

The Bullying Project 2018



What children and young people want schools to know about bullying



Children and young people said that bullying happened in the school yard, during lessons, in classrooms, lunch and recess, in various places and spaces including school bathrooms. Bullying also happens online but it usually starts at school.

Bullying poses a significant risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm to children and young people. Schools can play a significant role in minimising and preventing bullying from occurring by promoting an anti-bullying culture across all years and age groups.

Legislative Requirements

The Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and the *Children's Protection Act 1993* places legislative obligations on all educational institutions that provide services to children and young people under 18 years of age.

Under these Acts, schools are required to create and maintain a child safe and a child friendly environment that protects children from harm. In these environments children should feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential and their welfare must be protected and promoted.

Best Practice Case Study

In a primary school in Wales student well-being has been assessed as "excellent". This school has used human rights principles to form many programs, including an anti-bullying program, where pupils are "having a say and taking personal responsibility" for their actions. This school has student anti-bullying ambassadors. They have developed their own anti-bullying policy and shared it with other students, and then each class has agreed to their own class charter. As a result "...behaviour is very good in lessons and around school. Most pupils show great care and kindness towards others and are courteous and polite."

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, A report on Blaenymaes Primary School – Date of Inspection: November 2016 at pages 6-7 accessed 11 October 2018, <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Blaenymaes%20Primary%20School.pdf>

Bullying hurts people. There could even be legal consequences in severe situations.



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Everyone in the school environment has a role to play in reducing and preventing bullying. In addition to schools fulfilling their legal requirements, children and young people suggested that they could implement the following recommendations:

1 **Involve students in anti-bullying programs, strategies and activities so they can respond to bullying when it happens.**

For example, student ambassadors trained to deal with bullying incidents. Children and young people said they feel more comfortable talking to peers.

2 **Guide children on how to make friends, how to be a good friend and how to maintain good friendships.**

Children and young people said schools should encourage friendships between different year levels.

3 **Teach students' kindness as a strategy to address bullying.**

For example, to teach children about their rights and promises to ensure they respect others rights.

4 **Support teachers to be good role models, using practical and positive communication skills that students can put into action.**

Children and young people said they want teachers to watch them more closely and ask if they are okay, rather than waiting for students to tell them there is a problem.

5 **Have support readily available for all, including the bully.**

That way, they can access support services if they need them. Children and young people said this includes easy access to counselling services and trusted adults.

6 **Create physically safe spaces and a feeling of community.**

Use the experience of children and young people and their knowledge of their environments. Children and young people said an anonymous reporting system could support more students to come forward, increase awareness of the type of bullying in the school.

This could support the school to have a better response, and minimise repercussions.

7 **Create a community within the school that values students' skills and fosters teamwork, and builds relationships.**

8 **Celebrate diversity within the school and relate these directly to rights, values and morals.**

If children felt better about themselves they would be less likely to bully and be more confident to stand up to bullying when they see it happening to others.



Visit ccyp.com.au to download the full **Bullying Project Report** and Fact Sheets on Bullying Prevention.

Children and Young People aged 10-19 years across the greater Adelaide region were consulted as part of the Commissioner's Bullying Project (2018). The information in this fact sheet is drawn from their responses.

