial behaviour. The consequences of segregation from society/school will be discussed below.
Control theory

According to control theory, if an individual has a positive attachment to their parents and school environment and attends school activities, they are less likely to participate in bullying (Simon-Morton et al., 1999; Weis et al., 2001; Siegel, 2002; Vassallo et al., 2002; Rigby, 2003; Kubrin et al., 2008). The focus group participants may not have used the term control theory, but they recognised that a negative attachment towards school, such as disrupting the class and wagging influences the development of antisocial behaviour. The literature also acknowledges that the size of the school and the ratio between students and teachers are factors that affect an individual’s level of attachment to their school environment (Weis et al., 2001). Due to there being approximately 1,200 students at KSC, class sizes are quite large. The impact of this is that often teachers are unable to give the appropriate amount of attention to each student and often fail to see a number of things that occur (Weis et al., 2001). The participants from the year 7/8 focus group also felt that academic achievement can be linked with the development of antisocial behaviour. Student A reflected that if a person is not good at school they will bully and annoy the other children who are trying to learn.

Parental absence, insufficient rules and responsibilities at home were also identified by four of the participants as key contributors to the development of bullying. The participants reflected that without this structure and guidance individuals are uncertain about what is acceptable behaviour in other areas of their life. Similarly, the literature states that individuals who perceive their families to be less interrelated and caring for each other tend to repeat that behaviour at school (Simons-Morton et al., 1999; Eddy et al., 2000; Slee, 2002; Department of Education, 2003). Despite what rules and responsibilities are in place it depends on an individual’s maturity level on whether they heed to them. The impact of maturity on the development of bullying will be reflected in the social development model in the next section.

Social development model

The majority of participants acknowledged that an individual’s maturity level influences their response to bullying whether the person is a bully, victim or bystander. Corresponding to the literature, the participants reported that if an individual is more mature they do not support or participate in that type of behaviour. The development of maturity has been linked to a decrease in aggressive behaviour, particularly physical bullying (Rigby, 1997; Niu, 2009; Wurf, 2009). On the other hand it is not linked to
a specific age but rather occurs throughout adolescence (Lawson & Heaton, 1995; Cauffman & Stenber, 2000; Carr-Gregg, 2010). This was supported in the teacher focus group, as two of the participants reflected that females now tend to mature earlier in years 9/10, compared to a few years ago where maturity tended to occur in years 11/12. This view didn’t support the researcher’s observations while conducting the interviews, because as mentioned previously the year 9/10 participants found some aspects of bullying entertaining, which does not reflect a high level of maturity. It surprised the researcher that none of the participants directly referred to puberty as being an influence on the development of antisocial behaviour. Puberty should have been an important factor to acknowledge, considering the hormonal changes that are known to occur throughout this period, which impacts upon emotions and mood. According to Carr-Gregg (2010) aggression in middle childhood has been connected to the hormonal and cognitive changes that occur in puberty. This oversight could reflect that participants do not believe that antisocial behaviour and bullying are not isolated to puberty, but can occur at anytime during an individual’s lifetime.

Thus, Students B and C suggested that bullying does not only occur throughout adolescence and in the school environment, but also continues into adulthood and ‘...keeps on going on and on until you die’. This comment was quite concerning to the researcher as it showed that victims of bullying can internalise and relive their experience of bullying to such a degree that they feel that bullying cannot be escaped in the future. Unfortunately this supports the literature that reports that bullying does not happen in the school ground alone, but also occurs amongst adults in the form of domestic violence and workplace bullying (Kowalski, 2003; Moreno-Jimenez et al., 2007; Riley et al., 2009; Field, 2010).

What interested the researcher was that the student participants’ responses tended to acknowledge attachment levels to both family and school as being the main influence in the development of antisocial behaviour. In contrast, the teacher participants’ comments tended to support social learning theory. In the researcher’s opinion such varying responses show that each group tends to hold a particular institution (family and school) responsible for the development of antisocial behaviour. The students appear to hold the school responsible for the presence of bullying. This could be due to the students having a simplistic view on the issue, which is that because bullying begins in the school environment the school would be the main influence. In comparison, the teacher participants tended to focus on the family being the main influence, in an attempt to not take as much responsibility regarding the issue. By acknowledging influencing theories on the emergence of antisocial behaviour and bullying
a solid foundation is laid for developing appropriate interventions for containing and dealing with the issue, which is discussed below.

5.5 Interventions

When the focus groups were asked to describe the types of interventions utilised at KSC to combat bullying, the year 7/8 participants suggested a number of different interventions including sending a note home in the bully’s diary or asking the parents to come in for a meeting. On the other hand, the teacher participants stated that changing either the victim or bully’s timetable was the preferred strategy used to deal with bullying. Such actions tend to either label a student as a bully or segregate an individual from their friends, which in turn separates them from the norm. Thus, according to labelling theory such actions could also influence the development of antisocial behaviour.

Six participants also stated suspension and expulsion were interventions utilised at KSC. There were varying views as to whether such punitive measures were effective when dealing with bullying or not. Students A and C believed that having the bully suspended from the school reduces bullying, because it removes the bully from the school grounds. Students B, E and H disagreed, stating that suspension is not effective because it reduces the amount of structure in the individual’s lifestyle, which according to control theory can also contribute to the development of bullying. Hemphill et al., (2004) reported that punitive measures such as suspension does not assist in containing the level of bullying in the education system, but actually directs students towards antisocial behaviour. Despite these observations the literature also acknowledges that methods such as suspension and expulsion are viewed by the NSW Education Department as being suitable punishments for bullying (Campbell, 2005). Rigby and Thomas (2010) reported that parents also often appear to be more punitive in their attitude to the treatment of bullies at school. In addition the three year 9/10 focus group students stated that expulsion does not change the bully’s behaviour but rather only moves it from one school to another.

Other interventions such as counselling and mediation were mentioned in all three focus groups. The literature states that rehabilitative actions such as mediation and counselling sessions are more beneficial when dealing with bullying (Fuller, 2001; O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Morrison, 2002; Shaw,
2002; Astor et al., 2004; Rigby, 2010a) because it provides an opportunity for the bully to learn positive behaviour and empathy in accordance with social learning theory. In contrast, Student M reflected that counselling does not decrease bullying, because the people involved do not open up and talk about the issue at hand. Due to Student M stating that she had not been a victim of bullying the researcher questions this statement in relation to bullying, but speculates that it could be a reflection of her experience of counselling in general or a limited knowledge/understanding of the counselling process.

Nine student participants also stated that detention was utilised as an intervention for bullying at KSC. The year 7/8 participants stated that during detention students are required to write the Code of Conduct, which are the guidelines for appropriate behaviour in the school environment. According to the literature the development or update of a Student Code of Conduct is recommended as the first step to allow teachers, parents and students to participate in the development of a school's expectations. This is to ensure that all parents, staff and students are aware of appropriate behaviour and guidelines of the school (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2006). Similarly, the teacher participants acknowledged the importance of also having discussions about bullying, which take place in their Thinking and Living Skills class. Thus, according to Slee (2004), school-based preventive programs such as discussions about bullying and role-playing with students about what they can say or do after witnessing bullying are the most effective strategies (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Rigby & Johnson, 2004b; Rigby & Johnson, 2007). Past research by Rigby (1997) stated that adolescents between the ages of 14 and 16 years are less likely to participate in a discussion regarding bullying. The current research did not support this view as the year 9/10 students were active participants in the focus group discussion.

The student and teacher participants had varying expectations about who [parents or teachers] are responsible for managing bullying. Students A and B reflected disappointment when the school did not assist in their experiences of bullying but rather left it up to the parents to deal with the situation. In comparison the teacher participants stated that often parents do not know how to handle situations of bullying so they leave it up to the school. Two teacher participants reported that if bullying occurs outside of school hours it should not be the school's responsibility. Teachers A and B further reflected that parents are not so perturbed about bullying if they feel like their child is being labelled as a bully. Rigby (1997) reflected that although principals and teachers in Australian schools are faced daily with making decisions on discipline and bullying prevention methods, a safe school environment does not
happen automatically but requires a whole school approach. Hence, such an approach is generally characterised by co-ordinated action between the individual student, classroom, the school and the broader community (Henderson, 2002; Cislowski, 2001; Howe, 2007; Wurf, 2009; Rigby, 2010b; Rigby & Thomas, 2010). The researcher observed that KSC does not have a whole school approach when dealing with bullying, as the participants reflected that students, parents and teachers have varying views on the most appropriate intervention for dealing with bullying.

Even though the student participants were able to articulate the different intervention methods used at KSC, they also recognised that despite these interventions bullying still exists and is difficult to control due to various limitations. The student participants tended to focus on the limitations of teachers, which included teachers not being allowed to physically touch students or restrict people from talking. Both student and teacher participants also acknowledged that there is often no physical evidence that emotional bullying is occurring so teachers are unaware of its presence.

The literature acknowledges that past attempts to reduce bullying in schools have fundamentally failed (Rigby & Slee, 1999b; Rigby & Johnson, 2007; Rigby & Thomas, 2010). Reasons anti-bullying programs have had limited success include teachers being unaware of the extent of what is occurring because bullying rarely occurs in front of adults and programs not being effectively supported by students (Rigby & Johnson, 2007). In contrast Rigby and Smith (2011) reported that the implementation of anti-bullying programs have been successful due to a decrease in bullying between 1990 and 2009. Unlike the literature which also acknowledge the difficulties for educators in establishing intervention and preventative strategies for cyber-bullying (Campbell, 2005; McGrath, 2009), the year 9/10 student and teacher participants did not comment on interventions related to cyber-bullying, which could be because of the time restraints as mentioned in Chapter three. Or comments on cyber-bullying interventions may have been non-existent because of limited knowledge of the issue which appeared to be the case for the year 7/8 focus group.

Teacher A’s opinion that sporting activities promote antisocial behaviour by creating adversity between local teams contradicts the literature related to bullying. For example, Morris et al., (2003) state that sporting activities are another useful intervention for reducing antisocial behaviour, as sport and physical activities can assist in the development of personal and social growth. Also in contrast to the
literature the participants did not acknowledge other intervention such as increased police and security presence or the installation of surveillance cameras and alarms (Cislowksi, 2002; Campbell, 2005). In the researcher’s opinion this variation from the literature could be another representation of the differences between urban and rural communities, as rural communities often do not have the financial means or man-power to co-ordinate such interventions (Stokes et al., 1999).

The researcher also noticed that unlike the literature on bullying, which reports that peer mentoring and tutoring contribute to the promotion of a positive school environment (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Howe, 2007), none of the participants acknowledged these practices. The participants also did not mention the benefits of house systems, which allow different year levels to work together in structured activities (Leung, 2006). This surprised the researcher because when she was a student at KSC (between 1994-99) these programs were a part of the school policy and structure. It is unclear whether such a program no longer exists or whether the participants felt that they had no relevance to the topic of bullying.

5.6 Conclusion

The student and teacher participants provided valuable information on the topic of antisocial behaviour and bullying. The participants’ opinions and perceptions on a whole coincided with the literature, but the participants also provided various unique points of view, compared with existing research. The utilisation of interpretivism and symbolic interaction theory assisted the researcher in understanding the meaning behind the participants’ responses. The variation from the literature also acknowledges the significance and relevance of the current research. Even though the research utilised a small sample it emphasises the importance of getting students and staff involved in researching the issue.

Dividing this chapter into four themes allowed an opportunity to conduct a thorough analysis of the data and literature on antisocial behaviour and bullying. Acknowledging the different characteristics of the individuals involved in bullying in the second theme was an important aspect of the study, because it became obvious that there is not one set reason or way in which an individual responds to bullying. This then leads into the various theories that have been utilised to understand the influences of antisocial behaviour. The participants indirectly identified aspects of different theories specified in Chapter two - social learning theory, labelling theory, control theory and social development model.
Lastly, the analysis of the limitations surrounding the interventions for containing bullying utilised at KSC will assist in making any recommendations for future research and will be discussed in the following chapter. The final chapter also reviews the findings of the research in relation to the research questions, and will report the strengths and limitations of the current research.
Chapter six: Bringing it all together

This [bullying] is so wide spread, to the severe physical bullying and emotional bullying right down to joking… I would have to reverse the question and say: who isn’t a bully?

(Teacher A).

6.1 Introduction

The above quote from Teacher A about the severity of bullying in the school environment reflects the importance of achieving the objective of this study. The first section of this concluding chapter will address the research objective of gaining insight into the existence of bullying at KSC, including factors that influence such behaviours. The previously stated research questions will then be answered individually in separate sub-sections:

- To what extent do peers influence student antisocial behaviour?
- Does a connection exist between school attachment and antisocial behaviour?
- Is there a correlation between academic achievement and antisocial behaviour?
- What school disciplinary actions influence student antisocial behaviour?

The strengths and limitations of the research will then be presented. Finally, recommendations for future research in the field of antisocial behaviour and bullying in the school environment will be outlined.

6.2 Addressing the objective and research questions

This section will address the research objective and questions, in five sub-sections. The first subsection will discuss the research objective of the current research. The following four sub-sections will reflect how the data and literature have answered the research questions.
6.2.1 The existence of bullying at KSC, including factors that influence such behaviours

The literature and data from this research shows that bullying and antisocial behaviour does exist in the education system and specifically at KSC. Rigby (2005) quoted that at least 50 per cent of children/adolescents have experienced bullying at one time at school in Australia (see also Slee, 2004). It was further revealed that bullying is such an epidemic in the school environment that often the question needs to be asked, as suggested in the chapter’s opening quote ‘..who is not a bully?’ A sense of helplessness was present in the year 7/8 focus group when the interventions of bullying at KSC were discussed, as three participants expressed feeling that there was no escape from bullying, but rather it can continue into adulthood. Unfortunately, this supports findings in the literature that bullying is not restricted to the school environment, but also occurs among adults, in the form of domestic violence and workplace bullying (Field, 2010).

Four main factors identified in the literature and data as influencing bullying were present in the school - peer influence, school attachment, academic achievement and school disciplinary actions. Since adolescents spend a lot of time at school it would be the main institution in which socialisation with antisocial peers would occur (Siegel, 2002, p. 214; McConville & Cornell, 2003). The literature and research data also showed that if an individual has a negative relationship with their school environment, they are more likely to participate in antisocial behaviour (Simon-Morton et al., 1999; Weis et al., 2000; Siegel, 2002; Vassallo et al., 2002). Similarly, if an individual struggles academically they may learn to behave antisocially in an attempt to gain self-respect and power (Weis et al., 2001; Siegel, 2002; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Li, 2007). The research data also revealed that if a school’s disciplinary actions include detention, suspension or expulsion compared to rehabilitative interventions these do not control or reduce the outcome of bullying (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Fuller, 2001; Morrison, 2002; Shaw 2002; Astor et al., 2004).

The following sub-sections will individually address the research questions that were utilised in answering the above research objective.
6.2.2 To what extent do peers influence student’s antisocial behaviour?

Bullying is often considered a source of entertainment for the bully and their peers. The victim’s reaction, whether they burst into tears, become visibly emotional or start to attack the bully physically, is considered entertaining. Five student and two teacher participants from the data stated that often an individual will participate in bullying because it is the only way in which they feel accepted by their peers. Dautenhahn and Woods (2003) state that a bully also resorts to antisocial behaviour to be accepted by their social group as it is the only way to gain self respect because they are often not academically minded (Weis et al., 2000; O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Siegel, 2002; Rigby, 2003; Hayward & Sharp, 2004; Atkinson, 2006; Wurf, 2009). This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

The data and literature review also showed that peer influence has a major impact on the way bystanders respond to antisocial behaviour and bullying. The literature shows that 85 per cent of bullying incidents in the school environment are in the presence of other students (Rigby, 1996; Rigby, 1999; Kowalski, 2003). Two student participants from the research and the literature acknowledge that a common bystander response to bullying is to ignore the situation and allow the antisocial behaviour to continue (Campbell, 2005). Levine (1999) developed the concept Bystander Effect which states that victims are more likely to receive help when a single bystander is present, as opposed to a group of bystanders. It is believed that in a group environment an individual’s degree of personal responsibility is decreased.

Five out of the nine year 9/10 focus group participants stated that bystanders often remain uninvolved for numerous reasons, such as feeling powerless, a lack of self-confidence, emotional instability or a fear of going against the norm. This is supported by Campbell (2005), Dubeki (2006b) and Rigby and Johnson (2006). In addition, Atkinson and Lennox (2006) reported that another reason bystanders remain silent is because young people are often conformists; hence they develop a sense of belonging by siding with their peers in all situations including antisocial behaviour (see also Cunneen & White, 2002; Rigby, 2003). Teacher B stated that peer pressure and conformity are major issues that adolescents have to deal with; it is not until an individual starts to develop their own identity that other people’s ideas begin to lose their influence.
Specific types of bullying, such as exclusion, rumours and staff bullying, have more effect when conducted in a group. Five student participants revealed that bystanders become involved in bullying by forwarding and adding to rumours in an attempt to make them seem more interesting and witty. This type of entertainment can then be significantly increased in its effect through cyber-bullying because it moves beyond physical bounds and is witnessed by a larger audience (Li, 2005; McGrath, 2009). One student in the current research disagreed with the severity associated with cyber-bullying, but rather referred to it as a type of ‘weak bullying’, because of the anonymity associated with it. Group antisocial behaviour has also been connected to the younger year levels as opposed to the older students, as peer influence decreases with the development of maturity and self-identity (Alder & Hunter, 2001; Vassallo et al., 2002). In the current study, students in year 8 were specifically mentioned by the teacher participants as being more inclined to bully as a group rather than individually.

In accordance with social learning theory, the teacher participants acknowledged that the socialisation process in the school environment is the foundation of how young people interact. The development of antisocial behaviour can be either reinforced or impaired depending on whether the social interaction is positive or negative (Weis et al., 2000). Six student and two teacher participants reported that antisocial behaviour is often replicated by those who wish to achieve similar benefits/results. Between the ages of eight and 14 children are more influenced and emotionally supported by peer groups than family members (Siegel, 2002; Cunneen & White, 2011). Hayward and Sharp (2004) reported that the ages between 10 and 16 years are an important time in the development of antisocial behaviour. Weis et al., (2000) contradicted this view and reported that an adolescent is unlikely to acquire antisocial friends before the age of 13 years. The literature and data from the research was able to establish a connection between peer influence and antisocial behaviour, but was unable to fully answer the extent to which it influences bullying. Thus, this research question was only partially answered.
6.2.3 Does a connection exist between school attachment and antisocial behaviour?

The research data and literature showed that lack of attachment and a negative relationship to the school environment significantly influences the development of antisocial behaviour (Vassallo et al., 2002; Rigby, 2003). The size of the school and the ratio between students and teachers can influence an individual's attachment to their school environment (Weis et al., 2001). Since there are around 1,200 students at KSC, class sizes are quite large. The impact of this is that often teachers are unable to give the appropriate amount of attention to each student. In larger schools where interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are non-existent, antisocial behaviour is more likely to occur (Weis et al., 2001).

The literature and the research recognise that absenteeism is also connected to bullying (Stranger, 2002, p. 20). Three student and two teacher participants stated that both wagging and disrupting the class influence the development of antisocial behaviour. This view supported the literature that reports that adolescents who attend after-school activities are less likely to participate in bullying (Simon-Morton et al., 1999; Weis et al., 2001; Siegel, 2002). If a student does not feel connected to school, they do not value the same rules as that institution, but rather appreciate the benefits that are associated with bullying (Weis et al., 2001; Cunneen & White, 2011).

Four student participants further recognised that absenteeism is a common symptom for individuals who are being bullied, as the victim sometimes feels so scared that they don't want to leave their home (Rigby & Thomas, 2010, p. 12). Rigby (2003) stated that six per cent of males and nine per cent of females have stayed away from school at least once due to bullying. When bullying becomes more frequent (at least once a week), absenteeism increases to 19 per cent for males and 25 per cent for females in Australian schools (Campbell, 2005). Past research by Kowalski (2003) showed that in the USA it has been estimated that 160,000 school-aged children are truant from school due to their fear of being bullied.
The concept of resilience has also been associated with an individual’s attachment level. Resilient adolescents tend to have a strong attachment with school, family and friends (Gilligan, 2000; Fuller, 2001). One of the teacher participants stated that compared to previous generations adolescents today are more likely to interpret certain behaviour as bullying, as opposed to seeing it as a joke, in the way in which it may have been intended. Teacher B reflected that today’s generation is too sensitive and lacks the resilience to take a joke, but rather views everything as bullying/antisocial behaviour.

Drawing on the theoretical principles associated with control theory, a negative attachment occurs with social institutions such as family, schools, religions and political groups, when obedience of collective rules and moral order are not effectively enforced (Lawson & Heaton, 1999; Henderson, 2002). Four student participants acknowledged the importance of rules and responsibilities in the development of attachment at school and home. Negative attachment occurs if there are insufficient rules, and/or if an individual disobeys the rules. Kubrin et al., (2008) state that if a person is attached to their community they would not wish to go against the norm and commit a crime, but rather conform to the rules of society so as not to jeopardise their future. Furthermore, individuals with a strong bond to the community would also be actively involved and believe in the rules and regulations constructed by the law (Weis et al., 2001; Kubrin et al., 2008). On the other hand, when the relationship between an individual and society is strained, deviant behaviour is thought to be exciting, fun, rewarding and the most efficient way to achieve short and long term gratification. The researcher believes that the above information proves that a connection does exist between school attachment and antisocial behaviour; hence this research question was answered in full.

### 6.2.4 Is there a correlation between academic achievement and antisocial behaviour?

The analysis of this research has shown that there is a correlation between academic achievement and antisocial behaviour. The research data connected academic achievement with bullying on a number of different levels for both the bully and victim. Strom et al., (2013) stated that students who attended schools with high levels of bullying reported lower grades than those in schools with less bullying. It
was reported that low academic marks could motivate a bully to target their victim in an attempt to draw attention away from their own faults (low marks) and on to the victim’s (Kowalski, 2003). The research data revealed that seven student participants believed that an individual views bullying as a way of gaining power and is the only way that they know how to gain self-respect and deal with their frustration and rejection (Weis et al., 2001; Siegel, 2002; Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Li, 2007).

The year 7/8 focus group participants also felt that an individual’s academic abilities were linked to being a victim of bullying. In the research data there were differing views about whether it is an individual struggle academically or individuals who do well at school are more likely to be the victim of bullying. Overall, the literature and research concluded that victims can be bullied for any reason including being artistic, sensitive, shy or introverted, having different religion, or acne or speech problems (Writer, 2009). Iyer et al., (2010) linked low levels of academic achievement to being the victim of bullying because victimised children lack specific social competencies that not only put them at risk of victimisation but also makes it hard for them to perform well academically. Whatever the reason for bullying it was acknowledged that a victim’s academic achievements were affected as a consequence of victimisation. Peer victimisation has been found to promote negative attitudes towards school disengagement from classroom activities, concentration and poor academic outcomes (Rigby, 1999; Iyer et al., 2010).

The literature shows that individuals also commit less criminal acts as they grow older because their negative behaviour decreases, being replaced by maturity and increased levels of responsibility for their actions (Lawson & Heaton, 1999; Siegel, 2002). The majority of participants also acknowledged that an individual’s maturity level influences their view of antisocial behaviour and bullying. If an individual is more mature, they are less likely to participate in that type of behaviour. Cauffman and Steinberg (2000) reported that antisocial decision-making is more strongly associated with maturity rather than age. This was supported in the teacher focus group, as two of the participants reflected that females tend to mature earlier in years 9/10, compared to a few years ago where maturity tended to occur in years 11/12. The research data was able to establish that there is a correlation between academic achievement and antisocial behaviour; and thus this research question was answered in full.
6.2.5 What school disciplinary actions influence student antisocial behaviour?

The literature and research data show that school disciplinary actions are only successful in regulating student antisocial behaviour when all parties including teachers, students and parents are involved in the development of disciplinary actions for bullying (Mellor, 2000; Henderson, 2002; Campbell, 2005; Howe, 2007; Rigby, 2010a). Unfortunately it was observed through the research data that KSC does not have a whole-school approach when dealing with bullying. Two teacher participants reported that if bullying occurs outside school hours it is not the school’s responsibility, but is often left up to the staff to handle because parents are unsure how. The teachers further reflected that parents are then often unsatisfied with how the situation is handled, particularly if they feel like their child is being labelled as a bully. A study conducted by Rigby and Thomas (2010) reported that parents often appear to be more punitive in their attitudes towards how bullies should be treated at school.

According to the literature, when developing and/or updating of policies regarding antisocial behaviour, the first step is to allow teachers, parents and students to participate in the construction of a school’s expectations (Dautenhahn & Woods, 2003; Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2006). Two student and all teacher participants reported that such a document exists at KSC and is referred to as the Code of Conduct which defines acceptable behaviour. Li (2005) stated that it is important to continuously update policies to ensure that all aspects of bullying are acknowledged, in particular cyber-bullying, because of the constant changes to technology. The importance of including cyber-bullying in the school policies was reinforced by the current data as the student participants were observed to have limited knowledge about this type of bullying.

The literature and nine student participants suggest that interventions such as detention, suspension and expulsion are not effective when dealing with bullying. Such an action only removes the bully from the school ground and directs students towards antisocial behaviour as they are no longer in a structured environment (Hemphill et al., 2004). Student B further stated that suspension or expulsion does not change the bully’s behaviour but rather only moves it from one school to another. It is
interesting to note that unlike Victoria the NSW Department of Education has released policies stating that the only suitable punishments for bullying are suspension and expulsion (Campbell, 2005).

The literature and research data show that children who bully would benefit more from reintegrative programs and training rather than punitive approaches. Rehabilitative programs focus on the development of social, cognitive, problem solving and friendship skills, conflict resolution, self-confidence and self-esteem (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Fuller, 2001; Morrison, 2002; Shaw 2002; Astor et al., 2004; Wurf, 2009; Rigby, 2010a; Rigby, 2011). Strategies that were suggested in the research data and literature included sending a note home in the bully’s diary, asking the parents to come in for a meeting, changing the victim or bully’s timetable and counselling/mediation (Wurf, 2009; Rigby, 2010a).

According to Student M, counselling in isolation does not decrease bullying. This research also highlights that teachers and parents could also benefit from training in behaviour management such as monitoring behaviour, effective discipline, protecting informants and promoting positive behaviours and communication between students and teachers (Snell et al., 2002; Wurf, 2009).

Seven student and three teacher participants from this research recognised that regardless of what disciplinary actions are put into place, such practices are mute if teachers are unaware of the extent of the bullying. Rigby (1997 cited in Adams, 2007) reported that shame is often connected to bullying by students, parents and teachers, which can often hinder the process of developing preventative measures. Thus less than 25 to 30 per cent of victims actually report bullying behaviour as they feel too humiliated and embarrassed and fear the bullying might escalate (Campbell, 2005). Wurf (2009) also acknowledged that bullying rarely occurs directly in front of adult company, which limits chances of containing the problem. Wurf (2009) also revealed that when students do seek assistance they usually tell a friend or their parents before informing their teacher, due to lack of confidence in teacher’s ability to intervene or successfully stop bullying. The student participants agreed that if they witnessed bullying they would tell an older sibling or student before approaching a teacher for assistance. Participants from the student focus groups also referred to several limitations on the teachers in containing bullying, even if they were informed, such as lack of strength and not being allowed to physically touch or restrain students.
The current research has shown that the theoretical perspective of labelling theory is utilised as a preventative measure at KSC. It is a part of KSC policy to single out individuals as bullies. Interactions and opinions regarding these individuals are than based on the label connected to their past behaviours and experiences, as opposed to current behaviour. The action of developing a label based on past experiences and meaning is a primary focus of symbolic interaction theory (Becker, 1963; Patton, 2002; Kubrin et al., 2008). Thus, being labelled segregates a person from society, and they may begin to internalise their labels and begin to react in accordance to society’s response. This occurs by the individual continuing to engage in similar behaviour, behaviour that they believe is now expected of them, or by associating with other negative peers that have also been segregated from the community (Plummer, 1999, p. 19; Cunneen & White, 2002; Kubrin et al., 2008). The current research was able to establish which school disciplinary actions influence student’s antisocial behaviour in full.

6.3 Strengths and limitations

This section reviews the strengths and limitations of the research. The strengths of the research will be established first to draw attention to the benefits and value of the research. The limitations of the study will then be acknowledged to establish a foundation for areas that would benefit from further research.

6.3.1 Strengths

A number of strengths in this research can be recognised, as the following shows:

1. The researcher was able to gain access to both students and teachers to conduct the focus groups. This type of access is often difficult to obtain when carrying out research within a school environment, as students and teachers have limited free time to participate in additional activities/research projects. Researching in a school environment can also be disruptive to the school curriculum because students are required to be absent from classes to participate in the group discussions. Parental consent for students to participate in research discussing sensitive topics such as bullying can also be difficult to attain. Difficulties occur because often parents and schools do not want to recognise that such an issue may exist in their school environment (Mellor, 2000).
2. The researcher is a registered psychologist. This qualification assisted in providing an in depth understanding of the complexities and issues surrounding the topic of antisocial behaviour. Being a psychologist may have also contributed to the participants feeling comfortable enough to reveal and discuss their own personal experiences of bullying. These emotions are not generally discussed, due to feelings of humiliation and embarrassment being associated with bullying (Campbell, 2005).

3. On completion of the focus group discussions, Student A reflected that they felt more confident in dealing with bullying. Research supports the fact that a greater understanding of bullying through school-based discussions and programs, can assist in preventing bullying (Slee, 2004; Tomazin & Smith, 2007).

4. The research explored student perspectives on bullying and antisocial behaviour. This unique view will assist educators and professionals to recognise and address the needs of individuals who are most at risk of engaging in antisocial behaviour or support those who are vulnerable to victimisation. Acknowledging student perspectives on the issue supports the concept of a whole school approach (Henderson, 2002; Cislowski, 2001; Howe, 2007; Wurf, 2009).

5. The research showed that the student perspectives and definitions of antisocial behaviour do not necessarily coincide with the literature. These variations in definitions are important to recognise because unless students, staff, government and research have the same expectations and definitions in reference to bullying, any intervention that are applied will not be effective (Henderson, 2002; Howe, 2007).

6. Conducting the focus groups in a rural environment provided a unique view on the topic of bullying, because few studies have examined antisocial behaviour among rural youth, even though it is recognised as a societal concern for both rural and urban schools (Flynn & Fox, 2000; Kulig et al., 2008). The research provided distinctive views on how multicultural diversity may not be as readily accepted in small town communities compared with the metropolitan communities. The notion that ‘everyone knows everyone’ in small communities was also established as another unique factor in relation to antisocial behaviour in a rural setting. This
personal knowledge about people can be utilised in excluding specific individuals or families from the community (Kulig et al., 2008).

**6.3.2 Limitations**

A number of limitations in the research must also be noted. These include:

1. The time constraints that the researcher experienced, as mentioned in Chapter 3. The inability to have more time impacted upon the research as it restricted the discussion about cyber-bullying in the year 9/10 and teacher focus groups. The time constraints also hindered the process of providing a summary of the major themes identified in the same focus groups.

2. The way that the participants were recruited. It became apparent to the researcher that the majority of the student participants mainly attended the focus groups in an attempt to be absent from class. Each focus group did not have an equal number of participants, which meant that a true representation of the student population was not met. Rigby (1997) reported the difficulty in recruiting student participants by stating that adolescents 14 to 16 years of age are less likely to participate in a discussion regarding bullying.

3. The research was conducted in a rural school, which may not be representative of the urban population. Hence, the researcher has erred on the side of caution and has made no claims in reference to the sample being representative of all school environments. In comparison, the emphasis of the study was to enhance the importance of the student and teacher’s responses to the topic of antisocial behaviour. It would be expected that the main findings of this research would be similar in a larger study.

4. Conducting focus groups as opposed to individual interviews may not have thoroughly captured all of the participants’ views and experiences on the issue of bullying and antisocial behaviour. As some participants may have dominated the conversation more
than others, this may have prevented some from expressing all of their opinions on the topic.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

Areas that could benefit from future research are:

1. While small, this research can be considered representative of the student population. The research revealed some important results which lay a solid foundation for future research. Additional research that conducts a comparative analysis between urban and rural secondary colleges exploring whether there is a difference between the various environments could add to the current research.

2. Since the data and literature revealed parents and home environments are both connected to the development of antisocial behaviour, the researcher believes that this is an area that could be explored in more detail. Parents of school-aged children could be spoken to through focus groups or individual interviews. Mellor (2002) reports that the consequences of bullying also impact upon the family. It is anticipated that parents would provide another insight into the complexities of bullying.

3. While implementing the research, the act of cyber-bullying became an emerging issue in the literature and media. Thus, due to the increasing participation and various issues surrounding the containment of cyber-bullying, the researcher believes that it is imperative that further research be conducted in this area. Future research could benefit from focusing on education and training around the definition and impact of cyber-bullying and intervention and policy development regarding this type of bullying (Li, 2005).

4. Since this research has demonstrated that adolescents’ views on issues often vary from literature and policies, it would be important that future research involve students in establishing bullying and harassment policies. This will assist in capturing young peoples’ perspectives on the issue and developing efficient ways of dealing with the problem. The
fact that young people often see things differently to adults also needs to be explored and acknowledged in the literature.

5. Another area for future research would be to conduct a review on the professional development and training available to teaching staff on bullying. This would establish whether the topic of antisocial behaviour is sufficiently covered in training courses. The study would then shed light on any difficulties in the transition from training to practical application in the school environment. The research would also benefit from establishing whether the training is reflected in the school curriculum.

6. Another area for future research could be to review what factors induce or hinder student and staff participation in a research project regarding antisocial behaviour. Gaining an understanding of participant’s views on contributing to research would assist in making participants more comfortable (Cohen et al., 2007). This in turn could greatly improve the quality and quantity of the data gathered. Incentives such as a financial reward or a voucher could also be a way to secure a larger number of participants for a research project.

It is recommended that areas future research be mindful of the time constraints that were present in the current research when conducting focus groups in a school environment. To ensure that all areas of antisocial behaviour are thoroughly explored, it is suggested that the focus groups be completed in a double period. This time extension will ensure that all structured questions are discussed in detail and also allow time for participants to ask or express any follow-up questions or queries. Another way to explore the dimensions of antisocial behaviour and bullying thoroughly is to conduct individual interviews. This methodology could allow participants to provide more in depth responses to the questions, and reduce any feelings of hesitation and uncertainty that could be associated with a focus group environment.
The research has shown that bullying is an important issue in the school environment, and that a number of factors contribute to the existence of antisocial behaviour. The research questions and the objectives identified four key areas - peer socialisation, school attachment, academic achievement and school disciplinary actions that need to be acknowledged when developing training and interventions to contain bullying. All of the research questions were answered, at least partially, but as the recommendations for future research stated some areas could benefit from further study.

The impact of these areas on the development of antisocial behaviour was supported by the theoretical perspectives - social learning theory, control theory, social development model and labelling theory. Social learning theory acknowledges the importance of negative peer interaction, whereas control theory reiterates the connection between negative attachment and the development of antisocial behaviour. The last two theoretical perspectives assisted in addressing the remaining two research questions: the social development model supported the concept that academic achievement correlates with antisocial behaviour; and labelling theory revealed that some disciplinary actions are not appropriate interventions.

The researcher hopes that this research has provided valuable insight into the topic of bullying particularly from a student and teacher perspective, and has established a solid foundation for future research on antisocial behaviour.
References


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Appendix A: Letter from KSC
25th August 2007

To Whom It May Concern,

Danielle Atherton, a past student of Kyabram Secondary College, sought permission last term to conduct interviews with staff and students early in term three of 2007.

The interviews were conducted in line with Danielle’s research project for her Master of Arts degree in the school of International and Community Studies Design and Social Context Portfolio at RMIT.

Danielle’s topic “The relationship between education and anti-social behaviour” relates, in part, to bullying behaviours and we were pleased to assist Danielle with her research.

We look forward to her report and the opportunity to utilise her findings in further development of our own policies and procedures here at Kyabram Secondary College.

Regards

[Signature]

Trish Burke
Assistant Principal
Appendix B: Copy of Newsletter
CHAPLAINCY FUNDRAISERS

“Sock It To You” sock drive
Please find enclosed with Channels a brochure/order form for the “Sock It To You” sock drive. All types of socks from patterned to even aromatherapy socks, gloves, scarves, thermal underwear, cards, toys, cds, lambskin products, and more. Great gift ideas.

Please support Chaplaincy and make an order. Prizes for students:
2 x $40 CD vouchers - 1 for highest sales girls and 1 boys
4 x $30 CD vouchers - 2nd and 3rd highest boys and girls.

Return your order and money to Madelynne Owen at Kyabram Secondary College by 17 August. Cheques can be made to Kyabram Secondary College Chaplaincy Committee. There is provision for credit card payment if required.

MOVIE FUNDRAISER
SHREK the THIRD Movie & Ultimate Ogre Banquet
Friday 5 August
Dinner from 6.15pm to 7.15pm
Prizes announced at 7pm.

TICKETS are available from Kyabram Photoworks, Fab Flowers and Kyabram Secondary College office.
COST: $14 adults & children includes dinner & movie
Also a colouring competition is running to encourage children to come to the movie. You have to be present at the dinner before the show to win the major prize, which will be a SHREK Hamper. There are three other prizes for each age category.

Colouring competition forms are also available at KINGS, SAFEWAY, FAB FLOWERS FLORIST, JULIES HAIR STUDIO, DILLMAC, TOY WORLD, OPEN HOUSE, RAYS BARGAINS and PHOTOWORKS.

RESEARCH PROJECT
Trish Burke
Danielle Atherton is a practising Psychologist and a past student of Kyabram Secondary College. Danielle has approached the school for assistance in carrying out her research for her Master of Arts (Psychology). Her topic is The Relationship between Education and Antisocial Behaviour.

Danielle is seeking students from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 as well as staff volunteers to assist her with her research. The students will be interviewed in two groups of about 8 students each. The interview will be of 40-60 minutes duration during school time.

Copies of the proposal and methodology are available from the school office. The application has Human Research Ethics approval and has also been approved by the Department of Education and Training. Danielle needs 16 volunteers in total, please find consent forms inside your copy of Channels if you wish to volunteer and return these to the school office. Kyabram Secondary College is happy to support Danielle in her research.

OPEN DAY REMINDER
I encourage parents with students in Years 10 to 12 to visit at least one tertiary institution of interest during the month of August.
- SAT 4 AUGUST - Chisholm TAFE (Frankston), Monash (Gippstown)
- SUN 5 AUGUST - Box Hill TAFE, LaTrobe (Bendigo), Monash (Berwick, Clayton, Caulfield), Deakin (Melb)
- SAT 11 AUGUST - Holmesglen TAFE (Chadstone, Moorabbin)
- SUN 12 AUGUST - Deakin (Warrnambool), LaTrobe (Mildura & Shepparton), RMIT (Uni & TAFE), Victoria Uni (Footscray campus only), William Angliss Institute of TAFE
- SUN 19 AUGUST - Melbourne University (Parkville)
- SUN 26 AUGUST - La-Trobe (Bundoora), Swinburne (Croydon, Hawthorn, Lilydale, Prahran, Wantirna), Ballarat University

Programs are available from respective institutional websites or see the Careers office. A full list of the Open Days is available from www.vtac.edu.au

SUNSMART
Save your skin
Appendix C: Student Plain Language Statement
Dear Student,

This letter is to introduce myself and briefly describe my research. It is also to invite you to participate in a group interview with me. My name is Danielle Atherton and I am studying for a Masters of Arts (Research) Degree, in the School of International and Community Studies Design and Social Context Portfolio at RMIT University. The title of my research project is:

The Relationship Between Education and Antisocial Behaviour.

The aim of this project is to explore the relationship between education, the school environment and antisocial behaviour by acknowledging both students' and teachers' views on the issue. It is important that this connection is discussed, as the school environment is one of the main areas that young people interact, therefore it is important to gain an insight from those involved about the extent of the relationship.

If you choose to participate in this research, you will first be asked some general questions such as your age and year level. You will then be invited to participate in a 40-60 minute group interview with seven other students from your school which will be tape recorded, if you are happy about this. Within this discussion group the connection between school environment and antisocial behaviour will be discussed in depth.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential as the tapes will be kept secure and an alternative name to your own will be used in transcripts and the research project. If you are interested in getting a copy of the transcripts you can do so by contacting me. The results of this study may be published in a journal or presented at conferences; however no identifying material will be included. Once the interview is conducted and analysed, the tape recording and other data will be kept for a minimum of five years in a locked cabinet at RMIT University.

During the interview, some questions may stir up a personal response. In the unlikely event that such self-reflection is distressing, you may wish to seek professional psychological assistance from our Psychologist Sharon Anderson (9753 1441). Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the project at anytime and all data you provided will be destroyed.

The ethics committee of the Design and Social Context Portfolio HRES, Victorian Department of Education and your school Principal have given approval to conduct the current study. Please
keep this information sheet for your own records. If you have any questions about the study or results, please contact myself, Danielle Atherton on 9296 1286 or my primary supervisor Dr Marg Liddell on 9925 7311.

Danielle Atherton
Master of Arts Research Student
School of International and Community Studies
RMIT University

Supervisor Details
Dr Marg Liddell
Lecturer, Criminal Justice Administration
School of International and Community Studies
RMIT University

If you have any complaints or queries about your participation in this research project they may be directed to the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee; University Secretary RMIT; GPO Box 2476V; Melbourne, 3001 (Ph: (03) 9925 1745).
Appendix D: Teacher Plain Language Statement
Dear Teacher,

This letter is to introduce myself and briefly describe my research. It is also to invite you to participate in a group interview with me. My name is Danielle Atherton and I am studying for a Masters of Arts (Research) Degree, in the School of International and Community Studies Design and Social Context Portfolio at RMIT University. The title of my research project is:

The Relationship Between Education and Antisocial Behaviour.

The aim of this project is to explore the relationship between education, the school environment and antisocial behaviour by acknowledging both students and teacher’s views on the issue. It is important that this connection is discussed, as the school environment is one of the main areas that young people interact, therefore it is important to gain an insight from those involved about the extent of the relationship.

If you choose to participate in this research, you will first be asked some general questions such as your age and your teaching duration. You will be then invited to participate in a 40-60 minute group interview with three other co-workers from your school which will be tape recorded with your permission. Within this discussion forum the connection between school environment and antisocial behaviour will be discussed in depth.

Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential as the tapes will be kept secure and an alternative name to your own will be used in transcripts and the research project. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the transcripts this can be achieved by contacting me. The results of this study may be published in a journal or presented at conferences; however no identifying material will be included. Once the interview is conducted and analysed, the tape recording and other data will be retained for a minimum of five years in a locked cabinet at RMIT University.

During the interview, some questions may evoke a personal response. In the unlikely event that such self-reflection is distressing, you may wish to seek professional psychological assistance from our Psychologist Sharon Anderson (9723 1441). Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the project at any time and all data you provided will be destroyed.

The ethics committee of the Design and Social Context Portfolio HREC, Victorian Department of Education and your Principal have given approval to conduct the current study. Please keep this
information sheet for your own records. If you have any questions about the study or results, please contact myself, Danielle Atherton on 9296 1286 or my primary supervisor Dr Marg Liddell on 9925 7311.

Danielle Atherton
Master of Arts Research Student
School of International and Community Studies
RMIT University

Supervisor Details
Dr. Marg Liddell
Lecturer, Criminal Justice Administration
School of International and Community Studies
RMIT University

If you have any complaints or queries about your participation in this research project they may be directed to the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee; University Secretary RMIT; GPO Box 2476V; Melbourne, 3001 (Ph: (03) 9925 1745).
Appendix E: Consent Form
Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects
Involving Interviews, Questionnaires or Disclosure of Personal
Information

Portfolio
School of
Name of participant:
Project Title:

Design and Social Context
International and Community Studies

The Relationship Between Education and Antisocial
Behaviour

Name(s) of investigators: (1) Danielle C Atherton Phone: 9296 1286

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the
interviews or questionnaires and audio taping - have been explained to me.
3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.
4. I acknowledge that:
   (a) Having read Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands
       of the study.
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw
       any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
   (d) The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where
       I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law.
   (e) The security of the research data and audiotapes is assured during and after completion of the
       study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project
       outcomes will be provided to Carinya Secondary College. Any information which will identify
       me will not be used.

Participant’s Consent

Participant: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
(Signature)

Witness: ______________________________ Date: ___________________________
(Signature)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ___________________________ in the above project.

Signature: (1) ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
(Signatures of parents or guardians)

Witness: ______________________________ Date: ___________________________
(Witness to signature)

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics
Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 24334, Melbourne, 3001; the telephone number is (03) 9925 2257.
Details of the complaints procedure are available from the above address.

Human Research Ethics Committee, June 2005

185
Appendix F: Student Focus Group Questions
Are there any activities that you and your friends do that you disagree with?  
(wagging school, stealing, picking on someone)

What is the difference between antisocial (negative) and criminal behaviour?

Have you heard of bullying happening in your school or others?

- What form does this bullying take? (physical, verbal and cyber-bullying)
- Where does bullying occur in your school?
- What do you believe are the characteristics of a bully and victim?
- What do you think an individual achieves from bullying?
- What effects has this bullying had on its victim?

How would you describe/characterise a bully and victim?

Does labelling an individual as a bully influence them to interact in a negative manner?  
How/Why not?

What did/How would you respond if you witnessed someone getting bullied?

What are your school’s rules in regards to negative behaviour and bullying?

Would controlling mobile and internet access decrease cyber-bullying?  
How/Why not?

Do you believe students pay attention to school rules and regulations?  
How/Why not?

Have you read the Policy against Harassment printed in your school’s diary?  
How relevant is it/ Why not?

What do you believe is the best method of dealing with negative behaviour?
Appendix G: Teacher Focus Group Questions
To what extent does peer pressure have on adolescent behaviour?
What factors do you believe contribute to adolescents behaving antisocially?
To what extent does antisocial behaviour (cheating, bullying, smoking, drug use) exist in your school or the education system?
Have there been any instances of bullying occurring in your school or other schools?

- What form does this bullying take? (physical, verbal and cyber-bullying)
- Where does bullying most likely occur in the school ground?
- What do you think an individual achieves from bullying?
- What effects has this bullying had on its victim?

Is there any difference in the level of bullying occurring in public and private schools? If YES. How much?
How would you describe/characterise a bully and victim?
Does labelling an individual as a bully influence them to interact in a negative manner? How/Why not?
How do bystanders react to antisocial behaviour?
Have you seen a connection between student’s academic achievement and negative/antisocial behaviour at your school or others? How/Why not?
Would controlling mobile and internet access decrease cyber-bullying? How/Why not?
Do you believe students pay attention to school rules and regulations? How/Why not?
Does your school have any policy or procedural documents regarding antisocial behaviour and bullying? How relevant is it/ Why not?
Do you believe students pay attention to the rules and advice set out by their teachers? How/Why not?
Appendix H: RMIT Ethics Approval
Design and Social Context Portfolio

HRESC
HF:HP
Building 220.4.5
Bundoora West Campus
HRESC-B: 709-09/05

Danielle Atherton
32 Stewart St
Brunswick

Dear Danielle

Re: Human Research Ethics Application Approval

The Design and Social Context Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee received your amended ethics application entitled "The Relationship Between Education and Antisocial Behaviour"

I am pleased to advise that your application has been approved as Risk Level 2 classification by the Chair, as of 21 December 2005. This approval will now be reported to the University Human Research Ethics Committee for noting.

This now completes the Ethics procedures. Your ethics approval expires on 21 December 2008.

You are reminded that you are required to complete an Annual/Final report, which should be forwarded to the Secretary of the DSC HRESC – B at the above address by 6th December 2006. This report is available from: URL: http://www.mmu.edu.au/rd/hrec_apply

Should you have any queries regarding your ethics application please seek advice from the Chair of the sub-committee Assoc. Prof. Heather Fehring on 9925 7840, heather.fehring@mmu.edu.au or contact me on (03) 9925 7877 or email heather.porter@mmu.edu.au

I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Heather Porter
Secretary
Design and Social Context
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee
Operational Unit – Bundoora

CC: Dr Marg Liddell, Senior Supervisor, School of International and Community Studies
Appendix I: Department of Education Ethics Approval
SOS003224

Ms Danielle Atherton
32 Stewart Street,
Brunswick
VIC 3056

Dear Ms Atherton,

Thank you for your application of 23 March 2006 in which you request permission to conduct a research study in government schools titled: The Relationship Between Education And Antisocial Behaviour.

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. Should your institution’s ethics committee require changes or you decide to make changes, these changes must be submitted to the Department of Education and Training for its consideration before you proceed.

2. You obtain approval for the research to be conducted in each school directly from the principal. Details of your research, copies of this letter of approval and the letter of approval from the relevant ethics committee are to be provided to the principal. The final decision as to whether or not your research can proceed in a school rests with the principal.

3. No student is to participate in this research study unless they are willing to do so and parental permission is received. Sufficient information must be provided to enable parents to make an informed decision and their consent must be obtained in writing.

4. As a matter of courtesy, you should advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director.
5. Any extensions or variations to the research proposal, additional research involving use of the data collected, or publication of the data beyond that normally associated with academic studies will require a further research approval submission.

6. At the conclusion of your study, a copy or summary of the research findings should be forwarded to the Research and Development Branch, Department of Education and Training, Level 2, 33 St Andrews Place, GPO Box 4367 Melbourne 3001.

I wish you well with your research study. Should you have further enquiries on this matter, please contact Chris Warne, Project Officer, Research on (03) 9637 2272.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

John McCarthy
Assistant General Manager
Research and Innovation Division

13/04/2006

cnc
Appendix J: KSC Code of Conduct
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct for students is developed within DE&T guidelines and is designed to promote an environment which provides the maximum opportunity for all students to experience success and optimise their learning potential.

The College places a high emphasis on the development of self-esteem by all students, together with self-discipline and consideration for others. Specific details may be found in the College Discipline and Counselling Procedures.

All students have a right to:

- be treated with courtesy and respect;
- a cohesive curriculum which supports their intellectual, social, physical and personal development;
- be educated in a positive and safe learning environment;
- a full knowledge of the rights, implications and practices of this Student Code of Conduct;
- receive positive recognition for their achievements in all areas of the curriculum;
- an environment which is free of discrimination and harassment;
- participate in the decision-making processes of the College; and
- be provided with information related to the submission of all work requirements and assessment tasks.

The College expects that each student will:

- show courtesy and respect to all members of our school community and visitors;
- respect the educational rights of other students;
- take responsibility for their own actions;
- follow reasonable and clearly communicated instructions by staff;
- within their individual ability levels, make the most of their educational opportunities by completing all work set during class-time and for homework;
- not promote, possess or use drugs of any kind including tobacco and alcohol (excluding medication);
- abide by the rules of the College and specified Classroom Management Plans;
- take care of their own property and respect the property of the College and other people;
- maintain regular attendance and be punctual to class;
- remain in the College grounds unless parental and College permission is obtained; and
- abide by the College uniform policy including the wearing of broad brimmed hats.

These behaviour guidelines are essential and non-negotiable, but it is recognised that there will be specific occasions when it is necessary to establish temporary or short term rules, to ensure the safety and uninterrupted education of the students.

These expectations apply on all internal or external school organised activities.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT PROCEDURES

Working together, classroom teachers, Year Level co-ordinators and the Student Welfare co-ordinator will establish and implement a range of communication and support procedures, including:

- year level meetings to discuss welfare and discipline issues;
- teacher meetings to discuss particular students and classes;
- recording of student behaviour in the student files;
- regular formal and informal consultation and discussion;
- support groups will be set up as required; and
- the assistance of agencies such as the Department of Human Services as required.

CONSEQUENCES

The Whole School Approach to Building Relationships encourages positive student conduct and is supported by the “Tribes” program agreements. The agreements involved are:

- attentive listening
- appreciation/honour put downs
- mutual respect
- the right to pass
- personal best
The six areas covered are:
- Safety
- Treatment – people, environment
- Communication
- Movement
- Learning
- Conflict Resolution

Breaches of school expectations will incur some penalty or action as a logical consequence of the misbehaviour. The Student Management Team will develop, for staff consideration, a set of expectations in line with this Whole School Approach which will apply to all activities occurring outside the classroom environment. Serious and continued breaches of school expectations may lead to students being withdrawn from out-of-school activities or to suspension or expulsion procedures consistent with the Departmental procedures.

Procedures to evaluate and monitor the Code of Conduct include:
- regular review including input from students, parents, teachers, appropriate welfare agencies, welfare and year level co-ordinators' meetings;
- detailed recording procedure by co-ordinators;
- whole school recording and analysis of student management issues; and
- welfare and year level co-ordinator meetings and staff meetings have as a standard agenda item issues related to student welfare management and the Code of Conduct.

**PLANNER POLICY**

All students are issued with a planner and they are for school use only, not a private journal. Planners are used extensively for Parent-Teacher communication and parents are encouraged to communicate often through the planners.

When out of class all students must have their planners with them and signed by their teacher.

The planners contain sequential techniques and methods that will enhance our students' organisational, personal and academic progress. The planners are a "Do It Yourself Guide" for students to build quality study habits and culture.

**HOMEWORK POLICY**

In order to establish a productive study culture and strive to reach their full potential, it is essential for students to receive an increasing amount of homework from Years 7-12.

The acceptance of the concept of homework is important as:
- it is difficult for all required work to be completed during class time;
- it is important that students realise that education is not merely a school-time activity;
- students should strive to achieve at a very high standard; and
- it assists them in learning efficient time management.

This is only possible if a suitable amount of time is devoted to education out of school time.

Homework may take the various forms of:
- completion of work;
- short overnight tasks; and
- long-term assignments, reading or research.

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's education. Thus, parents should check if their children have homework and should ensure that their children have a suitable environment and full encouragement for the completion of homework. (See student diary for advice on home study environment.)

Completion of set homework on time will be seen as an important part of a student's achievement and attitude assessment. Students should use the Study Log in their diaries to record the time that they devote to homework.

Students from Years 7 to 10 should enter all homework, deadlines for assignments and planning to be completed in their diary. The diary is to be signed each week by parents and a teacher.

Students in Years 11 and 12, should use their diaries for the same purposes as Years 7 to 10 and make it the cornerstone of their study program.

The section in the diary to plan the upcoming week should be used every week.