

Working together

A toolkit for effective school based action
against bullying

An initiative of the Queensland
Schools Alliance Against Violence



Queensland Government

On 23 February 2010 the Premier announced the formation of the *Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence* (the Alliance) to provide advice on best practice measures to address bullying and violence in Queensland schools to the Minister for Education and Training, the Honourable Geoff Wilson MP.

The Alliance is independently chaired by Professor Ian O'Connor and includes representatives from:

- Education Queensland
- Queensland Catholic Education Commission
- Independent Schools Union
- Queensland Council for Parents and Citizens Association
- Federations of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools
- Queensland Independent School Parents Council
- Queensland Teachers Union
- Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union
- Queensland Independent Education Union
- Catholic sector principals
- State sector principals
- Independent sector principals
- Indigenous education representative
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.

On the 14 May 2010, the Alliance endorsed the release of *Working Together: A toolkit for effective school based action against bullying*.

The Queensland Department of Education Training acknowledges that components of "Safe to Learn" have been used, under license, from the *United Kingdom, Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance. (2007) Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools*. Many of the structural elements have been drawn from the UK guideline, however the elements of effective school based action against bullying and associated content has been developed from the cited research.

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Introduction

The Queensland Government has been working hard to address the increasingly complex issue of bullying, cyber bullying and violence in schools.

In September 2009, the Queensland Government engaged Dr Ken Rigby, nationally and internationally renowned expert and published author on bullying to undertake a consultancy to provide current information on research and initiatives in the area of bullying to inform the future work of the Department of Education and Training.

Dr Rigby's report, *Enhancing Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools* delivered 12 recommendations shaping the way forward for Queensland schools. Consistent with recommendation 10 of Dr Rigby's report was the formation of the *Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (the Alliance)*.

The role of the Alliance, as outlined in its Terms of Reference, is to provide the Queensland Government with independent advice on strategies to address issues of bullying and violence in all state and non-state schools throughout Queensland and importantly oversee the response to all of Dr Rigby's recommendations. One specific task of the Alliance is to *"identify evidence-based best practice across Queensland education sectors, nationally and internationally, which may be implemented in Queensland schools."*

A key aspect of Dr Rigby's advice was that schools require an effective framework from which to address bullying in schools. In response to this advice, the Alliance agreed to the development of a toolkit based on national and international best practice to assist schools to take action against bullying – the *Working Together* toolkit.

The process of developing the toolkit commenced with a review of current publications and research to distil the best work occurring across the world to address bullying in schools. Much of this research was sourced from within Australia, drawing on the work of Professor Donna Cross, Dr Ken Rigby and the reviews of the National Safe Schools Framework. The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* conducted by Professor Donna Cross and colleagues is a significant piece of Australian research that has informed many aspects of the toolkit, with many of the findings of the research being relevant to all forms of bullying.

The Alliance also identified a "ready to go" resource from the United Kingdom. The *Safe to Learn* resource appeared to have all the components of evidence based practice to address bullying in schools (Department for Children, Schools and Families Guidance (DCSF), 2007). The licence for this resource was obtained and it was used as a starting point for the toolkit. In order to ground the toolkit firmly within the Australian context a review of Australian research and resources was conducted to identify the *ten elements of effective school based action against bullying*. These elements form the structure for the remainder of the document.

The *Working Together* toolkit is truly a compilation of best practice occurring across the world.

Purpose of the toolkit

The purpose of the *Working Together* toolkit is to provide Queensland schools with an ever-evolving collection of practical strategies to address student-on-student bullying in all its forms. It is recognised that many Queensland schools already have well developed, comprehensive approaches to bullying and building positive school environments, and some schools are still developing their approaches. It is hoped the toolkit provides school leaders, teachers, specialists and teacher-aides alike, practical ideas to strengthen their schools' approach to bullying – wherever they are on the journey.

Just as the nature of bullying is ever-changing and responsive to the environment, this toolkit will continue to expand and provide school communities with useful evidence-based ideas on how to tackle this complex issue.

What is bullying?

In 2009, the Queensland Government engaged bullying expert Dr Ken Rigby to undertake a consultancy for the Department of Education and Training to provide current information about research and initiatives in the area of bullying in order to inform the future work in Queensland schools. Dr Rigby (Rigby, 2010) defines bullying in the following way:

“Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:

- *dominating or hurting someone*
- *unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power*
- *a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.”*

Bullying can take many forms. The *National Centre Against Bullying* identifies five kinds of bullying:

1. Physical bullying

This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing.

Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

2. Verbal bullying

Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

3. Covert bullying

Such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that make the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

4. Psychological bullying

For example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

5. Cyber bullying

Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

The issue of cyber bullying has received a great deal of interest recently and has been the focus of a number of research and review processes, such as the *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* (Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L., 2009) and the *Review of the National Safe Schools Framework* (McGrath, 2005).

In a report commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (Bernard & Milne, 2008) the main forms of cyber bullying are identified as:

- **Flaming:** online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- **Harassment:** repeatedly sending nasty, mean or insulting messages
- **Denigration:** Posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- **Outing:** sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyber stalking:** repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

Within the *Safe to Learn* (DCSF, 2007) resource it is identified that students can be bullied for a variety of reasons. Specific types of bullying may relate to:

- race, religion or culture
- appearance or health conditions
- sexual orientation
- home and family circumstances
- learning needs or disabilities
- gender or sexual bullying.

Just as bullying can take many different forms, it can also occur between students, staff and parents/carers. While these instances of bullying are serious and need to be addressed, the focus of this toolkit is on actions to address bullying among students.

What behaviours are not bullying

While it is important to understand and define what bullying is, it is also important to be clear to the school community, what behaviours are NOT bullying. Dr Rigby (2010) identifies that for some people the term 'bullying' is a highly emotive term and its use may lead to an over-reaction.

The *National Centre Against Bullying* acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)

- not liking someone or a single acts of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance) they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

What do we know about students who bully?

The research shows that students who bully are not necessarily the physically dominant student with self esteem issues. McNamara (1997) identifies students who bully as often:

- popular
- having good leadership skills
- not malicious in their intent
- thoughtless in their actions.

In the *Action Against Bullying* Education Series, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg identified other characteristics of bullies, for example they often have:

- high energy
- good verbal skills and an ability to talk themselves out of trouble
- a high estimation of their own ability
- an ability to manipulate individuals or groups
- an enjoyment of conflict and aggression
- a delight in getting their own way
- the appearance of being popular but often disliked.

What roles can students play in bullying behaviour?

Not all students play a clear role as either the student who is bullying or the student who is being bullied. Students may take on different roles in different circumstances (for example a student who is being bullied in one context, may do the bullying in another or a student who acts as a bystander may

intervene and act as a protector if the ring-leader is not around). The *Safe to Learn* (DCFS, 2007) publication identifies the different roles as:

- **Ring Leader:** students who through their social power can direct bullying activity.
- **Associates:** students who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader).
- **Reinforcers:** students who give positive feedback to the student doing the bullying, for example through comments, by smiling or laughing.
- **Outsiders/Bystanders:** students remain silent or watch and therefore appear to condone the bullying behaviour or who want to keep themselves safe by not drawing attention to themselves out of fear of the bully.
- **Defenders:** students who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort students who experience bullying.

What does effective school based action look like?

The *Safe to Learn* resource developed in the United Kingdom provides a description of what effective school based action looks like for all members of a school community (DCFS, 2007). This description, provided below, sets the standard for what schools should aim to achieve through their action against bullying.

Students who experience bullying report they

- are heard
- know how to report bullying and get help
- are confident in the school's ability to deal with the bullying
- are helped to feel safe again
- are helped to rebuild confidence and resilience
- know how they can get support from others.

Students who bully

- are held to account for their behaviour and the harm they have caused through appropriate disciplinary measures and learning programs
- are taught to behave in ways that do not cause harm in the future because they have developed their social and emotional skills and knowledge about the effects of their behaviour
- are supported to learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused.

The school community

- is aware of the activities and strategies the school uses to prevent and respond to bullying
- is engaged in developing and reviewing the actions taken by the school to address bullying
- celebrates the success of the school's approach to bullying and promoting safety
- understands the role they play and the actions they can take in preventing and responding to bullying.

School leaders, teachers and other school staff

- develop whole school policies that meet the expectations of their school community and school sector
- promote a positive school culture where bullying is not tolerated and cannot flourish
- continually develop school practice based on knowledge and evidence of what works
- know how to respond to reports of bullying
- regularly review their actions to address bullying
- use teaching and learning opportunities to address bullying
- ensure supports are in place to prevent and respond to bullying
- have addressed environmental issues and promoted safe play and learning areas and are constantly vigilant in their supervision of students
- participate in relevant professional development, and are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying
- gather useful information about the effectiveness of the actions to address bullying, and these data are used for monitoring and evaluation
- work in partnership with parents/carers, other schools and community partners to promote safe communities.

Parents/carers report they

- know the school does not tolerate bullying
- are aware of procedures to use if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn, including the school's complaints procedure
- have confidence the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously, investigate/resolve as necessary and will deal with the bullying in a way that protects their child
- are aware of ways in which they can support the school's action against bullying
- know how they can support their child if affected by bullying.

How to create and implement effective whole-school approaches to bullying

It is recommended schools use the *Elements of effective school based action against bullying* as a framework to develop their whole school approach for addressing bullying. The elements provide a checklist for schools to use to review and evaluate their action.

The *Elements of effective school based action against bullying* have been identified from national and international research and program reviews.

Elements of effective school based action against bullying

1. Create a caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive **school culture**.^{1,2}
2. Establish a **clear whole school definition** of bullying.^{3,4}
3. Establish a **clear anti-bullying policy** developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents/carers, which addresses all forms of bullying (including cyber bullying).^{3,4}
4. Collaboratively develop **procedural steps to respond appropriately to bullying incidents** that are clearly documented and define the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers.^{3,4}
5. Establish **teaching and learning programs** that promote personal development and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social-cognitive abilities, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders.^{1,3,4,5,6}
6. Provide **professional development** to assist school staff to understand the anti-bullying policy, implement teaching and learning programs, and to provide support for students at high risk times and in high risk settings.^{3,7}
7. **Consult students** regularly to monitor and determine the types of bullying behaviour and in what school and social contexts bullying (including cyber bullying) occurs.^{3,7,8}
8. Create **physical environments** in the school and staff supervision practices that limit the incidences of bullying (including cyber bullying).^{2,3,7}
9. **Support and engage families** by maintaining regular, clear communication and through systematic parent awareness raising and skill building.^{2,3,4,5,7}
10. Establish a process for **regularly reviewing** and celebrating the effectiveness of school policies, programs and procedures.^{2,7,8,9}

Elements of effective school based action against bullying

1. Create a caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive **school culture**

Effective school leadership is critical to the creation of a positive school culture. School leaders who create a caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive school culture which secures whole-school community support for a range of strategies lay strong foundations for effective school based action against bullying (Cross, D., Shaw, T., Pearce, N., Erceg, E., Waters, S., Pintabona, Y., & Hall, M., 2007).

The *Summary Report of the Outcomes from the National Safe Schools Framework Best Practice Grants Programme* (McGrath, 2005) reported schools that included a focus on developing a positive school ethos and culture, particularly through the development of values such as respect, compassion, support and acceptance of difference found this to be effective. Some schools reported the use of 'restorative practices' acted as a catalyst for the improvement of school ethos and student behaviours consistent with compassion and fairness.

The report also found that *"Secondary schools that used peer support structures and student leadership programmes as a means of empowering students found that these provide a very effective process for improving school cultures and climates"* (McGrath, 2005).

The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* found the perception of the school's culture regarding bullying was highly significant both for those who are bullied and those who bully others. Students in schools that scored poorly on school culture measures had an increased risk of both bullying and being bullied (Cross et al., 2009).

For many schools the pastoral care provides an effective framework to foster a positive school ethos based on care and respect for others.

A positive school culture can be supported and demonstrated by school leaders through a public commitment or statement. School leaders may choose to sign up to the Kandersteg Declaration as a way to communicate to their school community their commitment to address bullying. The Kandersteg Declaration is a pledge of long term commitment and determination to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying and victimisation in children and youth that resulted from the *Joint Efforts Against Victimization Conference* held in Kandersteg, Switzerland in 2007. Individual schools are able to sign up to the declaration.

Alternatively schools, or local school Alliances, may choose to develop their own accord that publicly declares the actions they will take to build a safe school community. (See the References section on page 63 of the toolkit for a link for more information regarding the Kandersteg Declaration).

2. Establish a clear whole school **definition of bullying**

The Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (QSAAV) has adopted Dr Rigby's definition of bullying and based on this, schools should involve the whole school community (teachers, student and parent body) in the development of a definition of bullying for their school community. A school's definition should identify that:

- bullying is repeated behaviour
- involves a power imbalance, and
- takes many forms (Rigby, 2010).

Schools may choose to incorporate within their definition some specific types of bullying behaviours that are particularly relevant to their school community.

The *Safe to Learn* resource identifies bullying as (but not limited to): name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others ((DCFS, 2007).

Schools should ensure their definition of bullying is based on research, knowledge of behaviour within their school and is understood and supported by all members of the school community – students, staff and parents/carers.

3. Establish a clear **anti-bullying policy** developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents/carers, which addresses all forms of bullying (including cyber bullying)

The anti-bullying policy should contain a statement that clearly identifies the school's stance and action for the areas identified in *Elements of effective school based action against bullying*. (See page 49 of the Resources section of the toolkit for a template that may be used to structure an anti-bullying policy).

In developing their anti-bullying policy schools should engage with all members of the school community, particularly students and parents/carers. Dr Michael Carr-Gregg and Dr Donna Cross identify that engaging students in the process of policy development, particularly as it relates to cyber bullying is a critical factor in ensuring its successful implementation.

Anti-bullying policies may be developed as part of the process of developing the school's wider behaviour policy, incorporating measures to promote good behaviour. In state schools these include policies such as the school's *Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students* and the Code of School Behaviour. In non-state schools the policy context may vary across sectors and individual schools.

Communicating the policy

The success of a school's anti-bullying policy is largely dependent on how well it is communicated and understood within the school community. The policy may be used, in a similar way to the Kandersteg Declaration, to communicate and celebrate the school's commitment to the safety of all students.

The school's policy should be reinforced to the school community throughout the year. The *National Centre Against Bullying* suggests that at the commencement of the school year it is good practice for the principal to write to parents/carers reminding them of the school's anti-bullying policy and associated responsibilities.

Other opportunities to promote the schools bullying policy throughout the school year may include:

- a designated day of action against bullying
- school assemblies to raise awareness of the school's anti-bullying policy and develop students' emotional literacy
- using student specific communications (seek input from students on the most relevant means)
- references and articles in the school newsletter

- placing the policy on the school's website.

4. Collaboratively develop **procedural steps to appropriately respond to bullying incidents** that are clearly documented and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers

The first step to ensuring schools respond appropriately to bullying incidents is to implement clear and effective systems that students and parents/carers can use to report bullying behaviour. These systems must then be supported by a school staff that is aware of reporting procedures.

The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS)* found that students who had been covertly bullied sought help from their friends most often, closely followed by seeking help from their parents/carers. The study found students also sought help from a teacher or staff member. A third of males and 23% of females did not ask anyone for help (Cross et al., 2009).

This highlights the need for all members of the school community (students, parents/carers and staff) to be involved in the development of appropriate reporting methods that are accessible and that students and parents/carers have confidence in.

Student reporting methods

A range of methods may be used by schools to encourage students to report bullying. In the *Action Against Bullying Education Series*, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg suggested a number of innovative strategies to increase avenues for reporting. These include:

- **Electronic bully boxes** – an email address well known among students that enables them to confidentially report bullying
- **Secret ballot techniques** – where at the commencement of the school year students are provided with a survey (often including a map of the school) to identify who and where they may have experienced bullying
- **Consumer satisfaction surveys** – such as the school opinion surveys that seek general responses about safety and wellbeing of students.

The *Safe to Learn* resource identifies that reporting systems are of value when students:

- have confidence their concerns will be treated promptly and seriously, and that action will be taken which will not make their situation worse
- can access reporting routes easily

- know who will deal with their concerns, and have trust both in them and the systems which the school uses
- are aware that malicious reporting relating to students or staff will be taken seriously and could incur a disciplinary measure (DCFS, 2007).

Parent/carer reporting methods

During the *Action Against Bullying* Education Series, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg emphasised the importance of parental reporting to ensure schools are aware of and can respond appropriately to incidents of bullying.

The *Safe to Learn* resource identifies that parental reporting methods are most effective when:

- all staff (including office staff and other support staff) are familiar with and have been trained in the school's systems and understand the steps to be taken
- all staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of parents/carers making contact with the school about incidents of bullying
- parents/carers have confidence staff will take the concern seriously and act promptly in a way that improves the situation for their child
- staff take action according to agreed timelines and report progress to parents/carers
- parents/carers are clear about how to take further action if they do not feel that their concern has been properly addressed (DCFS, 2007).

Intervention strategies

Dr Ken Rigby identifies a number of intervention strategies that may be effective in responding to bullying incidents. In cases of serious bullying, careful investigation may need to be undertaken, leading to planned or systematic treatment involving the bully or bullies and in some cases, others such as the target of the bullying, bystanders and parents/carers.

Schools may choose to use multiple approaches depending on the incident or adopt one approach across the school. Depending on the approach or range of approaches selected schools will need to ensure staff receive training so they are competent in the use of the chosen approach.

The nature of the bullying incidents will help to determine which method is most appropriate, as should school policy and the availability of school resources, particularly access to trained practitioners.

Schools will also need to assess the most appropriate method for the students involved, taking into account individual needs such as language, stage of development and disability.

The intervention strategies identified by Dr Rigby are:

1. The traditional disciplinary approach

Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, proportionately and consistently and taking account of any reasonable adjustments students may require and the needs of vulnerable children.

Disciplinary measures have three main purposes:

- to impress on perpetrators that what they have done is unacceptable
- to deter them from repeating that behaviour
- to signal to other students the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Disciplinary measures for bullying are intended to hold students who bully to account for their behaviour, and ensure they accept the harm they have caused and to learn from it. Disciplinary measures may also provide (as appropriate) an opportunity for the student to put right the harm they have caused.

Schools must also ensure that the needs of the student who has experienced bullying are addressed. It is not advisable to force them into situations where they have to face their bullies in isolation.

The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. However, schools should not take covert or cyber bullying less seriously than physical bullying. In reviewing disciplinary measures, schools must take due care to ensure they address bullying behaviours in a way which does not lead to escalation and which gives the best chance that bullying will not be repeated.

When other strategies and disciplinary measures do not resolve the problem, the school leadership team may be required to apply disciplinary absence measures, as appropriate (Rigby, 2010a).

2. Strengthening the target

This approach to dealing with cases of bullying aims to assist students who have been the target of bullying to cope more effectively in interactions with the bully or bullies. Students who are being targeted are advised or trained to become less vulnerable, for example, by learning to act more assertively. Students who have been bullied may be taught a technique known as fogging. This involves openly acknowledging that the bully may actually believe the negative things he or she is saying and refusing to be disturbed or intimidated. It can be effective in some cases of one-to-one bullying but is limited to bullying that is verbal (Rigby, 2010a).

The *Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support* program contains lesson plans and strategies for working with students who have been targeted by bullying. These lesson plans contain a 'checking in'

process for following up with students to check on their progress and whether the bullying and negative impact has decreased (Ross, Horner, & Stiller, B., 2009).

3. Mediation

According to this approach, students in conflict are invited to work with a trained teacher or peer-mediator, to find a mutually acceptable way of resolving their problem. It requires a readiness by the parties involved in the bullying to agree to meet and seek a solution, facilitated, but not imposed, by a neutral practitioner. Its application is severely limited to cases in which both the bully and target of the bullying are genuinely interested in mediation and the practitioner can remain neutral. Often those who bully are not motivated to seek mediation and it is difficult to remain neutral when the bullying is seen as completely unjustified, as it normally is (Rigby, 2010a).

The use of this method is not recommended for students with limited social skills or difficulties in receptive or expressive language (such as English as a Second Language students or students with disabilities).

4. Restorative practice

The use of restorative approaches in schools has proven effective in many schools. The aim of these approaches is to work with students rather than doing things to them or for them. Such approaches are underpinned by the principle of restorative justice whereby the student causing harm is held to account for his/her behaviour. This means:

- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied
- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (e.g. staff, friends or family)
- recognising the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused
- all those involved agreeing to a range of actions, which will be monitored over an agreed period of time.

There is a range of restorative approaches, from informal meetings with students where they can talk through their issues in a structured way, to, at the most formal end, a restorative conference with an independent facilitator. Restorative approaches can be effective when the requisite time and resources are invested, but it is important they are used in conjunction with, not in place of, disciplinary measures (Rigby, 2010a).

5. The support group method

This is a non-punitive approach that involves the students who have been identified as bullying being confronted at a group meeting with vivid evidence of the target's distress. Those present also include a number of students who are supportive of the target. The target is not present. The students are required to say what they will do to improve the situation for the target. The outcome is carefully monitored. This approach is seen as appropriate for non-violent, non-criminal forms of bullying. It does not, however, take into account any provocation that may have occurred to precipitate the bullying and the need, in some cases, for changes in behaviour on the part of both parties (Rigby, 2010a).

6. The method of shared concern

This is also a non-punitive approach. It involves first working with the suspected bullies and with the target, in one-to-one meetings. When progress has been made, a meeting is held with the suspected bullies as a group to plan how the problem might be resolved. Subsequently they are joined by the target and an agreed solution is negotiated. Although this approach can be time-consuming, outcomes are overwhelmingly positive and it is uniquely appropriate for dealing with cases of group bullying in which the target has behaved provocatively; this occurs in about 20 per cent of cases. Violent or criminal behaviour is normally not handled using this approach (Rigby, 2010a).

As stated earlier, school leaders need to be aware of the social and emotional skills of the teacher/s and support staff involved in dealing with the bullying incident, to ensure they are appropriately skilled in the chosen intervention strategy.

Follow up to actions

The nature of bullying, particularly among adolescents, means that unless the students involved in the bullying incident and the interventions applied are monitored over time they may only have a short term impact.

It is recommended that two or three months after a bullying incident, schools seek formal feedback from parents/carers and the student to check whether the intervention has prevented any further bullying from occurring. This can be done through a simple interview with the students involved, or the school could engage the parents/carers using a standard review letter to gather judgements on their satisfaction with how the bullying was dealt with. The *Safe to Learn* resource (DCFS, 2007) provides a sample review letter that schools can use to seek this formal feedback from parents/carers. (A copy of this letter is included on page 44 of Resources section).

If the response indicates the bullying has not stopped or the student does not feel safe, further intervention is required.

The information collected through this process can be used to inform the review of the anti-bullying policy, assists to reinforce the change in behaviour for the bully and provides assurance to the school community that this issue is being taken seriously.

5. Establish **teaching and learning programs** that promote personal development and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders

The most effective way of addressing bullying through the curriculum is to create effective learning environments in which:

- the contribution of all students is valued
- all students can feel secure and are able to contribute appropriately
- stereotypical views are challenged, and students learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others whether arising from race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability or disability
- students learn to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour both in school and in the wider community
- all forms of bullying and violence are challenged
- students are supported to develop their social and emotional skills (DCFS, 2007).

Teachers can use class time to raise awareness of bullying, for example by discussing issues of diversity and cyber safety, and also teaching the social and emotional skills that have proven effective in enhancing students' ability to manage their interactions with others while at the same time reducing the risk of bullying. Some classroom management practices and learning experiences may provide opportunities for students to learn about and develop social and emotional skills applicable to enhancing interactions with others, for example group work based on ground rules.

While there may be opportunities to address bullying through a number of subject areas such as English and Drama, this issue is best addressed through Health and Physical Education, particularly through comprehensive programs to promote personal development.

The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* (Cross et al., 2009) found that students should be provided opportunities to learn about group mechanisms and motives for covert bullying, as well as opportunities to develop their social skills and social problem solving, including ways to be an effective bystander.

“Ideally this learning would mobilise student bystanders to take action when they observe covert bullying (as well as overt bullying) and increase the resilience of students who are bullied covertly” (Cross et al, 2009).

Schools must consider the developmental stage of students when addressing these issues within the curriculum – not all topics are appropriate to all phases of schooling. It is recommended that these components are embedded within personal development programs.

The curriculum includes all the planned learning activities, explicit and implicit, which a school promotes. When reviewing their curriculum schools may find it useful to consider:

- the responsibilities of all curriculum team leaders in addressing diversity and tackling prejudice that may give rise to bullying in their curriculum area
- specific curriculum areas such as Health and Physical Education and Study of Society and Environment
- how assemblies and class time can be used as teaching opportunities for anti-bullying principles and practices.

The [Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Framework](#) enables schools to seek information regarding the delivery of social and emotional wellbeing programs that promote respectful relationships among children and adults. The Framework is accompanied by an overview of commercially available Social and Emotional Learning programs that address the core social and emotional competencies: self awareness, social awareness, self management, responsible decision making and relationship skills.

One of the major outcomes of the *National Centre Against Bullying* national conference was that bullying behaviour peaks at particular transition times at school. For example bullying behaviour increases when students transition from primary school to high school. This indicates a need for support, particularly around the development of social skills and coping strategies in the years prior to transition.

Students should be provided with opportunities to develop the breadth and depth of their knowledge as well as the skills that enable them to enhance their personal development, manage themselves and others in social contexts. Such knowledge and skills should be specifically relevant to students' development and phase of learning (such as early year, middle or senior schooling). It is recommended that schools develop their programs using the [Queensland Studies Authority](#) Essential Learnings.

6. Provide **professional development** to assist school staff to understand the anti-bullying policy, implement teaching and learning programs, and to provide support for students at high risk times and in high risk settings

Schools should ensure that staff are provided with professional development to enable the full implementation of their anti-bullying policy. Professional development should cover familiarity of the policy, teaching and learning programs that build social and emotional learning of students, methods of reporting and appropriate intervention strategies and support for students affected by bullying.

The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* (ACBPS) found the majority of teachers felt staff at their school needed more training to effectively deal with covert bullying incidents and to address covert bullying (including cyber bullying) within the curriculum (Cross et al, 2009).

“The ACBPS data suggest that teachers, who lack training to understand the effects of covert bullying are less able to recognise it, often consider it less serious or problematic, have less empathy for children who are covertly bullied and are less likely to intervene to prevent or manage this behaviour. This inaction on the part of teachers results in students believing that teachers condone this behaviour.”

The ACBPS results suggest that schools should focus on providing professional development for staff to develop their understanding on how to effectively address covert bullying. The ACBPS recommends professional development is provided to enhance student transition and reduce the subsequent bullying, particularly covert bullying, which continues to increase following transition from primary to high school (Cross et al, 2009).

Relevant topics for professional development include, but are not limited to:

- developing an understanding of the school’s anti-bullying policy
- understanding bullying behaviour (including covert and cyber bullying)
- understanding the environment of bullying, particularly developments in the cyber world and the impact on cyber bullying
- understanding child and adolescent development and the impact on bullying behaviour

- understanding the increased prevalence of bullying during transition periods and ways to address this
- development of social and emotional learning through the curriculum (such as social skills, communication skills, assertiveness, decision-making, relationship formation, conflict resolution, coping strategies)
- developing skills in the specific interventions to address bullying
- exploring opportunities to engage parents/carers in conversation regarding bullying.

Induction

Schools must ensure all members of the school staff (including casual, temporary and itinerant staff) receive comprehensive induction support. In planning induction programs, schools must clearly communicate the standard of behaviour expected of students to enable them to learn, and act to pre-empt and deal with inappropriate behaviour in the context of the behaviour policy of the school.

Schools should ensure throughout the induction program that the anti-bullying policy of the school is clearly outlined. This needs to apply for all teachers or other staff working within the school and as part of any school activities, such as camps, sporting events and excursions (DCFS, 2007).

7. **Consult students regularly** to monitor and determine the types of bullying behaviour and assist in the development of appropriate school based approaches

It is important to listen to students, encourage their participation and seriously consider their views when developing, implementing and monitoring school based approaches to preventing and responding to bullying.

Schools need to build skills in gathering information and data on the views and experiences of students, particularly in monitoring the occurrence, types and context of bullying behaviour. This data enables the school to develop an understanding of the patterns of bullying occurring and to involve students in developing tailored responses. This is particularly important when designing protective strategies and responses to cyber bullying, where the students will frequently have a greater understanding of the technology and social networking functions than teachers and parents/carers.

Approaches that facilitate the 'student voice' promote open and honest reporting when dealing with issues of bullying.

In engaging students, schools need to ensure they have developed strategies that:

- demonstrate respect for views
- enable honest debate while maintaining safe boundaries
- engage with marginalised students as well as those who often have a voice
- use communication medium that students are comfortable with.

There are several ways schools may engage students in discussion regarding the development of an anti-bullying policy and procedures to manage bullying (DCFS, 2007). These include:

- focus groups and face-to-face discussions with small groups of children and young people
- within the curriculum (eg. students could propose actions to address bullying)
- interactive websites and other social media (eg. online surveys, emails)
- art, posters, drama, DVDs and interactive activities

- representation of children and young people on advisory boards and involvement in youth forums.

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian is developing further guidelines, ideas and case examples of ways to encourage student participation. When available these will be added to the Resources section of the toolkit.

8. Create **physical environments** in the school and staff supervision practices that limit the incidences of bullying (including cyber bullying)

Gathering information and data on the views and experiences of students, staff and parents/carers about bullying will enable the school to develop an understanding of the patterns of bullying behaviours occurring within the school and bullying that occurs outside school but has implications when students return to school.

There are a number of audit tools currently available to assist schools to assess their physical environment schools. (See page 60 of the Resources section for a list of available audit tools). Alternatively schools can use existing data that has already been collected on incidents that have occurred throughout the school or may choose to engage students, parents and staff through existing forums to gain input into the nature of bullying concerns throughout the school.

The [Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support \(SWPBS\)](#) program helps schools to create positive learning environments by developing proactive whole-school systems to define, teach, and support appropriate student behaviours. An important component of SWPBS is the collection of data to inform future work.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has developed a [Student technology audit](#) that provides a quick and effective tool for schools to establish how their students use computers and other technologies. Gaining an understanding of how students use technology will help school staff to develop appropriate intervention and education programs. Identifying the types and level of technology use may also be a useful conversation starter for addressing cyber safety issues.

The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* found that covert bullying takes place predominantly during break times and in the classroom. Nearly two thirds of students who were bullied covertly said this occurred during break times and nearly half said it occurred in the classroom. Covert bullying was less likely to occur travelling to and from school (Cross et al., 2009).

Schools can use existing data to identify how the physical and cyber environment of the school impacts on bullying behaviour. Aspects to review may include:

- staff supervision patterns in the playground, school buildings and on public transport
- the physical design of the school building(s), including addressing 'blind spots' where bullying could take place
- designation of 'quiet-play' areas in playgrounds or short term safe rooms for use at break times (DCFS, 2007)

- web filtering programs and student web accessing patterns

It is recommended schools focus their attention on key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent, and that they work with students to establish when and where those times and locations are.

The Australian Government has published a [Schooling Issues Digest: the Impact of School Infrastructure on Student Outcomes and Behaviour](#) that provides brief reports that assess links between building design, school facilities and their impact on student learning and behaviour.

It is also recommended that schools work with students and parents/carers to discuss acceptable use of technology policies focusing on the use of mobile phones, social networking sites and websites. Schools should work with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of concerns related to cyber safety and the availability web filtering programs. ACMA provides examples of [Acceptable Use policies](#) currently used in South Australian schools.

9. **Support and engage families** by maintaining regular, clear communication and through systematic parent awareness raising and skill building

It is important for schools to work with their parent body to ensure they are aware of the school's stance on bullying. It is recommended that schools actively engage their parent representative body (ie Parents/carers and Citizen's association or Parents/carers and Friends association) to develop a strategy for communication with parents/carers.

Regular communication should be made with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of what to do if their child is involved in a bullying incident. Parents/carers should also be engaged to support the work the school is doing to address bullying. This is particularly important in the area of cyber bullying, which occurs in the home environment as well as the school.

It is recommended that schools support parents/carers of students who experience bullying as they play a key role in supporting their child with the development of coping strategies and assertiveness skills. Parents/carers of those students bullying may also have a range of emotional needs, and may need time and support in developing a balanced view of what is happening and appreciating their role in helping their child to learn about the consequences of his or her actions. Schools may need to engage assistance and support of the guidance officer, school counsellor or outside agencies to support the needs of students and their families.

For more information on ways to develop sustainable, collaborative and productive family, community and school relationships for a more satisfying educational experiences visit the *Family-School & Community Partnerships Bureau* website on <http://www.familyschool.org.au/>.

10. Establish a process for **regularly reviewing and celebrating** the effectiveness of school policies, programs and procedures

It is recommended schools regularly review their anti-bullying policy. A checklist for schools to monitor their activities against the ten *Elements of effective school based action against bullying* is provided in the Resources and References section of the toolkit.

Dr Ken Rigby (2010b) in his report *Enhancing Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools* identified evaluation of bullying approaches as a major challenge for schools. Dr Rigby recommends that schools systematically follow up on bullying incidents they have responded to in order to examine what works best for different cases. (See page 62 of the Resources section to access Dr Rigby's vodcast on this issue).

Gathering information and data on the views and experiences of students, staff and parents/carers will enable the school to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy and associated actions. Schools are encouraged to monitor the progress of their actions and establish systems to help analyse the effectiveness of their policy.

Some suggested questions to address in evaluating the policy are:

- Do the data and views of the school community gathered show that we have achieved what we set out to do?
- What have we learned about how to use anti-bullying strategies in the school?
- What is our next priority in taking action against bullying and how will we go about it (DCFS, 2007)?

Celebrating success

It is important for schools to celebrate the success of their anti-bullying actions. It is recommended that schools discuss with the parent body, students and staff suitable ways to celebrate their hard work in fostering a safe and supportive school community.

Working Together

Resources and references

Further information about specific types of bullying

The following information on the types of bullying is from the *Safe to Learn* resource (DCFS, 2007).

Bullying related to race, religion or culture*

Some surveys and focus groups have found that a high proportion of bullied students have experienced racist or faith-based bullying. Recent political and social issues also appear to have been a factor in bullying and harassment.

**Further information is currently being developed to address the impact of bullying on Indigenous students and their communities.*

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, may be more likely than their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight, and other body image issues, can result in bullying.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that students and young people who are gay or lesbian (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of marginalisation than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The student may not want to report bullying if it means 'coming out' to teachers and parents/carers before they are ready to.

Bullying related to different home or family circumstances

Students may be made vulnerable to bullying by the fact that they provide care to someone in their family with an illness, disability, mental health or substance abuse problem. Young carers may be taking on practical and emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. Research has highlighted the difficulties young carers face, including risks of ill-health, stress and tiredness, especially when they care through the night. Many feel bullied or isolated.

Some students are heavily influenced by their communities or homes where bullying and abuse may be common. Some bullying at school may arise from trauma or instability at home relating to issues of domestic violence or bereavement, or from the experience of being part of a refugee family. Siblings of vulnerable students may themselves be the subject of bullying by association.

Bullying related to students with disabilities

Research shows that students with disabilities are more at risk of being bullied than their peers.

Students with disabilities, whether in mainstream or special schools, do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence, and the robust friendship bonds, which can protect against

bullying. All schools should ensure that a whole-school approach is taken to deal with bullying related to students with disabilities, and that it is specifically covered in anti-bullying policies.

Where students with disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, schools should apply the same standards of behaviour as the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

Bullying related to students with mental health conditions

Children and young people with mental health concerns may not always have the confidence, coping strategies and peer networks to protect themselves against bullying. Children and young people with mental health concerns such as depression may be particularly susceptible to the effects of bullying due to their tendency to internalise the negative effects and blame themselves for the bullying behaviour.

Sexist or sexual bullying

Sexist and sexual bullying affects both genders. Boys may be targets as well as girls, and both sexes may be targets of their own sex. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name-calling, comments and overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used.

Students identifying as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria (feeling that they belong to another gender or who do not conform with the gender role prescribed to them) can also be targeted by bullies.

Other methods of bullying

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is a 'method' of bullying, rather than a 'type' of bullying. It includes bullying via text message, instant-messenger services and social networking sites, email and images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone. It can take the form of any of the previously discussed types of bullying, i.e. technology can be used to bully for reasons of race, religion, sexuality, disability, etc.

Sample information sheet for students

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone feels hurt or upset because of the things another person or group is doing to them over and over again.

Bullying is not when one person calls another person a name once, or hits a person once. It is when that behaviour happens a number of times.

Bullying can happen anywhere and can involve both staff and students. It can happen at school, in the community and online.

What should you do if you are being bullied?

If you are being bullied:

- stay calm
- tell the bully to stop
- move away from situation
- talk to someone you trust about what has happened, for example a parent/carer, teacher or friend, and get them to help you to take the right steps to stop the bullying

When talking about what has happened make sure you tell them:

- What the person/s has been doing?
- Who has been involved?
- Where have the incident/s occurred?
- Who else has seen the bullying behaviour?
- How often has it happened?
- What have you already done about it?
- keep on talking until someone listens to you and the bullying stops
- don't blame yourself for what is happening.

What should I do if I see someone being bullied?

If you see someone being bullied (or witness it online), keep safe and choose your response to match the situation:

- speak up and let the person doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying
- refuse to join in with the bullying and walk away
- help the student who is being bullied to ask for help
- ask a teacher or support person for help
- report what happened
- use some of the links on the next page to help you find more information about bullying.

When bullying occurs, staff at the school may:

- teach students how to cooperate and “get on” with others
- work out a behaviour plan or playground plan for some students, to keep everyone safe
- teach students about conflict and bullying
- run programs that help students become more confident
- run anti-bullying workshops
- have special meetings to work things out with the involved students
- have students complete classroom tasks about bullying in school subjects. Give detentions, suspensions or exclusions to students who bully others.

What can I do if I feel the school is not dealing with the bullying?

- talk to your parents/carers
- make an appointment to meet with a teacher, Guidance Officer or school principal
- ask a parent to email or phone a teacher
- ask a parent to contact your local district office or school board. They will try to work with you and the school to try and solve the problem.

Where can I get more information about bullying?

Kids Helpline: a free, private and confidential, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 - 25 years. <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

Act Smart Be Safe: a gateway for parents/carers, students, teachers and the community to access information to help improve youth safety. <http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/>

Alannah and Madeline Foundation: a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating effects. <http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

Bullying. No way!: an online resource providing information for parents/carers, students and educators. <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/who/default.shtml>

KidsMatter: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children. <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

ReachOut: an online resource that assists young people by providing information to improve understanding of the issues that relate to mental health and wellbeing. Reach Out also has information on how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities to connect with other young people. <http://au.reachout.com>

National Centre Against Bullying: a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber safety. <http://www.ncab.org.au/>

[Schools are encouraged to include local school, district, sector and/or parent body contact details]

[insert school name] does not tolerate bullying.

Sample information sheet for parents/carers

What is bullying?

Bullying is when a child, or a group of children, **deliberately** and **repeatedly** upset or hurt another child. The person/people doing the bullying will have some form of **power** over the target.

Bullying is not one-off incidents of name calling or physical abuse, it is only bullying when it is repeated, deliberate and there is an imbalance of power involved.

Bullying can happen anywhere and can involve both staff and students. It can happen at school, in the community and online.

How can I tell if my child is being bullied?

Sometimes children who are bullied do not talk about it with parents/carers or teachers. They are concerned that "telling" will make matters worse. Some signs that a child may be experiencing bullying may include:

- loss of confidence, fearfulness or anxiety
- changes in eating or sleeping habits, bedwetting
- health problems, vague headaches or stomach aches
- unhappiness, tearfulness or mood swings, sudden temper tantrums
- reluctance to go to school, changes in academic performance
- lack of friends
- missing belongings or torn clothing.

What should I do if my child tells me they are being bullied?

- Help your child to identify the bullying behaviour and ask them:
 - What has been happening?
 - Who has been involved?
 - Where have the incidents occurred?
 - Has anyone else seen the bullying behaviour?

- Discuss with your child some immediate strategies. Make a plan to deal with the bullying. Encourage them to:
 - talk with the teacher
 - walk away
 - use other strategies to diffuse the situation (see ‘fogging’ technique in intervention strategies section)
 - firmly say “No!”

- Become familiar with the school’s anti-bullying policy. Copies can be obtained from the school or school website.
- Contact the school to check that your child has spoken to someone about the problem and arrange a meeting to find out what the school will do to address the situation.
- Be clear about what you expect the school to do to help your child.
- Use some of the additional internet resources listed below to assist you and your child to learn more about bullying and prevention.

What will the school do?

In situations where bullying occurs, staff at the school may:

- apply disciplinary consequences
- assist students to develop more appropriate social skills
- implement a behaviour management plan or playground plan for individual students
- explicitly teach about conflict and bullying
- implement resilience and anti- bullying programs
- conduct mediation sessions
- address bullying in their curriculum.

The school will not give you any of the personal details of other students involved. They will not give you any details of consequences given to other students involved because of privacy requirements.

What can I do if I feel the school is not addressing the bullying appropriately?

- make an appointment to meet with the school principal
- contact your local district office or appropriate school sector/parent representative body. They will endeavour to work with you and the school to try and solve the problem.

Where can I get more information about bullying?

Act Smart Be Safe: a gateway for parents/carers, students, teachers and the community to access information to help improve youth safety. <http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/>

Alannah and Madeline Foundation: a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating effects. <http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

Bullying. No way!: an online resource providing information for parents/carers, students and educators. <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/who/default.shtml>

KidsMatter: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children. <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

ReachOut: an online resource that assists young people by providing information to improve understanding of the issues that relate to mental health and wellbeing. Reach Out also has information on how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities to connect with other young people. <http://au.reachout.com>

National Centre Against Bullying: a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber safety. <http://www.ncab.org.au/>

[insert school name] does not tolerate bullying.

Satisfaction survey for parents/carers

The following satisfaction survey letter is from the *Safe to Learn* resource (DCFS, 2007) and schools may choose to send this to parents/carers two months after a bullying incident has taken occurred seek feedback on their satisfaction with the school's processes and the outcome for their child. This letter should not be used if there is an ongoing complaints procedure.

[insert name of school]

Dear Parent/Carer

Two months ago your child was the subject of bullying behaviour. I am writing to seek your views on how well the school dealt with the problem. We will use this information confidentially within the school to inform our review of policy and practice. The individual details will not have any wider use unless we ask for, and you give, your specific permission.

1. How easy was it for your child/you to report the bullying? (circle one)

1

2

3

4

5

(1=not easy)

(5=very easy)

Comment if we could improve:

2. How satisfied are you with what we did to make your child feel safe? (circle one)

1

2

3

4

5

(1=not satisfied)

(5=very satisfied)

Comment if we could improve:

3. How satisfied are you with the support your child has had since the bullying incident from the school? (circle one)

1

2

3

4

5

(1=not satisfied)

(5=very satisfied)

Comment if we could improve:

4. Overall how satisfied are you with the way in which this school deals with bullying incidents?

(circle one)

1

2

3

4

5

(1=not satisfied)

(5=very satisfied)

Comment if we could improve:

Thank you for your assistance in completing this feedback form. We will use this information to think about what we do to address bullying, and make our school one where students and parents/carers are confident that we are honest about problems which happen, confident that we do not tolerate bullying behaviour and that our school staff support children.

Yours sincerely
Principal

Sample anti-bullying information sheet for school staff

What is bullying?

Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. It:

- is a desire to dominate or hurt someone
- involves unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
- occurs when the target cannot provide an adequate defence and feels oppressed and humiliated

(Rigby, K 2010, Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools: Vodcast 1, DET, Brisbane).

It can occur at any age, across cultures, genders and socioeconomic groups. It can happen in the playground, toilet areas, to and from school or in the classroom.

Cyber bullying refers to bullying using technologies such as the internet and mobile phones to threaten, humiliate, intimidate and/or control others. Cyber bullying can occur anywhere and at any time.

Why do schools need to take bullying seriously?

Young people, who are involved in bullying behaviour, either as a bully or as a target, are at higher risk of behavioural, emotional and academic problems. Targets of bullying are more likely than their peers to truant from school and are at increased risk of underachieving.

Ongoing bullying can seriously harm the health and wellbeing of the bullied person and the negative effects may be ongoing.

What can schools do?

Provide strong leadership to the school community

Effective responses to behaviour issues, including bullying, requires strong leadership to communicate that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Develop consistent practices for dealing with bullying, across whole school

A school wide approach to address bullying is essential. The school's anti-bullying policy should strongly reflect the school community's commitment to addressing bullying issues. It should include:

- an agreed definition of bullying
- processes for reporting bullying incidents for staff and students
- support strategies for individuals who experience bullying
- appropriate behavioural support and consequences for those students who behave inappropriately
- preventative strategies

- processes for recording bullying incidents
- review processes.

Address bullying across the school curriculum

Encourage teachers to work with students to explicitly teach strategies to deal with bullying and to ensure students understand:

- the nature of bullying
- the school anti-bullying procedures
- the harm caused by bullying
- reporting procedures.

Enhance the awareness of the schools anti-bullying policy and processes by displaying behavioural expectations in the classroom and school environment.

Teachers can address the deeper issues associated with bullying behaviour through the curriculum.

Students should be provided with opportunities to develop the breadth and depth of their knowledge as well as the skills that enable them to enhance their personal development, manage themselves and others in social contexts. For examples opportunities to learn about group mechanisms and motives for covert bullying, as well as opportunities to develop their social skills and social problem solving, including ways to be an effective bystander.

For example students may be provided with opportunities to:

- Analyse and criticise contemporary media – particularly popular youth magazines, television programs and music videos – that portray society as homogeneous.
- Question contemporary media content, including advertising for the images, beliefs, values and messages being promoted.
- Explore the idea of attractiveness and the 'perfect look' in relation to differing cultural, historical and social perspectives including the role of gender, race, class and power relations.

Such knowledge and skills should be specifically relevant to students' development phase of learning. It is recommended that schools develop their programs using the Queensland Studies Authority Essential Learnings.

Engage parents/carers and the school community

- Contact parents/carers of students involved in bullying incidents immediately.
- Involve parents/carers in the development of school wide procedures to address bullying.
- Include bullying information in newsletters, on the school website or in other regular communication.

Need more information?

The following links may be of assistance:

Act Smart Be Safe: a gateway for parents/carers, students, teachers and the community to access information to help improve youth safety. <http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/>

Alannah and Madeline Foundation: a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating effects. <http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

Bullying. No way!: an online resource providing information for parents/carers, students and educators. <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/who/default.shtml>

Kids Helpline: a free, private and confidential, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 - 25 years. <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

KidsMatter: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children. <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

ReachOut: an online resource that assists young people by providing information to improve understanding of the issues that relate to mental health and wellbeing. Reach Out also has information on how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities to connect with other young people. <http://au.reachout.com>

National Centre Against Bullying: works to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber-safety. <http://www.ncab.org.au/about/>

National Safe Schools Framework: incorporates existing good practice and provides an agreed national approach to help schools and their communities address issues of bullying, harassment, violence, child abuse and neglect. http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm

Sample anti-bullying policy

Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

School community beliefs about bullying

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at <school name>

Educational Programs

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at <school name>. At <school name> we use the following educational strategies:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At <school name> we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Responses to bullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

At <school name> we support targets and perpetrators by:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

At <school name> the consequences for bullying might include the following:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Reporting and monitoring bullying

At <school name> reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers may report bullying in the following ways:

- Xx
- Xx
- Xx

Reports of bullying will be collated and monitored to inform the school community about the extent of bullying and to identify particular areas of concern for future action.

Some related resources

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support

www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=24668

Alannah and Madeline Foundation

<http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

BOUNCE BACK!

<http://www.bounceback.com.au/>

FRIENDS for Life

www.friendsinfo.net/index.html

Friendly Schools and Families Program

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/about.php>

Kids Helpline

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

KidsMatter

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au>

MindMatters

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/default.asp>

ReachOut

<http://au.reachout.com>

National Centre Against Bullying

<http://www.ncab.org.au/about/>

National Safe Schools Framework

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm

You Can Do It!

www.youcandoit.com.au

School self evaluation checklist

Element	Not implemented	Being developed	Partially implemented	Fully implemented	Action required	Timeframe
1. A caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive school culture.						
2. A clear whole school definition of bullying.						
3. A clear anti-bullying policy developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents/carers, which addresses all forms of bullying (including cyber bullying).						
4. Procedural steps to appropriately respond to bullying incidents (for both the target and the bully) are clearly documented and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers.						
5. Teaching and learning programs promote Health and Physical Education and personal development and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders.						

Element	Not implemented	Being developed	Partially implemented	Fully implemented	Action required	Timeframe
6. Professional development to assist school staff to understand the anti-bullying policy, implement teaching and learning programs, and to provide support for students.						
7. Students consulted regularly to monitor and determine the types of bullying behaviour and in what school and social contexts bullying occurs.						
8. Physical environments in the school and staff supervision practices that limit the incidences of bullying (including cyber bullying).						
9. Families supported and engaged through regular, clear communication and systematic parent awareness raising and skill building.						
10. Processes regularly reviewed and effectiveness of school policies, programs and procedures celebrated.						

Additional resources – programs

There are many resources available, both Australian and international, to support schools. Schools should be selective to ensure suitability to each individual school context. The list below outlines resources that schools may use to assist in the implementation of their policies.

Alannah and Madeline Foundation: a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating effects. The Foundation promotes the Better Buddies initiative designed to help older children to care for younger children and create friendly and caring primary school communities where bullying is consequently reduced.

<http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

BOUNCE BACK!: a classroom resiliency program written by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble. It is a collection of practical classroom strategies to help young people cope with the complexity of their everyday lives and learn to 'bounce back' when they experience sadness, difficulties, frustrations and hard times.

<http://www.bounceback.com.au/>

FRIENDS for Life: a program for use in schools to prevent anxiety and depression and build resilience. It is aimed at children aged between 7 and 11 years.

www.friendsinfo.net/index.html

Friendly Schools and Families Program: provides a description of individual, group, family and school community level actions to address and prevent bullying in its social context. The program assists with the design, development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation of a social skill building and comprehensive anti-bullying program. It was developed by Dr Donna Cross and co-workers at Edith Cowan University.

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/about.php>

Kids Helpline: a free, private and confidential, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

KidsMatter: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children, reduce mental health problems and achieve greater support for children experiencing mental health difficulties and their families.

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au>

MindMatters: a resource and professional development program supporting Australian secondary schools in promoting and protecting the health, social and emotional wellbeing of all the members of school communities.

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/default.asp>

ReachOut: an online resource that assists young people by providing information to improve understanding of the issues that relate to mental health and wellbeing. Reach Out also has information on how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities to connect with other young people. <http://au.reachout.com>

National Centre Against Bullying: a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber safety.

<http://www.ncab.org.au/about/>

National Safe Schools Framework: developed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. It incorporates existing good practice and provides an agreed national approach to help schools and their communities address issues of bullying, harassment, violence, child abuse and neglect. It is a collaborative effort by the Australian Government, State and Territory governments, non-government school authorities and other key stakeholders. It presents a way of achieving a shared vision of physical and emotional safety and wellbeing for all students in all Australian schools.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm

Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students: an initiative of DET which outlines how state schools are to provide positive support for students in order to facilitate learning and responsible behaviour. Schools are required to set out clearly the expectations they have regarding student behaviour and to provide support for students according to their degree of need; for example, some may need to be especially targeted and others may require intensive support.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/student-services/behaviour/bm-plans.html>

Rock and Water Program: founded by the Dutch educationalist, Feerk Ykema, is designed to help young people interact and communicate more confidently with others. It makes use of physical exercises that are constantly linked to the acquisition of mental and physical skills. It claims to assist boys and girls to become aware of purpose and motivation in their lives.

<http://www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/stories/rockandwater.php>

You Can Do It!: a program delivered through a school curriculum to help students set achievable goals and enjoy life. It emphasises the need to have positive thoughts in order to change negative feelings and behaviours. The program covers eight areas: confidence, effort and persistence, happenings, self-acceptance, goal setting, time management and organisation, making friends and handling conflict.

www.youcandoit.com.au

Additional resources – background reading

The following list of selected readings has been compiled by Dr Ken Rigby during his consultancy for the Department of Education and Training.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school*. Cambridge:Blackwell

McGrath, H., and Noble, T. (Eds) (2005). *Bullying Solutions* Sydney: Pearsons Education.

Rigby, K. (2007, revised, updated). *Bullying in schools and what to do about it*. Camberwell, ACER.

Rigby, K. (2002). *New perspectives on bullying*. London: Jessica Kingsley. Available from Footprints, Sydney.

Smith, P.K. and Sharp, S. (Eds) (1994). *School Bullying: insights and perspectives*. London: Routledge

Smith, P.K et al (Eds) (1999). *The Nature of School Bullying: A cross-national Perspective*. London: Routledge.

Books on approaches to addressing bullying

Lewers, R. and Murphy, E. (2000). *The Hidden Hurt*.Ballarat: Wizard Books Pty Ltd.

Rigby, K. (2003). *Stop the bullying: a handbook for schools (Revised edition)* Melbourne: ACER. Ph. 03 98577447 or (free call, interstate: 1800 338402).

Rigby, K. and Thomas, E.B (2010, in press). *How schools counter bullying: policies and procedures in selected Australian schools*. Melbourne: ACER.

Rigby, K (2003). *Bullying among young children: a guide for teachers and carers*. Canberra: Australian Government Attorney General's Department.

Sharp, S. and Smith, P.K. (Eds). (1994). *Tackling Bullying in your school: a practical handbook for teachers*. London, Routledge.

Suckling, A. and Temple, C. (2001) *Bullying: a whole school approach*. Melbourne: ACER.

Audit tools

***Friendly Schools Friendly Families* physical environment audit tools**

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/survey/Sample-questions.pdf>

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/materials/whole-school/physical-environment.php#samples>

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/materials/whole-school/physical-environment.php#physical>

***MindMatters* staff survey**

http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/verve/_resources/Staff_survey_Full_version.pdf

***Bullying. No Way!* Key elements**

http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/resources/nssfp/Six_key_elements_to_guide_the_process.doc

The Australian Communications and Media Authority Smart Technology Audit

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Cybersafety%20policies%20and%20procedures/National%20or%20state%20and%20territory%20policies/South%20australian%20cybersafety%20policies.aspx>

Books on aspects of bullying in schools

Strategies for responding to bullying incidents

Renn, S., Van Velsen, J., Matheison, P., Dennis, K., Langley, J. (2009). *The bullying intervention toolkit*. Queenscliff, Victoria: Inyahead Press.

Rigby, K. (2010, in press). *Bullying Interventions in schools: Six basic approaches*. Camberwell: ACER.

Promoting target assertiveness and self-esteem

Elliott, Michelle (1998). *Bullying*. London: Hodder Children's Books.

Romain, T. (1997). *Bullies are a pain in the brain*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Co.

Stones, R. (1993). *Don't pick on me*. :Markham, ON::Pembroke

Conflict resolution skills

O'Toole, J., Burton, B. and Plunkett, A. (2004). *Cooling conflict : a new approach to managing bullying and conflict in schools*. Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education/Book

Johnson, D.W. and Johnson, R.T. (1991). *Teaching students to be peacemakers*. Edina, Minnesota: Interaction Book Company.

Non-punitive approaches

Renn, S., Van Velsen, J., Matheison, P., Dennis, K., Langley, J. (2009). *The bullying intervention toolkit*. Queenscliff, Victoria: Inyahead Press.

Robinson, G. and Maines, B. (2008). *Bullying: A Complete Guide to the Support Group Method*, London: Sage.

Pikas, A. (2002). *New Developments of Shared Concern Method*. School Psychology International 23, 3, 307-326.

Readymade Productions (2007). *The Method of Shared Concern: a staff training resource for dealing with bullying in schools*. Adelaide, Readymade Productions. www.readymade.com.au/method

Rigby, K. (2005). *The Method of Shared Concern as an intervention technique to address bullying in schools: an overview and appraisal*. Australian Journal of Counselling and Guidance 15, pp 27-34.

Mediation and peer support

Cohen, R. (2005, second edition). *Students Resolving Conflict*. Tucson, Arizona , Good Year Books.

Cremin, H. (2007). *Peer mediation: Citizenship and social inclusion revisited*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Restorative Practices and Community Conferencing

Morrison, B. (2002). *Bullying and targetisation in schools: a restorative justice approach*. Trends and Issues, No 219, Canberra, Australian Institute of Criminology.

Moore, David School Bullying and Community Conferencing: Download from <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/moore.html>

Sherman, L.W. and Strang, H (2007). *Restorative Justice: the evidence*. London: The Smith Institute.

Thorsborne, M and Vinograd, D. (2004). *Restorative Practices in schools*. Geelong: Margaret Thorsborne and Associates

Cyber bullying

Shariff, S. (2008). *Cyber-bullying: Issues and solutions for the school, the classroom and the home*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, P.K, Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S. and Tippett. (2008). *Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils*. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 49, 376-385.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority Acceptable Use policies:

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/en/Schools/Cybersafety%20policies%20and%20procedures/Student%20technology%20audit.aspx>

Bystander behaviour

Coloroso , B. (2009). *The Bully, The Bullied And The Bystanders: From Preschool To High school--how Parents/carers And Teachers Can Help Break The Cycle* (updated Edition) New York: Collins living.

Rigby, K. and Johnson, B. (2004). *Bystander behaviour of South Australian school children observing bullying and sexual coercion*.

Download: <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/FocusOnBystanders.pdf>

Health matters

McGrath, H. & Noble, T. (2003). *BOUNCE BACK! a classroom resiliency program*. Sydney: Pearson Education.

Juvenon, J. and Graham, S. (Eds). (2000). *Peer harassment in schools: the plight of the vulnerable and the targetised*. New York: Guilford.

Rigby, K. (2003). *Consequences of bullying in schools*. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 48, p 583-591.

Books for parents/carers

Carr-Gregg, M. (2007). *Real Wired Child: What parent need to know about kids online*. Camberwell, Penguin Group.

Rigby, K. (2003). *Bullying among young children: A guide for parents/carers*. Canberra: Australian Government Attorney General's Department.

Rigby, K. (2008). *Children and bullying: how parents/carers and educators can reduce bullying at school*. Boston, Wiley-Blackwell.

Miscellaneous

Bellhouse, B. (2009). *Beginner's Guide to Circle time with primary school students*. Sydney, Inyahead Press.

Rigby K and Barnes, A. (2002). *To tell or not to tell: the targetised student's dilemma*. Youth Studies Australia, vol 21, 3, pp33-36.

Rigby, K and Bagshaw, D. (2003). *Prospects of adolescent students collaborating with teachers in addressing issues of bullying and conflict in schools*. Educational Psychology, 32, 535-546.

Kandersteg Declaration <http://www.kanderstegdeclaration.com/>

Vodcasts for in-service training for teachers

- Department of Education and Training (2010) *Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools: Vodcasts and Support Materials* by Dr Ken Rigby
<http://education.qld.gov.au/student-services/protection/community/bullying.html>
 - Vodcast 1 - The nature of bullying
 - Vodcast 2 - Addressing bullying in schools
 - Vodcast 3 - Interventions in cases of bullying
 - Vodcast 4 - Three more ways of intervening
 - Vodcast 5 - Working with groups
 - Vodcast 6 - Issues with parents/carers and evaluating anti-bullying work.
- Education Queensland (1998) *Bullying-No Way! A Professional Developmental Resource for School Communities*. This consists of 21 vignettes enacting bullying incidents about which viewers are invited to comment using questions provided in an accompanying book of the same title. The videos are suitable for teachers and also for senior students. Available from Open Access Unit, Education Services Directorate, Education Queensland. P.O. Box 220, Ashgrove Queensland 4006. Tel (07) 33771000. Fax (07) 3366 3849.
- Queensland Education Department (2004) *Fair Go!! Anti-bullying program*. This video demonstrates how children can be helped through role-play to react more effectively when another child seeks to bully them. (Phone, the author, Karen Healy. 07 32083555 for further details).

Videos for showing and discussing in class

Late primary and early secondary

Stories of us: Bullying. Readymade Productions, Adelaide. (Ph 08 83792126) This is very realistic portrayal of bullying in secondary schools, made with students by students.

Neti-Neti Theatre Co. (1990) *Only Playing Miss !* A 60 minute video recording of a play on bullying in schools. (Available in Australia from ACER, ph. 03 92775656]. This presents a very moving account of school bullying and examines how students respond to its occurrence.

Open Channel Productions(1999) *NO BULL: say no to bullying and violence in the workplace.* Hawthorn, Victoria: Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce ph. 03 92514333. (A video dealing with bullying during “work experience” placements of senior students in high school).

Questionnaires

Rigby, K. (2010, in press). *The Peer Relations Assessment Questionnaires (PRAQs)*. Melbourne, Australian Council for Educational Research.

Evaluations of interventions to counter bullying

Rigby, K. (2002). *A meta-evaluation of methods and approaches to reducing bullying in pre-schools and in early primary school in Australia*, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra.

Smith, P.K , Pepler, D., Rigby, K (eds) (2004) *Bullying in Schools : How successful can interventions be?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Cross, D., Shaw, T., Pearce, N., Erceg, E., Waters, S., Pintabona, Y., & Hall, M. (2007). *School-based intervention research to reduce bullying in Australia 1999-2006. What works, what doesn't and what's promising?* School of Exercise, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance (DCSF) (2007). *Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools*. United Kingdom.

Kandersteg Declaration <http://www.kanderstegdeclaration.com/>

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Lodge, J., & Frydenberg, E. (2007). *Cyber-Bullying in Australian Schools: Profiles of Adolescent Coping and Insights for School Practitioners*.

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Merrell, K. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008) *How Effective are School Bullying Intervention Programs? A Meta-Analysis of Intervention Research*. School Psychology Quarterly, V23, No. 1, 26-42. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, USA.

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Rigby, K. (2010a) *Breaking the Cycle*. Education Review, Sydney.

Rigby, K. (2010b) *Enhancing Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools*, Department of Education and Training, Brisbane.

Rigby, K. (2003) *Addressing Bullying in Schools: Theory and Practice*. Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

Riley, D., Duncan, D. J., & Edwards, J. (2009) *Investigation of Staff Bullying in Australian Schools – Executive Summary*. University of New England, Armidale.

Ross, S., Horner, R., & Stiller, B. *Bullying Prevention: In Positive Behaviour Support for Middle Schools. Educational and Community Supports*. University of Oregon, Oregon, USA.

Ross, S., Horner, R., & Stiller, B. *Bullying Prevention: In Positive Behaviour Support. Educational and Community Supports*, University of Oregon, Oregon, USA.

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¹ McGrath, H. (2005) Making Australian Schools Safer. *A Summary Report of the Outcomes from the National Safe Schools Framework Best Practice Grants Programme (2004-2005)*, Faculty of Education, Deakin University, Melbourne Campus.

² Cross, D., Shaw, T., Pearce, N., Erceg, E., Waters, S., Pintabona, Y., & Hall, M. (2007) *School-based intervention research to reduce bullying in Australia 1999-2006. What works, what doesn't and what's promising?* School of Exercise, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

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⁷ Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance. (2007). *Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools*, United Kingdom

⁸ AICrime Reduction Matters. (2007) *Cyber bullying: issues for policy makers*. No.59

⁹ Rigby, K. (2010). *Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools: Vodcast 1*, Department of Education and Training, Brisbane.