

# The Bullying Project



## Ideas to Help Prevent Bullying

Children know that quality friendships are a key to preventing bullying and can help to build resilience and confidence, particularly among younger school children.

Children and young people know that having friends can be both a protection against bullying and a support for someone who is being bullied.

*'Not only does not having friends make you more vulnerable it makes you an easier target.'*

*'If someone is alone getting bullied, become their friend and they'll be seen as less of a target.'*

### Children and young people have said:

- Many kids get teased, bullied or picked on because they are seen as different in the way they look, dress or talk, or even because the family they come from appears unusual.
- Sometimes it may feel scary to get to know a classmate who is different from you.
- Taking the first step is hard, and making and keeping friends can be tricky.

They want schools to play more of a role in guiding children and young people on how to make friends. They want teachers to teach them how to be a good friend, and how to maintain good friendships, including providing opportunities to develop broad friendship networks while at school.

They want to make friends across different year levels. This enables them to explore new ways of relating to and getting to know the people around them. Then if issues occur

with their year level friends they can find an 'older' friend from whom they can seek some advice.

Children are also keen to have safe spaces to discuss 'big ticket' issues relating to gender, inclusion and diversity. These are issues they grapple with at various stages throughout their development, particularly in early teenage years.

According to children and young people, encouraging development of social skills that include having confidence to connect with others, can be a very effective anti-bullying strategy.

### Rights and Responsibilities

Bullying poses a significant risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm to children and young people. Schools can play a crucial role in minimising and preventing bullying from occurring by guiding children to make and maintain good friendships, across years and from a young age.

All children have rights. They need their own set of rights to survive and develop to grow up healthy and safe. These rights are set out in a document called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a document that more than 198 countries have agreed to, including Australia who was one of the first to sign it back in 1989 when it was first introduced.

*'Togetherness and wellbeing, as well as development of friendships, occurs most in environments that challenge stereotypes, celebrate diversity and respect children's rights.'*

Children and young people understand how difficult it can be to prevent bullying in the classroom and playground. They have some ideas on how to help prevent bullying at school that they think will work.

## Primary Schools

### Lunchtime Clubs

Easy to implement and no outside help needed

Lunchtime programs that provide students with opportunities to be involved in activities in which they are interested.

Students should be included in brainstorming ideas, designing rules and deciding on the name of groups and clubs. Clubs can be supported by older students or staff. Membership based on interest instead of age, will support development of friendships across year levels.

### Gaming in the Library

More difficult but likely to be highly valued, some help needed

Evidence suggests that gaming in the library has benefits for the whole school. Students have said that it increases the social interaction between students who normally don't socialise together and makes school fun. Students have also said that helping others to play makes you feel good about yourself and is the only time when students are the 'experts'. For students with no internet access at home it can provide a boost to digital literacy skills and support learning in a natural unforced way which in turn can support classroom learning.

## Secondary Schools

Harder to put in place and needs some wellbeing leadership support to implement well, but offers long term benefits

### Circle of Friendship

A group of students who come together to support a peer who finds it difficult to make friends. Students support peers to identify issues that are challenging them and to find solutions together. Wellbeing staff facilitate the circles but all strategies come from students. Anyone who is interested in this approach should explore appropriate training resources to ensure this strategy is implemented in a holistic way to reap the benefits, and so that everyone is safe and looked after in the process. These approaches have been effective with young people with disability.\*

\* Resourcing Inclusion Communities – [www.ric.org.au](http://www.ric.org.au)

### Conversation Clubs

Students understand there are big problems in the world and want to be able to have an informed conversation. School can be an ideal place to have conversations about them and that examine concepts like racism, social injustice, inequality and discrimination. Like a book discussion club this is a group of people who meet regularly to discuss contemporary issues. Facilitated by a group leader, senior students can lead discussions around healthy relationships, values and identity, as well as encourage members of the group to express their opinions, concerns and questions openly and without fear of being judged.



Visit [ccyp.com.au](http://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.