

National Safe Schools Framework

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1. INTRODUCTION

All State and Territory government and non-government education authorities, and the Commonwealth, are committed to working together to ensure the wellbeing of all Australian students.

A scan of State and Territory government and non-government education authorities, conducted in November 2002, revealed a range of excellent practices that clearly showed that each jurisdiction asserts the rights of all students to be safe and supported.

Typical jurisdictional practices to prevent and respond to bullying, harassment, violence, and child abuse and neglect, identified in the scan, include:

- Providing guidance and advice to schools in the development of written policies;
- Encouraging and promoting whole-school approaches, including the involvement of parents through workshops, school boards, and associations representing parents, carers and community members;
- Including child protection education in the school curriculum, as well as content that explores discriminatory behaviours through an understanding of social factors such as gender, race, sexuality, disability and religion;
- Providing professional development and training for school staff on, for example, methods of countering bullying and harassment, child protection legislation and procedures (including mandatory reporting), and identifying and understanding child abuse, including the needs of victims;
- Providing resources to teachers on helping students to recognise/report abuse, and build protective behaviours, resilience and optimism;
- Encouraging schools to empower students by involving them in the decision making and resolution processes through, for example, training in peer mediation or adoption of 'buddy' systems;
- Providing specialist support, including for teachers who encounter or report abuse and who work with students who are persistently aggressive, such as behaviour teachers and consultants, anti-harassment officers, school counsellors, psychological consultants and school based police constables; and by
- Conducting police checks on school personnel.

The 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, and child abuse and neglect.

2. CONTEXT

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) on 19 July 2002 agreed to the development, by January 2003, of a national framework for ensuring safe and supportive school environments. Council decided that the framework should be developed by the MCEETYA Taskforce on Student Learning and Support Services and agreed to jurisdictions reporting through the annual *National Report on Schooling in Australia* on their strategies and initiatives to provide safe, supportive learning environments.

Promoting and providing a supportive learning environment in which all students can expect to feel safe is an essential function of all schools. Students have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect. The Australian community rightly expects authorities charged with managing our schools, both in the government and non-government sectors, to take all available measures to ensure the safety of students, to support students and to set out clearly, transparently and explicitly the policies and programmes they have in place to fulfil this important responsibility.

Schools are among the safest places in the community for children and young people. Much good work has already been undertaken and continues to be undertaken by all school jurisdictions to provide a safe and supportive environment. The National Framework identifies strategies that can inform practice which enhances school safety and students' physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

The Framework is a collaborative effort by the Commonwealth and State and Territory government and 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. The Framework recognises the need for sustained positive approaches that include an appreciation of the ways in which social attitudes and values impact on the behaviour of students in our school communities. Such approaches encourage all members of the school community to:

- value diversity
- contribute positively to the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others
- act independently, justly, cooperatively and responsibly in school, work, civic and family relationships
- contribute to the implementation of appropriate strategies that create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment.

The aim of the Framework is to assist all school communities in building safe and supportive schools where:

- bullying, harassment and violence are minimised;
- students receive support on issues related to child abuse and neglect.

The Framework is underpinned by a set of guiding principles and related key elements/approaches that schools can put in place to effectively provide a safe and supportive learning environment.

3. VISION

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:

All Australian schools are safe and supportive environments.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROVISION OF A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Australian schools:

1. affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe at school
2. promote care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity
3. implement policies, programmes and processes to nurture a safe and supportive school environment
4. recognise that quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment
5. develop and implement policies and programmes through processes that engage the whole school community
6. ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated
7. recognise the critical importance of pre-service and ongoing professional development in creating a safe and supportive school environment
8. have a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn through the formal curriculum the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships
9. focus on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and intervention
10. regularly monitor and evaluate their policies and programmes so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements
11. take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect

5. KEY ELEMENTS/ APPROACHES THAT INFORM GOOD PRACTICE

Outlined below are the key elements stemming from the Guiding Principles that a school would have in place to effectively prevent and respond to bullying, harassment and violence, and child abuse and neglect. These are accompanied by a range of suggested approaches designed to support schools in providing a safe and supportive environment, and to assist them to reflect on their existing practices and plan for improvement. These approaches are not intended to be exhaustive, but are examples of good practice to guide schools in creating and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments. Examples of ideas about whole-school approaches to the issues can also be found on the *Bullying. No way!* website at www.bullyingnoway.com.au.

Guiding Principle	Key Elements	Suggested Approaches
1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11	School values, ethos, culture, structures and student welfare	<p>Leadership is committed to a shared vision of a positive and inclusive school. Such commitment includes resourcing and endorsement of policies, programmes and procedures.</p> <p>Parent, student, teacher and school community commitment is established and ongoing through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ the development of active, trusting relationships; □ fostering shared awareness about the diverse needs and viewpoints of the school community; and □ democratic decision making and leadership structures such as School Boards/Councils. <p>Pastoral care or student welfare systems/ student support teams and systems are in place.</p> <p>The school develops programmes and strategies to empower students to participate in a positive school culture, e.g. peer support systems.</p> <p>Positive relationships are established between schools, agencies and community groups with a related or complementary function.</p>
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11	Establishment of agreed policies, programmes and procedures	<p>Policies, programmes and procedures are developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents, and include a statement of rights and responsibilities of members of the school community, including visitors. They also include –</p> <p>(i) <i>in relation to bullying, harassment and violence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ an agreed definition of bullying, harassment and violence or, an agreed statement of expected and unacceptable behaviour in relation to bullying, harassment and violence, and a statement of consequences for unacceptable behaviour; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ a coordinated whole school plan outlining how the issues are to be addressed. <p>(ii) <i>in relation to child protection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ an explicit aim of eliminating the risk of child abuse by staff/ visitors; ❑ comprehensive screening of applicants for employment, student teachers and volunteers before they become involved in school activities, bearing in mind that few child sex offenders have criminal records; ❑ safe procedures for staff who work alone with students; and ❑ procedures for the reporting of abuse by staff. <p>Policies, programmes and procedures are developed, disseminated and promoted across the whole school community in a way that is sensitive to parents, students and community members from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Policies, programmes and procedures are integrated with existing policies and procedures, for example, Behaviour Management, Sexual Harassment and Racial Harassment.</p> <p>Periodic evaluation of policies, programmes and procedures is undertaken and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ auditing the school's policies/ strategies; ❑ reviewing bullying and safety issues through surveys of staff, students and parents; and ❑ analysing evaluation data to inform future planning needs and practice. <p>Risk assessment procedures, within and outside school, are in place. For example, risk minimisation through appropriate supervision, environmental design and targeted programmes for students at risk (e.g. pro-social skills development).</p>
2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11	Provision of education/ training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School staff ● Students ● Parents 	<p><u>School Staff</u></p> <p>Appropriate pre-service and in-service training is conducted for all staff about bullying, violence, harassment and child protection issues.</p> <p>Training for all staff in:</p> <p>(i) <i>in relation to bullying, harassment and violence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ understanding what is happening in the school, making use of appropriate information gathering methods and related discussion; ❑ positive student management;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ knowledge and skills relating to methods of addressing bullying and harassment; ❑ identifying and dealing with prejudice and discrimination, for example, as they relate to gender, race, sexuality, disability and other factors; and ❑ understanding the effects of bullying and harassment on children and young people. <p><i>(ii) in relation to child protection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ recognising and responding to indicators of child abuse and neglect; ❑ understanding the effects of abuse and neglect on the development of children and young people; ❑ complying with agreed policies and procedures related to child protection; ❑ keeping themselves safe; and ❑ personal safety/child protection curricula. <p>Relevant additional training is conducted for staff with specific roles in child protection to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ provide support to students who are the subject of concerns about abuse or neglect; and ❑ fulfill agreed responsibilities. <p>Residential care training for all boarding school staff is conducted.</p> <p><u>Students</u></p> <p>Effective curricula, programmes and pedagogy enable students to make use of empowering processes that increase safety and provide students with the means to solve their own problems and learn important lifelong relationship and citizenship skills.</p> <p>Comprehensive, realistic, developmentally appropriate personal safety component within the curriculum enables students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ recognise and report abuse; ❑ understand power in relationships; ❑ develop protective strategies, including help-seeking behaviours; and ❑ create positive, healthy relationships (sexual and social). <p>Age-appropriate curriculum content and pedagogy relating to bullying, harassment, and violence, enables students to learn, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ skills for forming and maintaining positive, non-coercive relationships including differentiating between
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		<p>assertiveness and aggression;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ methods of conflict resolution; ❑ how bystanders can discourage bullying and harassment; ❑ the development of cooperativeness, empathy and respect; and ❑ how to identify and address prejudice and discrimination, for example, as they relate to gender, race, sexuality, disability and other factors. <p><u>Parents</u></p> <p>Parents have an increased knowledge of strategies, options and ideas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ engagement in whole school planning processes; ❑ parent information sessions (e.g., on bullying, child protection, supporting children); and ❑ access to community based resources and information on developing effective relationships and behaviour in children.
2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11	Managing incidents of abuse/victimisation	<p>Cases of abuse/victimisation are identified and reported. This includes –</p> <p>(i) <i>for bullying, harassment and violence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ explicitly encouraging all members of the school community to take a proactive stand against bullying and violence; ❑ involving students and staff in identifying where bullying occurs; ❑ developing procedures to encourage early identification of incidents; ❑ responding proactively to signs and symptoms of bullying, harassment and violence; ❑ creating opportunities for students to share concerns; ❑ encouraging students to seek immediate help when bullying is witnessed or experienced; ❑ encouraging parents to identify and report bullying and harassment issues that have been observed or discussed by students to staff. <p>(ii) <i>for child protection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ implementing requirements of child abuse reporting legislation, as appropriate; ❑ identifying the indicators of all forms of child abuse and neglect; ❑ developing teachers' empathic listening skills; ❑ implementing support and monitoring strategies, both

		<p>immediate and long-term.</p> <p>Steps and outcomes for managing incidents are clearly documented in order to facilitate evaluation and justify possible modification in approaches.</p> <p>In responding to individual cases of bullying, harassment, violence or abuse, strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ are effectively matched to the incident; □ include parental education and involvement in their planning and implementation; and □ involve other agencies/ services as appropriate (e.g., police) and the implementation of individual case management systems through collaborative planning. <p>The support of relevant specialists is enlisted, including support for staff dealing with child abuse cases.</p>
1, 3, 4, 10	Providing support for students	<p>Support is provided for students involved in bullying, harassment and violence and who have experienced abuse or neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ focuses on restoring the wellbeing of students who have been affected by abuse or victimisation, through the provision of adequate social support and counselling; □ maintains their connectedness to schooling, including facilitating reintegration into the school of those involved in harmful behaviour (e.g., through restorative justice practices); and □ provides opportunities for individual students to develop more socially appropriate behaviour and coping skills, as relevant.
3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11	Working closely with parents	<p>Schools work closely with parents to prevent bullying, harassment and violence, informing and consulting with them on relevant issues, especially when their children become involved in incidents, either as perpetrators, victims or both.</p> <p>Parent participation is a key component of the child protection programme for children – for example, through parent information sessions, workshops and joint child-parent homework – enabling parents to reinforce safety concepts and strategies at home.</p> <p>There is an emphasis on increasing students' confidence and more open child-parent relationships.</p>

6. GLOSSARY

Bullying and Harassment	<p>“Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of ‘difference’ ... These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status.” (<i>Bullying. No way!</i> National website)</p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse refers to the “maltreatment of a child, especially by emotional or physical violence or sexual interference”. (<i>Australian Oxford Dictionary</i>)</p> <p>“Child abuse and neglect refer to acts of omission and acts of commission that are potentially harmful to the child.” (<i>Professor Freda Briggs</i>)</p>
Child sexual abuse	<p>Child sexual abuse refers to the use of children under the age of consent (as defined in different jurisdictions) for sexual gratification. (<i>Professor Freda Briggs</i>)</p> <p>Child sexual abuse may include sexual abuse by school peers.</p>
Connectedness	<p>A person’s sense of belonging and connectedness with others, including family and school. Connectedness within a school community has been linked to enhancing health and wellbeing.</p>
Evaluation	<p>The process of measuring the value of a program or intervention. It is a structured, staged process of identifying, collecting and considering information to determine goals, progress and outcomes. Evaluation is central to good practice and ensuring an evidence-based approach to school safety.</p>
Principles	<p>A statement encapsulating a fundamental concept for action that guides effective practice. The principles in this document are recommended guidelines for schools in providing a safe school environment.</p>
Restorative justice practices	<p>Restorative justice approaches use the incident of misbehaviour as an educative opportunity for repairing the harm and fostering more socially responsible relationships and behaviours that take others’ perspectives into account. This is achieved through carefully structured opportunities for individuals to understand the impact of their actions, recognise their social</p>

responsibilities and make amends to those who have been affected by their actions. The young person is also assisted to reintegrate successfully into the school community. The most common form of restorative justice is community conferencing.

Safe and supportive school environments

In the context of the National Safe Schools Framework, 'safe and supportive schools' refers to the provision of an environment that protects the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of students. In 'safe school environments' children are to be protected from verbal, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, including indirect forms of abuse, such as discrimination, exclusion and isolation by their peers.

School community

The school community is considered to comprise students, school staff (for example, teachers and other professionals, administrators, other support staff and volunteers) and parents/guardians and other carers.

Violence

"Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power ... It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind." (*Dr Ken Rigby*)

Wider school community

The wider school community includes individuals, groups and agencies who work together with the school community to achieve the best educational and personal outcomes for students, for example, health, youth and welfare professionals or agencies, community and church groups and the police.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MCEETYA Taskforce on Student Learning and Support Services wishes to thank and acknowledge the following *National Safe Schools Framework* Roundtable participants, who contributed to the development of this Framework:

Baker, Mr David, National Coordinator, National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), New South Wales.

Bray, Mr Ed, Principal, Mackay State High School; Deputy President, Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA), Queensland.

Briggs, Professor Freda, Delissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies, University of South Australia, South Australia.

Cross, Mr Stewart, Deputy CEO, CrimTrac agency, Australian Capital Territory.

Cummins, Ms Robyn, Vice-President, ACT Council of P&C Associations Inc; Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), Australian Capital Territory.

Forestenko, Ms Irene, Teacher, Mount Rogers Community Primary School; Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia (FECCA), Australian Capital Territory.

Fraser, Ms Alyssa, Student, Hawker Primary School, Australian Capital Territory.

Green, Ms Kim, Student, Cyril Jackson Senior Campus, Western Australia.

Griffiths, Ms Coosje, Student Services Manager, WA Department of Education; National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, Western Australia.

Hargreaves, Ms Narelle, Director (Northside), Schools Operations, ACT Department of Education, Youth and Family Services; National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, Australian Capital Territory.

Hawkes, Dr Tim, Headmaster, The King's School, New South Wales.

Henderson, Ms Chris, Senior Project Officer, Inclusive Education Branch, Education Queensland, Queensland.

Howe-Schneider, Ms Vivienne, Project Manager, National Child Sex Offender System, CrimTrac agency, Australian Capital Territory.

Jewell, Ms Pat, Victorian Coordinator, National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), Victoria.

Kerr-Roubicek, Ms Helen, Manager, Student Welfare, NSW Department of Education and Training, New South Wales.

Kirkwood, Ms Maria, National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC); National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, Victoria.

Le Duff, Mr Garry, Executive Director (SA), National Council of Independent Schools' Associations (NCISA); National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, South Australia.

Lonergan, Mrs Josephine, Executive Director, Australian Parents Council (APC), New South Wales.

McGrath, Mr Patrick, Principal, Good Shepherd School; Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA), Australian Capital Territory.

McMenamin, Ms Bernadette, Child Wise (formerly ECPAT Australia), Victoria.

McMillan, Mr John, Principal, Denistone East Public School; Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA), New South Wales.

McShane, Mr David, School Counsellor, St Peter's College, South Australia.

Monks, Ms Susan, Assistant Director, Special Services, SA Department of Education and Children's Services; National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, South Australia.

Morgan, Dr Ian, President, ACT Council of P&C Associations Inc; Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), Australian Capital Territory.

Morrison, Dr Brenda, Centre for Restorative Justice, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Australian Capital Territory.

O'Connor, Detective Senior Sergeant Christopher, Sexual Crimes Squad, Crime Department, Victoria Police, Victoria.

O'Donnell, Mrs Julie, Principal, Our Lady Help of Christians; Chair, Australian Catholic Primary Principals' Association, Victoria.

Paterson, Brother Tony, Principal, Samaritan Catholic College; Australian Catholic Secondary Principals' Association, Victoria.

Paterson, Mr Andrew, Client Services Unit, CrimTrac agency, Australian Capital Territory.

Puls, Mr Joshua, Student Counsellor, Sacred Heart Girls' College, Oakleigh, Victoria.

Rigby, Adjunct Associate Professor Ken, School of Education, University of South Australia, South Australia.

Schneemann, Mr Bart, Student, Canberra Grammar School, Australian Capital Territory.

Silcox, Mr Steffan, District Director, Swan District Education Office, National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, Western Australia.

Slee, Associate Professor Phillip, School of Education, Flinders University, South Australia.

Spencer, Ms Jan, Teacher, Hawker Primary School, Australian Capital Territory.

Townsend, Mr Arthur, Branch Manager, Quality Schooling Branch, Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST); Chair, National Safe Schools Framework Working Group, Australian Capital Territory.

Vandeppeer, Ms Natalie, Head, Canberra Girls Grammar Junior School; Junior Schools Heads Association of Australia (JSHAA), Australian Capital Territory.

Weatherilt, Ms Tracey, School Psychologist, Swan District Education Office, Western Australia.

Young, Ms Ngaire, Secretariat, Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce, Western Australia.

What's in the National Safe Schools Framework?

1. Vision statement

The vision statement of the National Safe Schools Framework is straightforward: “All Australian schools are safe and supportive environments.”

The challenge lies in the *diversity* of schools in Australia. A key function of the *Implementation Manual* is to encourage schools serving geographically, culturally and socio-economically diverse communities to develop policies and practices around violence and child protection which are informed by deep knowledge of their communities and which respond explicitly to local contexts.

2. Guiding principles

The *Guiding Principles* form a core element of the National Safe Schools Framework. As such they constitute a valuable basis for the work of all schools to provide safe and supportive learning environments.

The *Guiding Principles* focus on the important issues of:

- Diversity.
- Planning and leadership.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community.
- Pre-service training and professional development.
- Prevention and intervention, including working with students through the formal curriculum.
- Taking action in relation to abuse and neglect.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

They are strongly tied to the six key elements and the approaches suggested to put them into action.

They provide an excellent starting point for engaging a range of school community stakeholders in discussion, planning for action, and implementing and monitoring safe and supportive school environment strategies. (See section below on *Developing Common Understandings of the National Safe Schools Framework*).

3. Key elements of good practice

The six *Key Elements* are derived from the *Guiding Principles* and are seen to be the essential components of all school programs aimed at preventing and responding effectively to harassment, bullying, violence and child abuse and neglect.

It is seen as equally important to work with staff, students and parents.

The *Key Elements* can also be used as an **initial checklist** for school communities to use in assessing the comprehensiveness of its approach to establishing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

They are:

School values, ethos, culture, structures and student welfare

Are values which contribute to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment shared across the school community?

Is social justice a core part of the school's ethos?

Is the culture of the school a positive and inclusive one which values the contributions of all members of the school community equally?

Establishment of agreed policies, programs and procedures

Are there clear definitions of harassment, bullying, violence and child protection available which are known and understood by all members of the school community?

Are there clear policies programmes and procedures in place for preventing and responding to harassment, bullying, violence and child abuse and neglect which are known and understood by all members of the school community?

Provision of education and training to school staff, students and parents

Are all staff well-informed and kept up to date about harassment, bullying, violence and child protection, and trained in appropriate prevention and response strategies?

Are all students accessing age appropriate information about harassment, bullying, violence and child protection?

Are all parents and carers informed about harassment, bullying, violence and child protection and able to engage in school planning?

Managing incidents of abuse and victimisation

Are there clear and well-understood processes for reporting and managing incidents of abuse and victimisation?

Are all members of the school community encouraged to identify and report cases of abuse and victimisation using agreed processes?

Are there strong and established relationships with relevant specialists to provide support for staff dealing with cases of child abuse?

Providing support for students

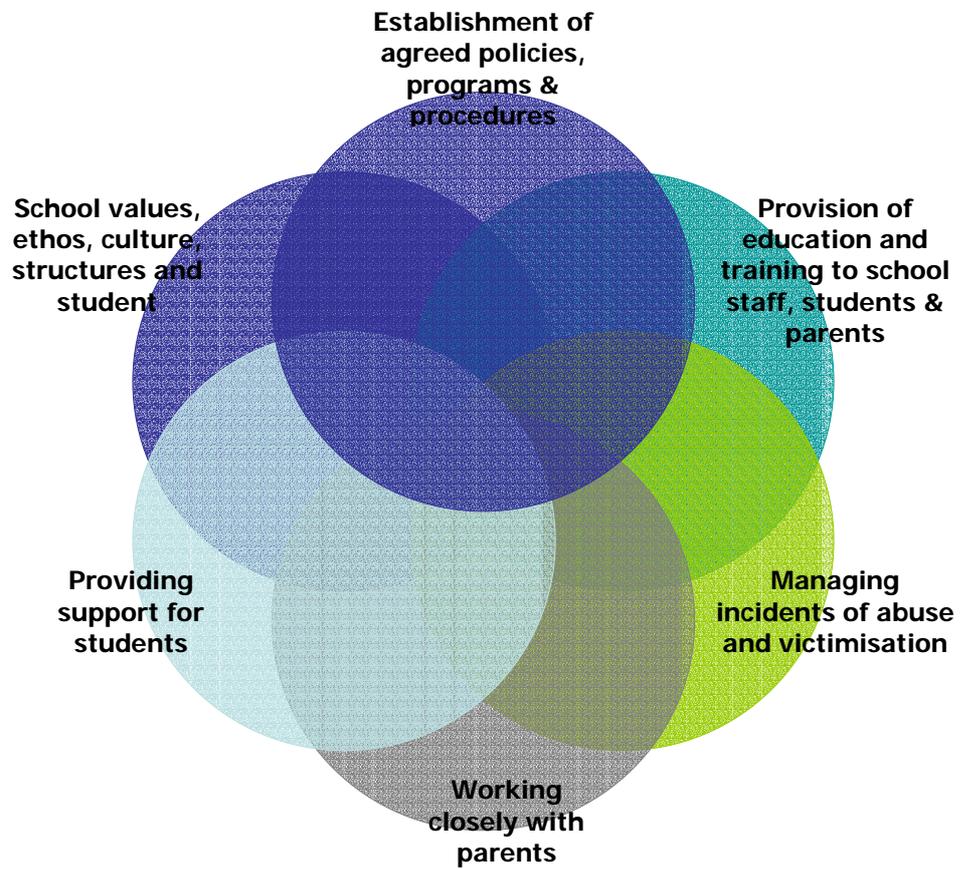
Are there strong and established relationships with relevant specialists to provide support for students affected by victimisation or abuse/neglect?

Working closely with parents

Are parents closely involved in preventing harassment, bullying and violence, and informed and consulted when their own children are involved in incidents?

Are parents encouraged and supported to promote confidence in their children and to develop open relationships with them?

Each *Key Element* is accompanied by *Suggested Approaches* which propose ways to embed each element in an effective whole-school approach.



Key elements of good practice

Bullying, harassment, violence and child protection

Issues for school staff

It is estimated that as many as one in four school-aged children may be victims of child maltreatment (James 2000)¹ and many students of all ages experience bullying and harassment (either directly as victims, or indirectly as witnesses) on a regular basis.

The community rightly expects the education community to be vigilant in trying to prevent harm to children and young people and in intervening as early as possible when the evidence suggests students are being victimised. There are compelling reasons for us to do so.

At the most prosaic level, there are both legal and policy imperatives that bind teachers and others who work in schools, and with young people in other settings, to look for and respond to indications of abuse, bullying, harassment and violence.

Secondly, there are simple issues of justice. All children have the right to live their lives free of the threat or the reality of violence. Given that all abuse and violence involves the misuse of power – the power conferred by age, size, physical or intellectual ability, relationship, position, or *assumed* on the basis of race, gender or sexuality – school staff have an obligation to do all they can to prevent and to stop victimisation. The impact on children and young people of repeated victimisation, discussed in more detail below, can be devastating in the short term, and have life-long consequences.

Finally, it is now very clear that the consequences of bullying, harassment, violence and child abuse include negative impacts on educational outcomes. Children who are fearful, pre-occupied with the memory and/or the anticipation of violence, whose self-confidence and self-esteem have been eroded, and who feel angry, hurt and often deeply isolated from their peers, cannot be expected to be focussed, engaged students, able to do justice to their capacity as learners.

There can, however, be real dilemmas for teachers in dealing with these issues. It is a critical part of the job, but by no means an easy one. The life of a teacher is constantly busy and demands for attention come from all quarters. Sometimes it seems impossible to keep an eye on what is happening with all of one's students.

Moreover, much bullying, harassment and violence, to say nothing of child abuse, occurs out of sight, deliberately hidden and often accompanied by threats of further violence if the behaviour is disclosed. The signs and indicators are rarely conclusive, and other explanations for them can often be found – in fact, perpetrators rely in this being the case.

For these reasons alone, it is critical that schools adopt a whole school approach, one which spreads the task of monitoring students' welfare across the full range of responsible adults; which supports children with information, advice and reassurance to enable them act as advocates on behalf of themselves and their peers; and which engages parents and carers as critical partners in the process.

That said, being confronted with evidence of bullying, harassment, violence and child abuse can still be traumatic for many teachers and other adults. This is especially likely to be the case if

¹ James discusses the difficulty of reliably determining the incidence of child abuse because of under-reporting and issues related to substantiating allegations. However, she notes that unofficial estimates of sexual abuse range from 1 in 4 girls to between 1 in 7 and 1 in 12 boys.

they have been victimised themselves, either as children or within their adult relationships, and schools need to anticipate and plan for such eventualities.

Teachers who have *not* identified cases of serious child abuse or peer violence among their students may be devastated when evidence of these events comes to light, and in urgent need of professional support. Such support is often also required by teachers who have identified and reported child abuse.

Certain kinds of harassment and abuse may pose particular challenges for some members of a school's staff. For example, gay, lesbian or bisexual teachers whose sexuality is not known or not accepted by the school community, or those teachers (whatever their sexual preference) who have been the targets of homophobic harassment, may feel especially vulnerable in challenging homophobic behaviour among students. It is worth making the point that homophobic harassment is often directed at people because of *perceptions* that they (or their friends, or members of their families) are homosexual, whether or not that is the case.

There will also be members of staff, whether we like it or not, who are, or have been, perpetrators of abuse and violence, or whose attitudes are racist, sexist or homophobic. School leaders who are dealing with such challenges may want to seek additional support either from the employing authority or from other agencies in developing ways to work with such staff members.

We need to be sure that none of the behaviours we are working to eliminate from the student population are used by staff members in their dealings with each other or with students. So, in relation to the day to day behaviour of staff working with students, it is not unreasonable to expect that they behave in accordance with the conditions of their employment and within the relevant code of conduct – all of which means that giving expression to racist, sexist or homophobic views is at all times unacceptable.

A particular concern for many schools revolves around handling the media when events occur which attract their attention. There will usually be protocols developed by the employing authorities to guide a school's response to media enquiries, but those who have to deal with journalists directly will find the whole situation easier to handle if they are able to confront the issues as openly as possible, and if they are well-prepared.

No school can prevent all instance of bullying, harassment and violence, nor identify and intervene in all instances of child maltreatment, but staff who are well-informed and who work in schools with well-developed whole school approaches to these issues will at least be able to face outside scrutiny confident that they have been working positively towards child protection.

What do school communities need to know about bullying, harassment and violence?

Bullying has been identified as one of the major issues facing children, young people, parents, educators and the community at large in recent times. Whilst bullying has always occurred, it is only relatively recently that the extent and the impact of bullying has begun to be appreciated. It has been estimated that one in six Australian children are bullied weekly (Rigby, 1997).

In 2002, Kids Help Line received almost 6,000 calls about bullying from young people in Australia. Overall, it is the fourth most common reason young people seek help from the service. Among those under 15, it is the third most common reason.

The reasons young callers to Kids Help Line give for victimisation include:

- ethnicity (the rate of bullying calls from indigenous and non-English speaking callers is higher than for other callers).
- resistance to pressure to behave in a certain way.
- physical differences.

- high achievement.
- being new.
- sexual orientation.
- socio-economic background (Kids Help Line, 2002).

Some confusion seems to have arisen over language in relation to discussions of bullying, harassment and violence. Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status (Bullying. No Way!, 2002).

Rigby (2003, p.1) notes that "Although the terms 'bullying' and 'harassment' are commonly used interchangeably, distinctions are sometimes made. 'Bullying' is sometimes seen as involving a higher degree of violence, and 'harassment' is frequently used when a person is being targeted because of his or her membership of a group, as in 'racial harassment.' Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It may be directed towards damaging property or involve self-harm. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind."

The use of the term harassment, a later entry into the language of school bullying, came about in part because of the fact that it encouraged the source of the behaviour to be *named* – hence sex-based harassment, racial harassment, homophobic harassment – and addressed. A recent UK anti-bullying pack refers to racist, sexist and homophobic bullying (Smith, 2002, p5).

The choice of terminology may be less important now than the degree of awareness in the school community about what lies beneath bullying and harassment, and a willingness to challenge the beliefs and attitudes that underpin these behaviours.

The nature and extent of bullying can vary from direct to indirect harassment, from minor irritants to serious assaults; students who bully/harass others can be breaking the law by engaging in criminal acts or by contravening anti-discrimination and human rights legislation.

And its nature changes with time. While the "traditional" forms of bullying continue to occur (physical and verbal abuse, extortion and exclusion) the access of many young people to mobile phones and computers has allowed a new version of threatening and harassing behaviour to emerge via emails, calls and text messages.

The what, when, where and how of bullying and harassment

The most common form of bullying is verbal harassment. The main difference experienced by boys and girls is that girls are more likely to be on the receiving end of indirect bullying (such as exclusion) while males are more often threatened and bullied physically (Kids Help Line, 2002, p1).

Research shows that while there is little difference in the numbers of boys and girls who suffer from bullying, boys are more often bullied by a single individual and girls more often by groups. When girls are the targets of sex-based harassment however, a single perpetrator is often involved and physical contact is not infrequent, which may be very difficult for victims to discuss.

There is no evidence to suggest that the size of the school, or whether the school is single-sex or co-educational, or government or non-government, makes any significant difference to the amount of bullying that goes on.

Available information suggests that most bullying occurs in late primary school or in the first years of secondary school. Ongoing harassment however appears to be more likely to be experienced by older students (15-18) according to Kids Help Line data.

Kids Help Line also reports an increase in covert forms of bullying in the wake of greater attention being paid to more obvious instances.

Bullying occurs not only at school of course, but also on the way to and from school, as well as elsewhere in the community outside school hours.

The fact that so much bullying and harassment spins round issues of difference should alert us to the fact that our prevention and intervention strategies need to focus strongly on building understanding, acceptance and celebration of diversity, as the following examples of students' experiences (drawn from the Bullying. No way! website) amply demonstrate.

"A couple of times other boys laugh because I don't speak very good English. It upsets me and I am not able to think for the rest of the day when it happens."...Year 9 boy

"I'm a girl. I hate make-up and dresses. I am more like a boy my friends say, because I like footy, soccer and baggy clothes. I mostly get teased due to me playing with the boys. I get called a boy, and a suckup. It makes it worse when the boys stick up for me. People should not be bullied because of stereotypical images."...Year 7 student

"I'm deaf and my friends have told me that some of my peers follow me making fun of me and the way that I speak. To help these other students understand what it's like to be deaf my school has introduced a Disability Awareness Program for all new students to the school where they experience for themselves what it is like to have a disability. They are also learning to sign so that we can talk and laugh."...Year 9 student

"When I came out in Year 8, I knew it wouldn't be easy. Jim, my close friend didn't seem to care, but lots of boys in my year threw wet paper towels at me in the toilets, made snide gestures in class, and shoved me around. I could hack most of it, but the day I was held down by 3 boys – including Jim – that was the pits. Afterwards Jim was really upset – not only about what had happened to me but because he had joined in to stop the harassment he was getting for hanging around with me. A year later he's still saying sorry." ...Chris, Year 9

"People who are really pretty and stuff tell us we have to look like this and act like that to be popular and accepted. They tease us and leave us out of things. It's good we are learning about why people do that. It helps us to understand."...Annika, Year 7 student

The effects of bullying and harassment

Bullying, harassment, violence and discrimination are harmful to both victims and perpetrators.

Research now confirms what many of us have long known – that bullying, harassment and violence undermine a victim's confidence, well-being and ability to learn. It's not good for perpetrators either – there is a strong correlation between bullying in childhood and adolescence, and the use of violent and anti-social behaviours in adult life. In fact, those who are consistent and unchecked bullies at school are 35 to 40 per cent more likely to have criminal convictions as adults (Australian Department of Health and Aged Care).

However, there is still some resistance to the notion that bullying can do real harm. It is worth thinking about the ways in which these views can be challenged. Since they often spring from personal experience, and it is true that some very resilient people do not suffer long-term damage from being bullied or harassed, it may be worth considering how personal experiences of the *negative* impact of bullying and harassment can be shared – bearing in mind of course that such sharing needs to be managed in ways which don't create additional problems for those sharing their experiences.

Making access to the research available is also important. And the research findings are clear. Experiences of bullying and harassment are clearly connected to:

- low self esteem and proneness to depression;
- maladjustment; and
- low levels of well-being.

In addition, we know that bullying and harassment can have a significant impact on the choices students make at school – about what subjects to study, which co-curricula activities to engage in, even about whether to stay on or leave.

Reporting bullying and harassment

The full extent of bullying may be very hard to detect. It usually happens out of sight, away from teachers or other adults. The people most likely to know what is going on are other children. Children who are being bullied often don't tell anyone because they feel weak or ashamed, or are frightened that it will only make things worse.

If they do tell, it is most likely they will tell their parents – usually their mother or their friends - before they will tell a teacher (Department of Education, Science and Training). In fact, it has been suggested that only a very small percentage of children ever tell anyone they are being bullied.

Working to prevent bullying, harassment and violence is therefore critical, and reassuring students that they will be believed and supported when they report such behaviours is an important part of a well thought out school strategy.

The clear message from the literature is that a whole-of-school approach is much more likely to be successful than single-factor interventions. "A key ingredient seems to be the conceptualisation of the school community in a holistic way, consisting of students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders, combined with the acceptance by management of their responsibility to achieve and maintain a harmonious and caring school environment" (Hemel, Chapter 4, *School Violence*).

What do school communities need to know about child maltreatment?

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse has been described as encompassing a variety of acts or behaviours which result in harm to children. "Child abuse is an act by parents or caregivers which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time" (Victorian Department of Community Care).

The four main categories of child abuse are physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse.

While the rate of 'non reporting' of child abuse and neglect is largely unknown, it is widely agreed that reported cases of abuse and neglect represent only the tip of the iceberg.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by his or her parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the unintended consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve him or her in sexual activity. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Child sexual abuse refers to the use of children **under the age of consent** for sexual gratification. This is an important point to make, not only because the age of consent varies between jurisdictions, but also because a recent study reveals disturbing attitudes to child sexual abuse in the Australian community. (Information about the age of consent in various jurisdictions can be found in **Appendix 6**).

A national survey commissioned by the Australian Childhood Foundation (the results of which were presented to the Federal Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on September 9th, 2003) found that 13% of respondents did not believe that sex between a 14-year-old-girl and an adult was sexual abuse and a further 11% could not decide (Tucci et al, p11). Of equal concern is the fact that 35% of respondents believe that children make up stories about being abused (Tucci et al, p.12).

It is also important to remember that sexual abuse by school peers is not an uncommon phenomenon.

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages his or her physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

Neglect is failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, supervision or protection, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

The incidence of child abuse

Freda Briggs (2003) argues that "The problem of child maltreatment is arguably one of the most serious confronting contemporary society."

The publication **Child Protection Australia 2001-2002** notes that:

- Child abuse notifications increased from 107,134 in 1999-2000 to 137,938 in 2001-2002.
- Child abuse substantiations increased from 24,732 in 1999-2000 to 30,473 in 2001-2002.
- There is an upward trend in the numbers of children on care and protection orders and in out-of-home care. In June 2002, 4.3 children aged 0-17 per 1000 were on care and protection orders, while 3.9 children aged 0-17 per 1000 were in out-of-home care.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are significantly over-represented in child abuse statistics. They are currently 6 times more likely to be on care and protection orders or in out-of-home care (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).
- Most researchers suggest that the increased numbers are most likely due to increased reporting because discussion of issues of child abuse is much more 'open' than has been the case in the past, resulting in greater public awareness of the issues and the consequences.

The Consequences of Child Abuse

It is not easy to predict the long-term consequences of child abuse and neglect. Outcomes are affected by a range of issues such as the degree and duration of abuse, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, the nature of the family and the kind of family support that is available, the types of interventions that occur (if any), and the resilience of the victim.

Most child abuse is, however, not confined to a single incident. The longer the abuse goes on, the more serious are the effects. Abused and neglected children are more likely than other children to be self destructive or aggressive, to abuse drugs and alcohol, or become young offenders or "street kids". In some situations abuse and neglect may result in permanent physical damage. Other widely documented impacts include:

- Retarded cognitive development.
- Poor self development.
- Poor language development.
- Diminished verbal skills.
- Possible psychiatric disorders.

- Lower self esteem.
- Inability to form meaningful relationships.
- Lower in social maturity.
- Diminished life coping skills.
- Increased likelihood of:
 - Poor health.
 - Self destructive behaviours.
 - Homelessness & depression.
 - Abusing own children.
 - Future delinquency.
 - Adult crime - violence.
 - Substance abuse.
 - Personality abnormalities.
 - Youth suicide.
 - Violence or aggressive behaviour.
 - Sexual maladjustment.

These events clearly have a significant impact upon an individual's ability to function, and affect education and employment outcomes, the capacity to develop and sustain relationships, and parenting abilities (McIntosh, G. & Phillips, J.).

A recent study, *Long Term Effects of Child Sexual Abuse*, found that it is widely held among professional in the area that child sexual abuse is a major cause of mental (and other) health problems in adulthood. There is now an established body of knowledge clearly linking a history of child sexual abuse with higher rates in adult life of depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, substance abuse disorders, eating disorders and post-traumatic stress disorders.

Child sexual abuse, according to the study, occurs more frequently in children from socially deprived and disorganised family backgrounds. There is a high correlation between domestic violence and sexual abuse of children. It is known that there are increased risks of abuse with a step-parent in the family, and when family breakdown results in institutional or foster care. There is considerable overlap between physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and children who are subject to one form of abuse are significantly more likely to suffer others.

All forms of abuse are likely to result in emotional problems for the child—in particular, a lack of self esteem and distrust of adults. In the longer term, adults who have been abused as children are also more likely to abuse their own children and often experience difficulties in forming satisfactory relationships with other adults. The most serious effects are likely to occur when no one takes action to stop the abuse and to protect the child (Victorian Department of Community Care).

Costs to the community are high - both financially and socially. The strong relationship between child abuse and later mental and physical ill health, crime and imprisonment in adolescence and adulthood, the perpetuation of the cycle of abuse, substance abuse and self-harming behaviours extracts a high price in dollar terms. It has been estimated that the tangible costs of child sex abuse are about \$200 000 per offence (Briggs).

What causes child abuse?

There is no single fact that causes child abuse. Abused children come from all sections of society, although most abused children *who are reported to authorities* are from families where

there is high mobility, a lack of education, loneliness, poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing or social isolation. Abuse and neglect appear more likely to occur in families where there are a number of risk factors, and adults feel under pressure and lacking support. Boys appear to be somewhat more at risk than girls of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect,. However more girls are sexually abused than boys. It is not uncommon for abuse may be directed at only one child in the family.

In summary, most abuse **other than sexual abuse** occurs in families experiencing some, or all, of the following:

- Poverty.
- Lack of education.
- Serious marital problems.
- Frequent changes of addresses.
- Violence between family members.
- Lack of support from the extended family.
- Loneliness and social isolation.
- Unemployment.
- Inadequate housing.

Children can be abused at any age. Some children are more at risk of abuse than others, for example, those under two years of age and children with disabilities. Many adolescents are victims of child abuse and neglect. Sometimes abuse commences during adolescence as parents experience difficulties in dealing with the adolescent's behaviour and desire for independence.

Abusers may also have:

- Very high expectations of the child and what the child should achieve.
- Been a victim of abuse in their own childhood.
- A lack of knowledge and skills in bringing up children.
- Low self esteem and self confidence.
- Depression.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Mental or physical ill health.
- Work pressures.

In addition, it has been found that certain **community attitudes** may encourage child abuse, including:

- Acceptance of the use of violence and force,
- Acceptance of the physical punishment of children.
- Acceptance of parents "ownership" of children and their right to treat children as they see fit.
- Racism.
- Inequality between men and women (Victorian Department of Community Care).

Who are the abusers?

The vast majority of child abuse is perpetrated by family members and/or other adults well-known to the child (Victorian Department of Community Care). The "stranger-danger" message is seriously misleading.

In cases of child sexual abuse, the overwhelming majority of abusers are male, and the majority of victims are females although many boys are also abused. Sexual abuse is associated with attitudes to women and sex that men learn from a young age as well as unequal power relationships between men and women and adults and children.

Both men and women commit physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. It often depends on which parent spends most time with the child. Child abuse usually takes place in the home with someone that the child knows rather than with strangers (Victorian Department of Community Care).

How can we recognise signs of abuse and neglect?

Physical Abuse

Physical indicators include:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts.
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally.
- Poisoning.
- Internal injuries.

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults.
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury).
- Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home.
- Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout.
- Being excessively friendly to strangers.
- Being very passive and compliant.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is not usually identified through physical indicators. Often the first sign is when a child tells someone they trust that they have been sexually abused. However the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, or vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse.

One or more of these indicators may be present:

- The child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred.
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains.
- Experiencing problems with schoolwork.
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age.
- Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting.
- Experiencing difficulties in sleeping.
- Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers.

Emotional Abuse

There are few physical indicators, although emotional abuse may cause delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development.

Possible indicators include:

- Displaying low self esteem.
- Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful.
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour.
- Being highly anxious.
- Showing delayed speech.
- Acting like a much younger child - eg. Soiling, wetting pants.
- Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers.

Neglect

Indicators include:

- Frequent hunger.
- Malnutrition.
- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing eg. Summer clothes in winter.
- Being left unsupervised for long periods.
- Medical needs not attended to.
- Abandoned by parents.
- Stealing food.
- Staying at school outside school hours.
- Often being tired, falling asleep in class.
- Abusing alcohol or drugs.
- Displaying aggressive behaviour.
- Not getting on well with peers (Victorian Department of Community Care).

Child Protection

In ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), Australia agreed to take “all legislative, administrative, social and *educational* measures to protect all children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse while in the care of the parent(s), legal guardian **or any other person who has the care of the child.**” (Principle 9, Articles 19, 34 and 39).

A major trend over the past decade has been to develop a more 'holistic' policy framework engaging a range of areas including employment, education, health and family relationships. Child protection curriculum was first introduced to Australian schools in 1985; a significant reason was the realisation that the “Stranger Danger” message perpetuated by parents and police is far removed from reality. Most abuse is perpetrated by people who are known to and trusted by the child.

Research has shown that the best results in relation to child protection come from long term school programs that are realistic about the issues involved in child maltreatment, and that

involve parents and carers. While personal safety information cannot be shown to stop abuse (of any kind) it does help students to report quickly and seek assistance (Briggs).

The American program *Protective Behaviours* was introduced to Australia in 1985 but doubts have been raised about its effectiveness, and a number of states are now replacing it with their own curriculum materials. Other states incorporate the Protective Behaviours concepts and strategies into their curriculum materials. One example is the New South Wales *Child Protection Education Program (Kindergarten to Year 12)*. Protective Behaviours Australia advises that it has developed new resources over the last eighteen years to meet the developmental needs of children and diverse risk contexts.

The New South Wales *Child Protection Education Program (Kindergarten to Year 12)* has been judged to be effective and developmentally appropriate, but requires greater support in terms of teacher training to be more widely utilized (Briggs).

Professional development for all members of staff is seen as being the **key** to improving child protection in schools.

It has also been noted that “(m)uch more attention needs to be paid to the education of secondary school staff because if abuse starts or continues into early adolescence, the outcomes are the most damaging. A high correlation between sexual abuse in adolescence and later paedophilia (has been found)... Victims were much less likely to turn to crime if the abuse occurred early in their lives and there was early intervention. There is an assumption that secondary students are capable of protecting themselves. Recent reports have shown that this assumption is false (Briggs).

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Fostering and sustaining change in schools

Over the past two decades a great deal of literature has emerged on fostering and managing school change. The majority of respected authors in the field make some consistent observations about the nature of school change, and the pre-conditions necessary for change to be achievable and sustainable.

Most, however, sound a cautionary note, arguing that there are few examples of successful sustained school change. The most common explanation revolves around an underestimation of the complexity of the change process.

What are the barriers to sustainable change?

One of the chief barriers to achieving sustainable change is a tendency to underestimate how **complex and uncertain** a process it is. Some of the complexities arise from the nature of schools' and teachers' work, characterised by changes in policy, an intensification of work, and a range of new demands being made on schools and school staff.

While many look for a simple and straightforward "recipe" to manage change, the majority of writers agree that no such recipe exists; there *is* no single universal model for effecting school change. It has been argued that change is a non-linear and potentially non-rational" process, significantly shaped by factors in the local social context, and likely to take much longer to achieve than many anticipate.

Resistance is not uncommon, especially when there is little ownership of the process at the **local level**, and especially when teachers see the proposed change as working against their interests. There are likely to be a **range of attitudes** among members of the school community to any change proposed. Competing interests in schools, and the often contradictory views held inside and outside schools about their role and function and about what should constitute teachers' work, also creates an often unacknowledged barrier to change.

The range of attitudes amongst teachers towards issues at the core of any significant change process means that teachers often take **personal risks** in terms of challenging their own beliefs and understandings, as they engage with change in their workplace. This is particularly likely to be the case when the issues under consideration impact on the personal as well as the professional lives of those concerned, as is the case in relation to violence and child protection. The same is true of course in relation to members of the wider school community who are critical stakeholders in the change process.

In the same way, a lack of agreement between stakeholders about what counts as **progress** can be a substantial barrier to sustaining a change process.

A number of writers in the field have also commented on the way reform can be undermined by the persistence of entrenched and **taken for granted teaching practices** – as well as other entrenched and taken for granted aspects of school culture.

What are the principles of effective change?

Despite acknowledging the difficulties involved, there is a strong consensus among writers in this area about the principles which underpin effective change processes.

- Drive change from an understanding of the specific contexts and conditions at the local level
- Foster broadly based ownership of the change process
- Provide appropriate support for those involved in the change process

Drive change from an understanding of the specific contexts and conditions at the local level

There is almost universal agreement amongst researchers in this field that inflexible, externally imposed initiatives are almost certain to fail. The problem of course is that often change is driven from the centre.

What is necessary then is a commitment to “localizing” the need for change, that is to working in ways that investigate how the key issues in the change agenda can be understood in the specific contexts and conditions of the local community.

There are two aspects to localizing a change agenda. The first is that the local character of the community is influenced by a range of factors – geographical location, socioeconomic issues, social and cultural profile – which make it unique, shaping the ways in which particular issues are manifested. Secondly the culture of every school is unique, a product of its history, its leadership and the qualities and relationships of its staff, and its relationship to its community.

It is critical therefore that schools are able to identify the ways the reform agenda melds with the specific features of the local context in determining a strategy for achieving change”.

Successful change processes require that a shared understanding of the issues involved and commitment to working on them is built at the local level, making the way in which the reform is implemented critical to its success. Clearly then, a key element of the reform process is to build a **vision** of the benefits of change which is intimately connected to the specifics of the local community.

Foster broadly based ownership of the change process

If reform initiatives are to be successful, it is critical that schools and their staff take **ownership** of both the issues involved and the process for achieving change.

In the final analysis, change is embedded in schools’ cultures and practices only to the extent that teachers internalise new understandings and enact them in both their formal and informal interactions with students. Whether reform initiatives foster real change in students’ attitudes and behaviours is also dependent on the degree to which corresponding understanding and action is generated in the families and other social groupings of the broader school community.

Resistance can only be countered by fostering broad-based ownership of the entire process, and by empowering all stakeholders to be able to play a genuine role in all aspects of its design and implementation. For this reason, teacher participation, as well as community participation, is an essential component of reform.

It is argued that school-based factors, like leadership, the school’s culture and decision-making processes, and local levels of resources, are the most critical aspects of effecting change. This suggests that issues such as **clarity** of purpose, the **practicality** of approaches and strategies, and ensuring that adequate **time** is available to plan, implement, monitor and review the change process are of paramount importance.

Forcing the pace of change to meet externally imposed conditions is not productive. It is clear from the literature that sustainable change is the result of a long-term commitment which acknowledges the real constraints on the time of teachers and other partners in the process. Effective ownership of change processes means that control of the **pace of change** must be in the hands of those responsible for implementing the initiative. This pre-supposes that there are democratic and collaborative structures and practices in schools which support collaborative decision-making processes both within the school and broader school community.

A key feature of collaborative decision-making is the quality of communication among staff members and between school staff and the community. It is important therefore that in any change process there are many opportunities, both through structured and formal meetings and through unstructured and informal processes, for teachers and community members to engage in open discussion, to undertake research together, and to collaboratively design and implement new strategies.

Essentially these are arguments about recognising and fostering **teacher leadership in partnership with principals’ leadership** of change agendas.

Provide appropriate support for those involved in the change process

If teachers and other members of the school community are to lead and sustain the change agenda, opportunities must be created not only for genuine and critical participation in all stages of the process, but sufficient **resources** and other supports must be in place to ensure that stakeholders are empowered and confident to engage.

Professional development for teachers, and access to **education and training** for community partners, are central to building an effective and collaborative change process. A key element in the process is the need for scheduled and guaranteed **time** for planning and professional development, particularly the kind of professional development in which teachers and others actively research, and make meaning of, the key issues.

Implicit in this is access to appropriate resources, which may include building **partnerships** with appropriate academics or other professionals with expertise in the field to support the critically reflective practice which are widely acknowledged to be fundamental to sustaining change over time.

Creating the pre-conditions for effecting sustainable change

Change occurs most successfully in school communities where the pre-conditions for effecting sustainable change are established and supported.

Building a democratic and participatory school culture

It has been argued that schools, as organisations, need to be understood as 'living systems', with all that that implies about fluidity and change for managing reform initiatives. The implication is that change takes time, cannot be managed in a linear, lock-step fashion and requires a willingness on the part of all stakeholders to be learners about and reflectors on the change process itself.

This is unlikely to happen unless schools have invested in building cultures based on trust and collaborative action at the local level. A culture marked by openness, collaboration, and respect is essential to generate the kinds of critical reflection and discussion that encourage stakeholders to be receptive to change. Building or strengthening a culture conducive to collaboration, democratic decision-making and critical reflection should therefore be the first step in a change process. Such a culture, which keeps rules and formal structures to a minimum, can nurture the opportunities that are offered by uncertainty to build trust between the partners in the process, encourage problem-solving, and explore ideas "outside the square".

Creating opportunities for teachers and other members of the school community to develop their understanding about initiatives, and to critically assess and discuss them in a collaborative environment, is an important element of a successful change process. What is being described here is in essence the process of reconceptualising schools as learning organisations, underpinned by ensuring that teachers having genuine decision-making power, in ways that enable them to see themselves as genuine change agents in the school, able to articulate why change is necessary, how it should be managed, its value for their own work and its value for students.

Leadership is critical in this context; ways of establishing or enhancing democratic and participatory structures and processes must be based in acknowledging that teachers and their learning are central to any process of cultural change.

'Organic' or 'communal' leadership structures in schools rather than hierarchical ones are said to be most effective in promoting and sustaining change. Teachers can take a lead role in transformational change in schools when there is a climate that encourages open debate and risk taking, when empowering and supportive structures are in place, adequate resources provided,

and when teachers have the opportunity to make real decisions about things that affect them and their students.

Resistance to and fear of change is often borne out of concern that diverse views will produce conflict within the school community. If, however, real consensus is to be achieved, the reality of diverse and conflicting views has to be acknowledged as an opportunity for testing ideas, knowledge and assumptions, and identifying ways of testing assumptions in action, rather than as an impediment to action itself.

The vital importance of creating a school culture which encourages **critical reflection** is underlined by Lipman in "Restructuring in social context". She argues that school reform initiatives can actually **reinforce existing inequalities** based on race, class and power relationships because of the "taken for granted-ness" of the assumptions and practices of those involved in the change process. She suggests that the risks can be reduced by explicitly developing processes and strategies which:

- challenge the hierarchy of knowledge in schools, and social relationships in society;
- identify and confront taken for granted assumptions in school culture, and broader social and political culture; and
- change existing power relations by consciously including traditionally marginalised groups in any reform process.

Understanding the sociocultural context of the school community

A strong thread in the research about effective school change is the need for all those involved in the change process to develop a deep understanding of the complexity of social life, and the inter-relationship between schools and the sociocultural context in which they are located.

A key task for those engaged in school reform, therefore, is to foster an understanding of the "critical cultural geography' that directly connects everyday life and practice in the classroom, and any initiatives for school reform, with the broader social context" (Hattam) and to ensure that teachers understand their own work as sociocultural practice. In other words, the assumptions, values, understandings and attitudes of all members of the school community are important subjects for enquiry and critical discussion by all stakeholders in the change process.

Recognising and enhancing teacher knowledge

Acknowledging and enhancing teacher knowledge is a critical pre-condition for successful change. It is widely understood that teachers possess extensive "**tacit knowledge**" about their schools, their students and the nature of their work.

Making that tacit knowledge explicit is an important element of building support for reform initiatives.

Encouraging teachers to write about their work and practice as case studies provides both data useful to the change process and the a motivation for engagement with change. Such work provides the basis for critical reflection and sharing, and encourages teacher-initiated research for change.

Tacit knowledge needs to be enhanced by access to quality professional development. While many writers acknowledge the difficulties created by recent trends in school education that shift responsibility for teachers' ongoing professional development and learning away from national and state systems and onto individual schools, providing professional development opportunities should comprise a central part of any school change planning.

Quality professional development should lead to meaningful conversations, fostering reflection on new and challenging ideas, and the importance of the local context, the school culture, leadership and planning, and generating the sense of ownership necessary for effective change to occur. "Hence the argument is that change processes need to create the spaces and

conditions for this type of conversation with texts and reform initiatives, leading to both changes in teachers' beliefs and their development of skills to enact the change" (Sharkey).

Promoting an understanding of change

Knowing about the issues at the core of the change process and about the local context in which change is to occur are clearly important. So too is knowing about **how change occurs**. Fullan, for example argues that effective change needs accumulated knowledge about what works in what conditions, contexts and situations, for different types of initiatives. He also suggests that participants in the process need to understand that there is never a single, correct way to proceed; instead the process, in practice, will eventually produce local theories of effective change.

Developing among the school community an understanding of change as non-linear and complex is important if short-term failures or setbacks are not to derail the process entirely. In *Punctuated legitimacy: A theory of educational change*, Gold argues that short-term failure is an integral part of longer-term processes of deep change. Typically schools experience cycle of attempted major changes that challenge the deep structures of schooling, and then periods of smaller incremental change during which pressure again builds for more fundamental change.

This should not be seen as the failure of the reform initiative, but rather as a normal part of an organic change process, providing opportunities for learning and reflection, and a chance to engage with deeper issues than may initially have been grasped.

It is important therefore that such cycles are anticipated and allowed for in planning for change. Planning needs to allow for periods of assessment, evaluation, reflection and redesign, and should anticipate the resistance likely to be engineered by work overload by integrating, where possible, change initiatives with existing processes to avoid creating unnecessary additional work for teachers.

References

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Hattam, Robert 1998, 'Towards a cultural geography of school reform and teachers' learning', website (27 August 2001): <http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/hat98194.htm>

Lipman, Pauline (1998), 'Conclusion: Restructuring in social context' in Pauline Lipman (ed), *Race, Class, and Power in School Restructuring*, New York, State University of New York Press

Sharkey, Paul 1996, 'On befriending texts for change', website (14 September 2001): <http://www.aare.edu.au/96pap/sharp96.159>

A whole school approach

Why a whole-school approach?

In the past, a range of issues that have implications for all students (such as drug education or child protection) have been thought to be the province of particular learning areas or of the co-curriculum. More recently, a whole-school approach to these and many other issues has been widely advocated.

A whole school approach is one that involves **all the members of the school community (students, staff, parents and carers, and other community members)**, and **works across all the areas of school life**. It implicitly acknowledges that learning occurs not only through the formal curriculum, but also through students' daily experience of life in the school - and beyond.

Whole-school approaches seek to engage all key learning areas, all year levels and the wider community. They include many aspects of school life, such as curriculum, culture, teaching practices, policies and procedures.

Advocates of whole-school approaches understand that real learning and sustainable change is most likely to occur when a common vision is widely shared throughout the school community, and when all members of that community are supported to operate in ways that are consistent with it.

Planning to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with important ideas in a range of ways and over an extended period of time enhances the likelihood that real learning – and real change - will occur.

A genuinely whole-school approach increases the sense of ownership of all stake-holders, and engenders the kinds of good-will that can prevent programs being derailed by the inevitable glitches that arise from time to time. Sharing the ownership of a program widely across the school community also reduces the likelihood that it will fall over as a result of staff changes or movement out of the area by key individuals.

Without the planning that necessarily underpins a whole-school approach, it is possible that those things students learn via the formal curriculum in one key learning area might be contradicted in another. Developing a considered and consistent approach will reduce the possibility that aspects of the co-curricular life of the school, or of management and practices in the non-teaching and learning parts of school life might be at odds with the messages of a program confined to only one part of the school's operations.

A whole school approach means ensuring that students learn appropriate messages and skills through the formal curriculum and classroom practices. These must be supported by policy, guidelines and practices in the student welfare and pastoral care areas.

Importantly, and perhaps particularly in relation to issues such as bullying, violence, harassment and child protection, there can be significant differences of understanding and opinion both among members of a school staff and within the broader community. While it is highly unlikely that those gaps will ever fully be closed, it is critical that they are acknowledged and addressed, and that consideration is given to:

- balancing the personal views of staff members against their professional obligations;
- the most effective ways to move towards a shared understanding and a shared approach across the school community over time;
- how to work with students on issues which may raise questions about views and practices which are not consistent with those of their families and/or communities.

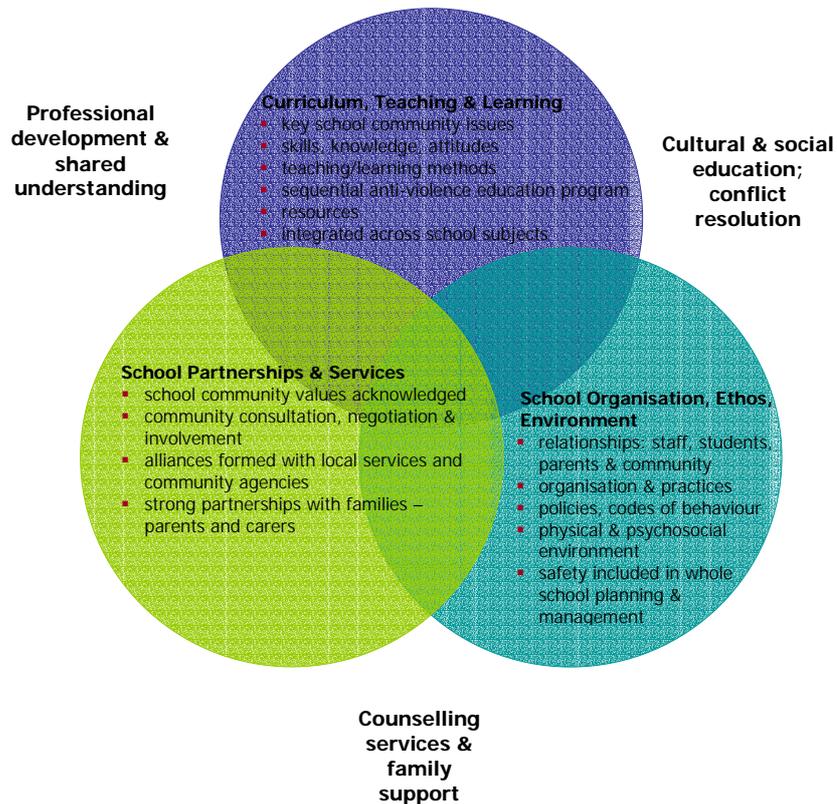
What does a whole-school approach look like?

Possibly the most critical thing to understand about a whole-school approach is that the “process a school community engages in to develop a program is as important as what they finally put into action.

The key features of an effective whole-school approach are:

- **leadership**
 - leadership is given in identifying and promoting the need for change, and in sustaining initiatives (Section 2, *Assessing school safety*, explores issues of identifying the need for change in the context of the National Safe Schools Framework);
- **planning**
 - effective planning identifies the opportunities to initiate change, the needs of all stakeholders in the change process, the barriers or challenges arising from local circumstances, and those strategies most likely to effect sustainable change (Section 3, *Planning, implementing and monitoring*, provides more detailed discussion of the issue);
- **consensus**
 - a consensus view is built across the school community by providing information to all stakeholders and creating opportunities to share and debate ideas as the basis for evidence-based decision-making.
- **collaboration**
 - staff, parents and students are involved in working together to develop and implement the whole-school approach.
- **comprehensiveness and consistency**
 - established and emerging policies, programs, strategies and practices across the school, in both the formal curriculum and in the culture and ethos of the school, are consistent with the identified approach.
- **balance**
 - a balance is achieved between proactive, preventive approaches and reactive, responsive approaches.
- **monitoring and evaluation**
 - strategies are monitored and evaluated as part of an evidence based approach to achieving change over time (Section 3 provides more detailed discussion).

school-community alliances



A whole school approach to violence, harassment, bullying and child protection

Professional development materials

Introduction

These materials have been designed to be used with a variety of audiences – school, staff, parents and carers and other members of the school community.

The materials include information sheets, overhead transparency masters and readings on the key issues of bullying, harassment, violence; child protection; and action research.

Key issues	Key materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection - current jurisdictional arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current jurisdictional arrangements in relation to harassment, bullying, and violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of bullying, harassment and violence, child abuse and neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead transparency masters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead transparency masters • Readings

Other materials useful for professional development may be found in the *MindMatters* program, as well as in a range of resources previously published.

Useful web addresses for locating resources for professional development, as well as for working with parents and students are:

MindMatters

<http://online.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/resources/resources.htm>

Downloadable booklets and audit tools on

- Resilience
- Friendship and belonging
- People, identity and culture
- Stress and coping introduction
- A Whole School Approach to Dealing with Bullying and Harassment
- Understanding Mental Illnesses
- Loss and Grief
- Working with diverse communities)

Also

- Posters for use with students and others

Bullying. No way!

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/resources/>

Policies and procedures, legislation, support services, information sources related to

- Indigenous issues
- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Behaviour management
- Child abuse
- Child protection
- Crisis management
- Critical incident management
- Cultural and language diversity
- Disability
- Gifted and talented students
- ESL
- Gender
- Homophobia
- Pregnant and parenting students
- Students at risk
- Inclusive education
- Safe schools
- Students welfare
- Learning difficulties

Professional development materials

The National Safe Schools Framework Approach

OHT masters

Vision statement

“All Australian schools are safe and supportive environments.”

Guiding principles

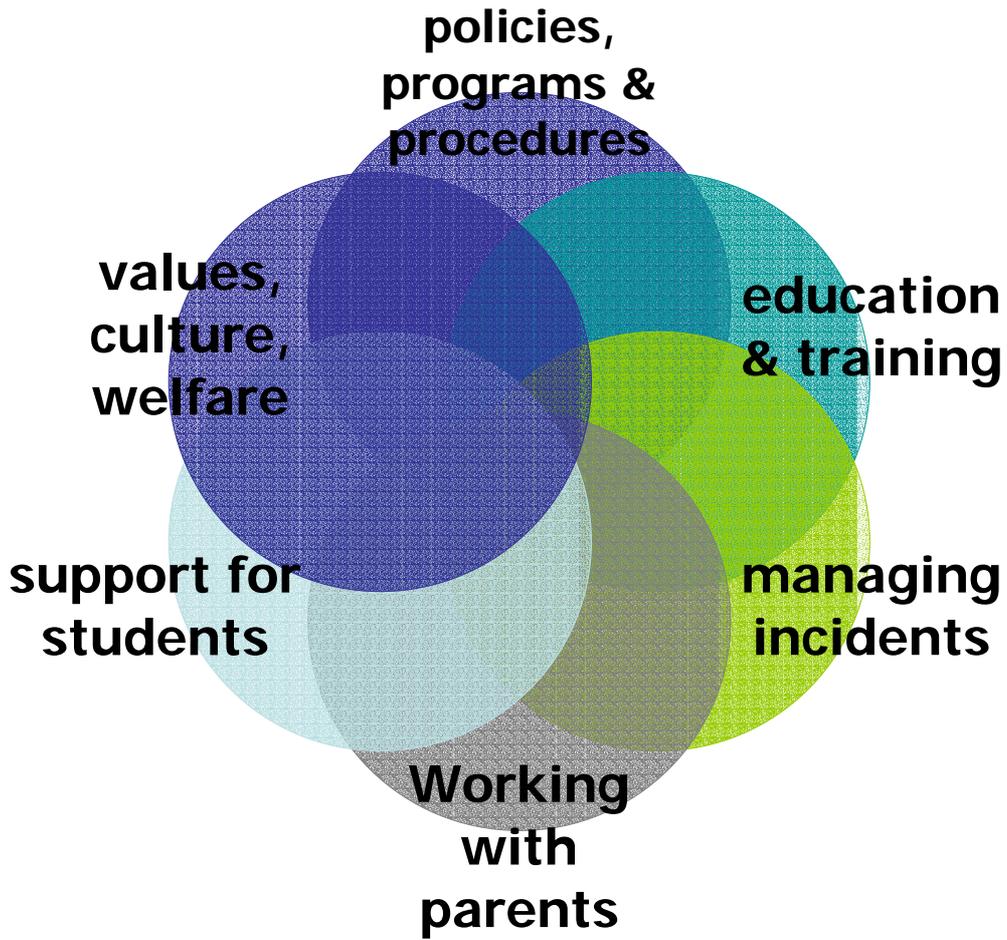
Australian schools:

1. affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe at school
2. promote care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity
3. implement policies, programmes and processes to nurture a safe and supportive school environment
4. recognise that quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment
5. develop and implement policies and programmes through processes that engage the whole school community

6. ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated.
7. recognise the critical importance of pre-service and ongoing professional development in creating a safe and supportive school environment
8. have a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn through the formal curriculum the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships
9. focus on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and intervention
10. regularly monitor and evaluate their policies and programmes so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements
11. take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect

Key elements of good practice

1. School values, ethos, culture, structures and student welfare
2. Establishment of agreed policies, programs and procedures
3. Provision of education and training to school staff, students and parents
4. Managing incidents of abuse and victimisation
5. Providing support for students
6. Working closely with parents



Professional development materials

Defining terms

OHT masters

Violence

- ✎ Violence is defined in the Macquarie Dictionary as “rough force in action” or “**rough or injurious action or treatment**”.
- ✎ Although other forms of violence are widely recognised, the word usually has the connotation of **physical** force or harm.
- ✎ The World Health Organization identifies three clusters of **risk factors** associated with youth violence:
 - Individual factors;
 - Family influences;
 - Social, political and cultural factors.

Violence

Individual factors

-  Hyperactivity
-  Impulsiveness
-  Poor behaviour control
-  Attention problems
-  History of early aggressive behaviour
-  Low educational achievement

Violence

Family influences

-  Poor supervision and the use of harsh physical punishment
-  Parental conflict in early childhood
-  Low level of attachment between parents and children
-  Low level of family cohesion

Violence

Social, political and cultural factors

-  Gangs and a local supply of guns and drugs
-  Low levels of social cohesion in the community
-  The qualities of a country's governance – laws, law enforcement and social protection policies
-  Income inequality, urbanization, rapid demographic change in the youth population
-  Cultures that do not provide non-violent alternatives for conflict resolution.

Are bullying and harassment the same?

-  Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately
-  However both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'.
-  These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status.

Although the terms are commonly used interchangeably, distinctions are sometimes made.

Bullying is sometimes seen as involving a **higher degree of violence.**

Harassment is frequently used when a person is being targeted because of his or her **membership of a group**, as in 'racial harassment.'

Bullying

Characteristics

-  Bullying in its truest form is a series of **repeated, intentionally cruel incidents**, involving the **same individuals**, in the **same bully and victim roles**.
-  Bullying can however consist of a single interaction.
-  It occurs in a **social context** and there is typically some group involvement.
-  Bullying is not a problem that usually sorts itself out.
-  The defining characteristic of bullying lies in the **relationship** of the bully and victim, and in the **intent** of the interaction.

Bullying

Relationship

-  Bullying usually occurs between individuals who are **not friends**. In a bullying situation, there is a **power difference** between the bully and the victim - the bully may be bigger, tougher, physically stronger, have the power to intimidate others or exclude them from their social group.
-  Bullying knows no financial, cultural or social bounds.

Intent

-  The intention of bullying is to put the victim in **distress** in some way.
-  Bullies seek **power**.

Bullying

Effects

-  Bullying is devastating; the effects last a lifetime. It causes **misery for victims**, and leaves a lasting impression on witnesses.
-  Victims may lose time at school, suffer from anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, physical illness and physical injury.
-  Violent patterns of behaviour can **continue into adult life** - bullying has implications for domestic violence and child abuse.
-  Bullies tend to believe that violence can solve problems & have little empathy for their victims. They have often been raised in homes where physical punishment is used and there is little emotional warmth.

Harassment

-  Harassment is defined by the Macquarie dictionary as “to trouble by repeated attacks; to disturb persistently; torment”.
-  Harassment in education and employment contexts is usually associated with attacks based on the victim’s **membership of a group** – common terms are “racial harassment”, “sexual or gender-based harassment”, and “homophobic harassment”.
-  Harassment usually involves the expression of **attitudes**, either verbally or through some type of behaviour, based on an **assumption of superiority** of group of persons over another. Such attitudes may be expressed by **what is not done as well as what is done** – by exclusion or ostracism.

Harassment

Racial harassment

-  offensive comments about racial or ethnic background.
-  offensive jokes about people of different racial or ethnic origin.
-  repeated unwelcome comments about appearance, customs, dress, accent, language.

Harassment

Sexual or gender-based harassment

-  any unwelcome attention of a sexual nature.
-  behaviour that involves unwelcome touching.
-  telling jokes of an offensive sexual nature.
-  repeated questions about a person's private life or sexual habits.
-  asking sexual favours.
-  having offensive pictures on the wall.

Harassment

Homophobic harassment

-  Homophobia is defined as the dread, fear and loathing of homosexuality, of homosexuals, and of people **perceived** to be homosexual.
-  Homophobic harassment involves both verbal and physical abuse as well as exclusion and shunning.
-  A comprehensive study of 929 men, women and transgender people conducted in 2000 found that 31% of respondents had experienced discrimination or abuse on the basis of their sexuality/gender identity in education.
-  Suicide, mental illness and homelessness rates among students identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual are high, while their school retention rates are low.

Child Protection

-  The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) defines child protection as “all legislative, administrative, social and **educational** measures to protect all children from all forms of physical or mental **violence, injury, abuse or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation** including sexual abuse.
-  Child protection refers specifically to protecting children from abusive or negligent treatment that occurs while they are in the care of the **parent(s), legal guardian or any other person who has the care of the child.**
-  Schools need to operate within the child protection provisions specified in **state legislation.**

Child Protection

-  Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary **support** for the child as well as **other forms of prevention** and for the **identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up** of instances of child maltreatment”.

-  In all states and territories in Australia, with the exception of Queensland and Western Australia, it is **mandatory** that teachers (and in some cases other school staff) **report suspicions of child maltreatment.**

-  In Queensland and Western Australia, teachers are required to report suspicions of child maltreatment **through the principal.**

Child Abuse

What is Child Abuse?

-  Child abuse refers to the “maltreatment of a child, especially by **emotional or physical violence or sexual interference**”.²
-  Child abuse and neglect refer to acts of **omission** and acts of **commission** that are potentially harmful to the child.
-  Child abuse is anything which individuals, institutions or processes do, or fail to do, which **directly or indirectly harms children** or damages their prospects of a safe and happy development into adulthood.

² Australian Oxford Dictionary

Child Abuse

-  **Physical abuse** – bruising, burning, shaking, beating.
-  **Emotional abuse** – depriving a child of love warmth, and attention, yelling or belting, ‘picking on’ a child.
-  **Neglect** - failure to provide basic necessities of life – adequate diet, medical care, clothing.
-  **Sexual abuse** - incest, rape, fondling, ‘flashing’ and other sexual activity.

The definition of a “child” & the age of consent

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child describes a child as a human being under the age of eighteen but local laws take precedence.
- In Australia, the definition of “child” varies from State to State and has relevance to child protection.
- The age of consent to sex differs between jurisdictions.

Definitions OHT 19

	Hetero- sexual	Homo- sexual	Notes
ACT	16	16	Children 10-16 can legally have sex with mutual consent if the age difference is no more than 2 years.
VIC	16	16	Children 10-16 can legally have sex with mutual consent if the age difference is no more than 2 years.
TAS	17	17	
SA	17	17	The age of consent is 17, but two 16 year-olds in a sexual relationship do not commit a crime.
WA	16	16	
NT	16	18 (m)	No law applies to female homosexual age of consent.
QLD	16	18 (m)	No law applies to female homosexual age of consent.
NSW	16	16	

Professional development materials

Current jurisdictional arrangements in relation to child protection

Please Note

Although some special legislative provisions apply to non-government schools which enable them to work within the policies of a particular church or religious code (and those of related agencies), non-government schools also operate within a clear regulatory and policy context which makes them accountable for the safety and well-being of all their students.

It is expected that representatives of non-government school authorities, boards or other governance bodies will ensure that the National Safe Schools Framework materials are located within the context of their school and/or systemic imperatives.

Overview of child protection arrangements in government schools

	ACT	NSW	VICTORIA	TASMANIA	SA	WA	NT	QLD
Mandatory reporting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Reporting procedures	Staff must inform school principal who must notify Family Services.	Staff report through the principal to DoCS.	Teachers report directly to the DHS.	All employees & volunteers report known or suspected abuse or neglect to Dept of Health and Human Services through principal or individually.	All persons working in care and education environments report directly to the statutory child protection service.	Staff report through principal. If allegation is against the principal, the relevant District Director is advised.	Teachers report to Family & Community Services.	Staff report through the principal.
Police checks	New staff and student teachers checked for criminal convictions by the AFP.	Police checks for new school staff and student teachers. Information relates to criminal charges Australia-wide (proven, dismissed, withdrawn or discharged).	Police checks for new school staff. Only “disclosable court outcomes” are available to the Department. First year student teachers subject to “Restricted” police checks. Individual school councils decide whether to check volunteers.	Police checks of new teaching staff (sex offence reports and convictions). Teachers employed previously now being scanned. Teachers checked before promotion. All student teachers undergo checks before practicum.	All new teachers undergo a South Australian Police check that is limited to criminal convictions. Student teachers are not required to undertake screening.	All new staff are police cleared. Universities ensure that student teachers are police cleared before they start practicum.	New school staff and student teachers commencing Year 3 are subjected to police checks. Restricted to criminal convictions within the last decade and sex offences committed at any time.	New teachers undergo criminal history checks. Paid or voluntary workers “other than teachers or parents” (including pre-service teachers) require a “working with children (criminal history) check”.
Child protection training or professional development	Child Protection Contact Officers must undertake mandatory reporting training.	Initial one hour training for school managers and staff, followed by annual updates for all staff. Additional training for staff with specific child protection roles.	Training is compulsory for all school staff.	Not yet available but staff are made aware of the protocol “Sharing responsibility” which sets out child protection information and procedures	Teachers complete a 7-hour mandatory reporting training session to obtain teacher registration.	Train the trainer model 2001 One staff member participated from each school to update all school personnel in child protection issues.	School principals are responsible for in-servicing new staff relating to child protection issues.	Reporting-related training provided for staff who have ongoing contact with school students.

	ACT	NSW	VICTORIA	TASMANIA	SA	WA	NT	QLD
Access to specialist support	Teachers can receive support from the Dept's Family Services Division.	Counsellors and welfare consultants may provide support and referrals to teachers who encounter abuse cases.	Student support service officers can support teachers who encounter abuse. Student welfare coordinators and principal class officers also perform the function.	Teachers are offered support by social workers and psychologists employed in District Support Services.	Teachers have access to counselling services.	School psychological services can liaise with other agencies as required.	Support is available from Employment Assistant Services, advisory teachers and/or senior staff or the sexual assault unit.	Policy states it is "advisable" to provide counselling and re-allocate duties as required.
Child protection curriculum	Individual schools decision. If schools use the <i>Protective Behaviours Program</i> , teachers are responsible for revising it. The <i>No Fear</i> program is also available.	Mandatory from kindergarten to Year 10 as part of the PDHPE curriculum. Parents must give written permission (annually) for primary students to attend.	The Department has a contract with the Children's Protection Society to provide training in <i>Protective Behaviours</i> .	Child protection school curriculum is optional, <i>Protective Behaviours</i> programs are conducted in some situations.	<i>Protective Behaviours</i> is an optional component of the core Health curriculum.	Health and Physical Education materials include <i>Protective Behaviours</i> .	Child protection curriculum is not specified, being covered mainly in health for adolescents at secondary level.	Policy supports child protection curriculum but resources are not provided. Programs used: - - <i>Protective Behaviours</i> - <i>Savvy Schools Kit</i> - <i>What if love hurts? Young people, relationships & violence</i>
Specialist child protection curriculum staff	No	Specialist teachers are employed.	No	Social Workers and Guidance Officers on request	A Child Protection curriculum officer is employed.	Training is offered by some teaching staff and police.	No.	No

National Trends

Mandatory reporting

In all states and territories except Queensland and Western Australia, teachers are required by law to report suspected cases of child sexual abuse and, in most states, all forms of child maltreatment directly to child protection authorities. In Queensland and Western Australia school staff report through the principal. In some States, non-teaching staff, visiting professionals and volunteers are also included in mandatory reporting legislation.

Reporting procedures

All jurisdictions have developed policies and /or guidelines to support reporting. Procedures differ in their complexity. Some teachers are required to report to school principals. Some jurisdictions require schools to develop their own protocols and procedures.

Police checks

Teachers

All jurisdictions require new teachers to undergo police checks. Non-teaching staff and teachers employed prior to the introduction of screening may escape this.

Some Teacher Registration Boards now require police checks prior to registration. Some jurisdictions use local police and others use CrimTrack. Basic local police checks are limited to criminal convictions. Most jurisdictions recognise this as inadequate.

Student teachers

All jurisdictions except South Australia require student teachers to undergo police checks prior to practicum. Students receive proof of clearance. These are usually limited to three to four years or the duration of the course.

Child protection training/professional development

All jurisdictions recognise the importance of in-service education in child protection, but most programs concentrate on legislation and procedures and do not include a focus on understanding child maltreatment, its effects and the needs of victims.

Access to specialist support

The availability of specialist support for teachers and victims varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Most referred to student counsellors but they are not readily available in the primary education sector. Other help is available from human resource and district support staff or psychological consultants

Child protection curriculum

Most jurisdictions recognise the importance of child protection curriculum for developing safety knowledge and safety strategies. The 1978 Wisconsin *Protective Behaviours*  program is the most frequently used program nationwide. Child protection curriculum is mandatory in NSW State schools.

 *The South Australian Catholic Education Office, which was one of the first jurisdictions to adopt this program in 1985, is currently reviewing the implementation of the program to assess its current needs.*

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

Some jurisdictions employ a child protection curriculum officer to train and support teachers and ensure that child protection curriculum is taught conscientiously and consistently.

Independent Schools

Independent schools are dependent in part on the legislative and curriculum requirements of particular states and territories (see relevant state/territory summary for more detail). They are also subject to the varying roles and levels of support available through the Associations of Independent Schools.

Mandatory reporting

Varies.

The legislation of the state or territory in which the school is located determines whether staff are required to report suspicions/cases of child abuse or neglect.

Reporting procedures

Procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect vary between state and territories depending on the relevant legislation. In some schools, staff have to report incidents to senior staff, the Ombudsman or to the Commission for Children and Young People.

Police checks

Police checks on school personnel also vary from state to state. In most, only new staff are checked. Volunteers and others who have unsupervised access to children may be checked in some jurisdictions.

Basic police checks only provide information relating to criminal convictions but, in some states, there is provision for collecting information about prosecutions and charges for sex offences where no conviction was recorded.

Higher-level suitability checks for non-teaching staff can include past employers.

Child protection training/professional development

In states with mandatory reporting, school staff may be required to undertake child protection reporting training. In others, it is “a matter for school staff to determine”. Some Associations of Independent Schools provide professional development programs for child protection.

Access to specialist support

Teachers in independent schools do not always have access to specialist counselling following the reporting of child abuse. One Association of Independent Schools employs a contractor to provide an Employee Assistance Program. Another refers teachers to agencies such as their union. Teachers are generally dependent on counsellors and school chaplains to provide support when they encounter angry or sexualised behaviours in child victims.

Child protection curriculum

The inclusion of child protection curriculum varies from school to school. Parent participation in programs “depends on the individual school”.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

Specialist child protection curriculum staff are not generally employed in the independent sector. Some Associations of Independent Schools provide support through representation on curriculum working parties.

Additional information is supplied below in relation to Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland

Victoria

Victorian independent schools are subject to regulation covering all areas of their operations. Schools are required to report under, or comply with, the provisions of a range of federal legislation including:

- Trade Practices Act 1974
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Privacy Act 1988
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Workplace Relations Act 1996
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
- Education Services for Overseas Students 2000

Victorian independent schools also report under, or comply with, the provisions of a range of state legislation including:

- Education Act 1958
- Health Act 1958
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985
- Health Services Act 1988
- Children and Young Persons Act 1989
- Disability Services Act 1991
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995
- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001
- Health Records Act 2001

In order to become registered as a school in Victoria, independent schools must meet legislative requirements related to:

- Student enrolments.
- Teacher registration.
- Building certification.
- Sanitary and other conveniences
- Safety.

All independent schools are also subject to the provisions of the Health Act 1958 (Vic). Under existing legislation all independent schools are required to have Emergency Management Plans and Critical Incident Plans. In addition, under existing legislation all independent schools are required to have policies in relation to student welfare and behaviour management.

Continuing registration of an independent school is reliant on the school's capacity to satisfy the requirements of the cyclical review process undertaken by the Registered Schools Board.

All teachers employed in Victorian independent schools are required to be registered with Victorian Institute of Teaching. VIT grants Permission To Teach in independent schools to employees engaged as an 'instructor', specialist instructor (eg Instrumental Music) or Casual Relief Teacher and to anyone enrolled in an approved course that will be completed within two years.

South Australia

Independent schools are subject to the following state legislation:

- Education Act (1972) - sections on teachers registration and non-government schools registration.
- Child Protection Act (1993) - mandatory reporting requirements.
- Equal Opportunity Act (1984)
- OHS&W Act (1986)
- Racial Vilification Act (1996)

Under the requirements for school registration schools are required to demonstrate adequate protection for the safety and welfare of students.

The Teachers' Registration Board requires that new teachers seeking registration undertake a police screening check. Police checks are also used by many schools as part of the selection process for all teachers and other staff. Other screening procedures are also used for volunteers.

The Association of Independent Schools South Australia (AISSA) has distributed a Student Protection Kit to member schools outlining a range of child protection preventative strategies. It also conducts a diverse range of seminars on such topics as anti-bullying strategies, handling critical incidents etc.

Independent schools are required to meet obligations relating to Federal legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act, Anti Discrimination Act, Racial Discrimination Act, and the Privacy Act.

Western Australia

The legislation for Teacher Registration is currently before Parliament and will require teacher screening. This should come into force in 2004.

School Registration guidelines require schools to have appropriate policies in place.

Re-registration guidelines for existing schools are being developed and will require appropriate policies to be in place and refer to documents of the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA) as suitable examples.

In Western Australia there is currently no child protection legislation and no requirement for mandatory reporting. AISWA has prepared draft policy on child protection. As child protection legislation is likely to be developed the situation will change.

Queensland

The following legislation in Queensland impacts on independent schools:

- The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000.
- The Education (Accreditation of Non-state Schools) Act 2001.
- Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988.
- Education (General provisions) Act 1986.
- Child Protection Act 1999.

In addition the Association of Independent Schools Queensland (AISQ) provides advice to schools and professional development regarding policies and procedures they need to have in place in their schools to comply with these regulations.

ACT

ACT Department of Education and Community Services

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

When staff encounter child abuse, they must inform the school principal who must notify Family Services. Failure to report can incur a penalty of 50 units (\$5000) or 6 months imprisonment.

Police checks

New staff and student teachers are checked for criminal convictions by the Australian Federal Police in accordance with the ACT Spent Convictions Act 2002 and the Commonwealth Spent Convictions Scheme. The university facilitates this by distributing application forms to students undertaking teaching practice in state schools. The Department pays the fee. When students have been “cleared” they receive a card which must be presented to the principal prior to commencing practicum.

Child protection training/professional development

Contact Officers must undertake mandatory reporting training.

Access to specialist support

Teachers who report abuse can receive support from the Department’s Family Services Division.

Child protection curriculum

Individual schools decide whether to include child protection/personal safety education in the school curriculum. If the 1978 American Protective Behaviours Program is used, teachers are responsible for revising it. Some special schools use Protective Behaviours with children with disabilities. The “No fear” program is also available. Schools decide whether parents are involved.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

The ACT Department of Education employs an equity, gender, anti-sexual harassment and anti-racism officer but there is no specialist for child protection.

Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Education Office

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

All school staff are advised that they should report cases to the principal of the school in which the child is enrolled who, in turn, must notify the Department of Education and Community Services, the Director of the Catholic Education Office, the Department of Children’s Services (NSW) or the Department of Family Services (ACT) and Centacare.

Police checks

New and long term staff and student teachers must have police checks using the NSW Commission for Children and Young People “Working with Children Check” and the “Prohibited Employment Declaration” ACT.

Child protection training/professional development

Staff are trained for their reporting role using "*Child Abuse Guidelines*" (1995) which are currently being revised to cater for recent changes in ACT/NSW legislation.

Access to specialist support

Human Resource Officers, school principals and a Centacare assigned school counsellor can provide support for teachers who encounter abuse.

Child protection curriculum

The 1978 American Protective Behaviours program was adopted by for use in systemic schools in the early 1990's.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

A child protection curriculum officer is employed.

NSW

New South Wales Department of Education and Training

Mandatory reporting

Yes

Reporting procedures

Procedures for reporting are laid down in the *Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987*:

- (a) Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised Procedures;
- (b) Handling Allegations Against DET Employees in the Area of Child Protection (January 2003).

Education and training personnel report concerns about risk of harm as it is defined in the Act through the principal (or Director for non-school based staff; or through the Executive Officer for TAFE and other sectors) to the Department of Community Services (DoCS) via the DoCS Helpline.

Police checks

The New South Wales Department of Education and Training requires intensive police checks for new school staff and student teachers (but not for staff employed before the introduction of police checks). Under the NSW Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, a criminal record for the purposes of child-related employment screening includes an offence involving sexual activity, indecency, child abuse, and/or child pornography. Information relates to criminal charges Australia-wide ('whether or not heard, proven or dismissed, withdrawn or discharged'). A person with a conviction for a sex offence is banned from child-related employment.

Child protection training/professional development

School managers and staff undergo an initial one hour about their responsibilities followed by annual updates for all staff. Additional training is provided for staff with specific child protection roles such as counsellors and welfare consultants.

Access to specialist support

Counsellors and welfare consultants may provide support and referrals to teachers who encounter abuse cases. Therapeutic support is also available through the Employee Assistance Program. Support personnel in districts and schools, including district guidance officers and substitute care coordinators, assist teachers dealing with the sexualised and angry behaviours of victims.

Child protection curriculum

Child protection curriculum is mandatory from kindergarten to Year 10 as part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum. Specialist teachers are employed and comprehensive, developmentally appropriate resources and lesson plans are provided (which have recently been revised). Staff must provide information to help children to recognise/report abuse and develop protective strategies. Although PDHPE is a core subject, parents must give written permission (annually) for primary students to attend child protection sessions, while parents of high school students have to be informed of sensitive aspects of the program. Materials and videos are provided to assist staff to conduct parent information meetings. Notes are available in 21 languages.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

Forty-six student welfare consultants, based in district offices across the state, have a broad support role.

Parramatta Catholic Education Office, NSW

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

A comprehensive formal reporting process is used outlined in the Parramatta CEO *Child Protection Kit* (see http://www.ceo.parra.catholic.edu.au/index_sta.htm).

Police checks

Since July 2000, applicants for employment have been subjected to a “working with children check” of criminal records. Long term employees must complete a Prohibited Employment declaration which states the person has not been convicted of a serious sex offence. Student teachers are also checked.

Child protection training/professional development

All staff have access to the CEO Child Protection Kit (available on-line) which contains policies, protocols, procedures and resources. Individual schools use it for training staff. In addition, there is training at the System level for principals and other executive staff to address legislation changes and updates to protocols and procedures.

Access to specialist support

The *Child Protection Kit* advises that counselling should be offered to the child and family. All school systems have pastoral care programs which may give a teacher access to a pastoral care coordinator, DoCS or the Marist Education Centre. The principal also has to monitor the well-being of staff who report abuse and make counselling available if necessary.

Child protection curriculum

Protective Behaviours is part of the Diocese’s child protection curriculum.

Wilcannia CEO (NSW)

Mandatory reporting

Yes

Reporting procedures

Teachers are mandated to report child abuse to the principal “and complete mandatory documentation”.

Police checks

New staff are checked.

Child protection training/professional development

All staff are trained to meet their reporting responsibilities.

Access to specialist support

Those who encounter abuse or young children exhibiting sexualised behaviours have access to professional support or counselling through the Catholic Education Office.

Child protection curriculum

Protective Behaviours is the approved curriculum.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

A specialist child protection curriculum officer is employed.

Victoria

Department of Education and Training

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

Teachers are obliged to report child abuse directly to the Department of Human Services.

Police checks

New school staff are required to undergo police checks for both Department of Education and Training and Catholic Education Office schools in Victoria. Long-term employees escape this requirement until they are promoted. Only “disclosable court outcomes” are available to the Department. First year student teachers must also submit to “Restricted” police checks. Clearance is limited to the duration of the course. A more comprehensive check is undertaken when graduates seek employment in the Department. Universities provide application forms which students must send to police. The university retains copies of police clearance. Students pay a small fee for this service. Individual school councils decide whether volunteers are checked.

Child protection training/professional development

Training is compulsory for all Department of Education and Training school staff. The “Safe from Harm” resource was developed with DHS to assist teachers in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

Access to specialist support

The Department of Education and Training employs student support service officers who can support teachers who encounter abuse. Student welfare coordinators and principal class officers also perform the function. Each region has an Emergency Management Team. Individual schools develop protocols, procedures, documentation and training. Department of Human Services and Department of Education and Training student support services, principal class officers and child protection case-workers may assist when teachers have to deal with sexualised behaviour in children/victims.

Child protection curriculum

The Department has a contract with the Children’s Protection Society to provide Protective Behaviours, concentrating on assertiveness training and anti-bullying. The Society does not claim to use the program to prevent or protect children from sexual abuse.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

No

Victorian Catholic Education Office

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

The Victorian Catholic Education Office requires all schools to have policies and practices in place that must incorporate processes laid down by the Department of Human Services.

Police checks

A criminal record check is compulsory for:

- every new employee of Catholic schools in Victoria;
- current employees taking up employment with a different employer in a new role (teachers, school officers, school services officers and staff of Catholic Education Offices);
- current employees being promoted or appointed to a position of leadership, including Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Level Coordinator, School Counsellor, or any position involving one-to-one contact with students; and
- teachers undertaking emergency teaching.

A criminal record check for additional categories of people involved with the school community is a matter for schools to determine on an individual basis.

Child protection training/professional development

A series of documents published by the Child Protection Unit of the Victorian Department of Human Services provides background information and guidance for professionals mandated by Victorian legislation about teachers' legal responsibilities to report child abuse and neglect, and how to recognise and respond to child abuse.

A professional development course run over three half day sessions, entitled *Keeping Children Safe from Harm - Child Protection Issues* is offered to all teachers with a particular focus on graduate teachers, teachers from another state or overseas, teachers returning from an extended absence, teachers and/or principals who have not participated in a professional development program of this nature within the last four years.

Access to specialist support

A recommended practice is to establish an Advisory Group consisting of the principal and one or two key personnel whose role is to discuss any concerns and observations. The Advisory Group (see above) may have a role in providing this support.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Education Department

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

The Department's document "Guidelines regarding alleged abuse of students by employees of the Department of Education" was updated by the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 and the State Services Act 2000 and provides reporting guidelines. The Sharing Responsibility protocol between the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services outlines the requirements for DoE employees and volunteers in schools to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Child Protection Advice and Referral Service, DHHS.

Police checks

Police checks are made on teaching and ancillary staff and involve a search for reports of sex offences as well as convictions. Teachers employed before the introduction of checking are now being scanned under the Teacher Registration process. Teachers also undergo checks before promotion.

All student teachers undergo checks before practicum. Students have to produce evidence of clearance before they visit a school.

Child protection training/professional development

Child protection in-service education is not yet available but staff are made aware of the protocol "Sharing Responsibility" which sets out child protection information and procedures

Access to specialist support

Teachers are offered support by District Support Service staff. When teachers encounter sexualised behaviour in young victims (etc) support is available from social workers and guidance officers (psychologists) employed within District Support Services.

Child protection curriculum

Child protection school curriculum is optional, usually restricted to 'feeling safe' in primary school. Parents are not involved. "Protective Behaviours" programs are conducted in some situations. The curriculum focus is on the development of resilience and assertive behaviour, connectedness with adults and communications skills.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

Social Workers and Guidance Officers on request.

Tasmania: Hobart Catholic Education Office

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

Teachers must report child maltreatment to the principal who reports to the Director of Catholic Education who, in turn, reports to Intake and Assessment.

Police checks

Police checks are required for student teachers and new staff but "deal only with criminal convictions".

Child protection training/professional development

The CEO offers in-service education relating to policies, legislation and the management of cases of abuse.

Access to specialist support

Teachers can access counselling via the CEO.

Child protection curriculum

The program *MindMatters* is used in schools; parents are not involved.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

A curriculum officer has responsibilities for child safety curriculum.

South Australia

Department of Education and Children's Services

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

All persons working in care and education environments (whether paid or voluntary) are required to report suspicions/disclosures of child abuse and neglect directly to the statutory child protection service. School principals are not involved in the investigation and the Child Protection Service is responsible for communicating with victims' parents. There is a financial penalty for failing to report.

Police checks

All new teachers undergo a South Australian Police check that is limited to criminal convictions. The jurisdictions are aware of the limitations of this given reports that only about 3% of reported child sex offenders are convicted in this state.

Student teachers are not required to undertake screening.

Child protection training/professional development

Teachers must undergo an initial 7-hour mandatory reporting training session to obtain teacher registration.

Access to specialist support

Teachers have access to counselling services when they report cases of abuse. DECS employs school counsellors in all secondary schools and one third of primary schools.

Child protection curriculum

The Wisconsin *Protective Behaviours Program* is an optional component of DECS core Health curriculum. Parents are informed of children's participation in *Protective Behaviours*  but their permission is not sought. Parents are invited to help children in their choice of a network of trusted people.

 The use of the Protective Behaviours Program is currently under review .

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

DECS currently employs a Child Protection curriculum officer.

South Australian Catholic Education Office

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

All persons working in care and education environments (whether paid or voluntary) are required to report suspicions/disclosures of child abuse and neglect directly to the statutory child protection service.

Police checks

All new teachers undergo a South Australian Police check that is limited to criminal convictions. The jurisdictions are aware of the limitations of this given reports that only about 3% of reported child sex offenders are convicted in this state.

Student teachers are not required to undertake screening.

Child protection training/professional development

CEO and DECS teachers must undergo an initial 7-hour mandatory reporting training session to obtain teacher registration.

Access to specialist support

Teachers have access to counselling services when they report cases of abuse.

Child protection curriculum

The CEO uses *Protective Behaviours*[👏] as well as its own curriculum: *Family Life* (R-12) and *Health and Personal Development Units*. It offers parent information sessions and parental agreement is needed for children's participation in programs.

👏 The use of the Protective Behaviours Program is currently under review.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

No.

Western Australia

Western Australia

Western Australian Department of Education and Training

Mandatory reporting

No. There is no specific legislative requirement, however, it is deemed to be a lawful order under the Public Sector Management Act 1994 for staff members of all schools to report instances of disclosures, signs and allegations of abuse, neglect and sexual contact.

Reporting procedures

All school staff have a responsibility to act if they have concerns or knowledge that abuse or neglect may be occurring. The Department's Child Protection Policy states that staff must report to the principal instances of student disclosure of abuse or neglect from someone with a responsibility to care for the student; signs of abuse or neglect from someone with a responsibility to care for the student; allegations of sexual contact by staff; and disclosure or discovery of sexual contact with another student. Instances involving the principal must be reported directly to the District Director. Upon receipt of such a report, the principal or District Director must notify Student Services and initiate appropriate actions from the following: contact parents; implement behaviour management strategies; establish case management process; report to Department of Community Services; report to police; and report to District Director/Executive Director. Under some circumstances it will be more appropriate for the principal or District Director to initiate actions prior to notifying student services. The principal undertakes further action in consultation with parents/caregivers, appropriate personnel and/or agencies.

Police checks

Since 1997, all applicants for any employment teaching and non-teaching with the Department of Education and Training (DET), are required to provide a police clearance as part of their application. Any person who has a conviction for sexual offences against children is not considered for employment.

Trainee teachers are required to provide a police clearance to DET prior to undertaking practice teaching. Other persons required to provide police clearances include those "working for the dole" and contract cleaners. Persons entering school sites temporarily to undertake maintenance, minor repairs, voluntary work, visiting performers etc, must complete and sign a Criminal Convictions Declaration.

Permanent staff who have been promoted, and Public Service Staff transferring to School Education Act Staff, must now provide a police clearance prior to taking up their new position. It is proposed to require all staff transferring from one school to another to provide a police clearance.

Child protection training/professional development

District office Student Services staff were trained to train school staff in 2001/2002. A minimum of one administrative staff member per school in each of the education districts were required to attend a one day training program in order to understand the Child Protection Policy and its implications. These people were required to undertake awareness raising for all their staff, teaching and non-teaching in their specific schools.

Access to specialist support

The Child Protection Policy requires any staff member to report concerns about any child protection issues to the Principal. In turn, Principals are required to consult District Student Services team to confirm appropriate actions. Advice is provided to the school by the Director, Schools and Services, as to how the case should be managed and which agencies/government departments to consult.

As an outcome of the Gordon Inquiry, a number of support strategies have been implemented across the State to support and protect Aboriginal children from abusive behaviours.

Child protection curriculum

The Health and Physical Education Learning Outcomes and curriculum materials provide students with the opportunity to develop the essential knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will enable them to manage their personal safety. Other materials include Protective Behaviours, and Growing and Developing Healthy Relationship (Departments of Health and Education and Training).

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

No

Western Australian Catholic Education Office

Mandatory reporting

No.

Reporting procedures

Although teachers are not mandated by law to report child abuse and neglect, the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia's policy requires them to report disclosures/strong concerns to the principal who relays them to the Department of Community Development and/or the Police. The policy states that principals should develop procedures for the school's Child Protection Policy, for example, Notification Steps.

Police checks

All staff and student teachers are checked by Australian Federal Police using the MCEETYA National Check Employment Status Categories 1-3.

Access to specialist support

The school is responsible for providing support for teachers who report child abuse. Psychological services may assist a teacher who is dealing with victims' sexualised or angry behaviours.

Child protection curriculum

The Education Department's Health Protection Package is used in some CEO schools.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

No.

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Education Department

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Reporting procedures

Teachers must make reports to Family & Community Services as shown in the *Schools Policy Handbook*.

Police checks

New school staff and student teachers commencing Year 3 are subjected to police checks. These are restricted to criminal convictions within the last decade and sex offences committed at any time.

Child protection training/professional development

School principals are responsible for in-servicing new staff relating to child protection issues.

Access to specialist support

When teachers encounter abuse, support is available from the Employment Assistant Services, advisory teachers and/or senior staff or by the sexual assault unit.

Child protection curriculum

Child protection curriculum is not specified, being covered mainly in health for adolescents at secondary level.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

No.

Northern Territory Catholic Education Office

Mandatory reporting

Yes.

Queensland

Queensland Department of Education

Mandatory reporting

No.

Reporting procedures

While there is no mandatory reporting legislation for teachers, there is a notification expectation in Education Queensland Policy HS 17 (2000). All employees are required to report to the principal of the school, information that suggests that a student has suffered harm or may require protection from harm from external causes. If the principal reasonably suspects that the child is in need of protection, s/he must report the matter to the local office of the Department of Families, and to the Queensland Police Service if there is evidence of criminal conduct involved.

Alternatively, employees may contact the Department of Families directly. Employees are advised not to undertake investigations beyond satisfying themselves that they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has been, or is at risk of harm.

Where suspected physical or sexual harm involves an employee and urgent action is needed, contact should be made with the Criminal Justice Commission, Complaints Section. The staff member reporting should also report to police, the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care and the CJC Liaison officer as soon as practicable.

Police checks

The *Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988* requires that new teachers are registered and undergo criminal history checks. Information is made available relating to “Convictions and charges that may have been laid against the person, no matter when they occurred”. When a relevant criminal record is found, additional information is sought to facilitate a full assessment. Established teachers are not retrospectively checked.

The *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000 (QLD)* requires a “working with children (criminal history) check” for paid or voluntary workers “other than teachers or parents”. Pre-service teachers are classed as volunteers.

Child protection training/professional development

The Department provides reporting-related training for staff who have ongoing contact with school students. Senior Guidance Officers and numbers of guidance staff have been trained in the use of the child protection training package and some have delivered training to schools. Schools are encouraged to include volunteers and other staff in training sessions.

Access to specialist support

When teachers encounter abuse, Education Queensland policy states that it is “advisable” for educational institutions to provide counselling and re-allocate duties as required. All schools have access to guidance officers to support staff and victims. Additional support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Behaviour management staff, student welfare and guidance officers and nurses can assist teachers who encounter sexual behaviours in child victims.

Child protection curriculum

The Child Protection Policy supports the implementation of child protection curriculum but resources are not provided. The following programs are used: *Protective Behaviours*, *The Savvy Schools Kit* (to raise community awareness of family violence) and “*What if love hurts – Young people, relationships and violence*” (a Queensland family violence video for adolescents aged 15 and over). The Policy recognises the importance of involving parents as participants in programs but this is left to individual schools.

Specialist child protection curriculum staff

No.

Queensland Catholic Education Commission

There are 26 separate providers of Catholic Education in Queensland – five independent Catholic diocesan authorities and multiple independent Religious Institute Schools. The QCEC is not a school employing authority.

Mandatory reporting

No.

Reporting procedures

Although Queensland has no mandatory reporting legislation for teachers, Catholic employers must, under the non-state school accreditation regulation, have in place a reporting process.

Police checks

The *Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988* requires that new teachers are registered and undergo criminal history checks. Information is made available relating to “Convictions *and charges* that may have been laid against the person, no matter when they occurred”. When a relevant criminal record is found, additional information is sought to facilitate a full assessment. Established teachers are not retrospectively checked.

The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000 (QLD) requires a “working with children (criminal history) check” for paid or voluntary workers “other than teachers or parents”. Pre-service teachers are classed as volunteers.

Child protection training/professional development

The QCEC is currently working on a draft document, “Manual – Student Protection”.

If this is adopted, all aspects of child protection will be covered. Each Catholic employing authority will have access to a ‘Student Child Protection Officer’ who will assist principals in ensuring that procedures are followed.

Child protection curriculum

Child protection curriculum is left to individual schools. Programs will be recommended in a new manual. Authorities adopting the manual will ask schools to document what is being done to assist parents to have knowledge and skills across the range of behaviours.

Professional development materials

Current jurisdictional arrangements in relation to bullying, harassment and violence

Please Note

Although some special legislative provisions apply to non-government schools which enable them to work within the policies of a particular church or religious code (and those of related agencies), non-government schools also operate within a clear regulatory and policy context which makes them accountable for the safety and well-being of all their students.

It is expected that representatives of non-government school authorities, boards or other governance bodies will ensure that the National Safe Schools Framework materials are located within the context of their school and/or systemic imperatives.

Overview of bullying, harassment and violence responses in government schools

	ACT	NSW	VICTORIA	TASMANIA	SA	WA	NT	QLD
Policy	Student Management and Welfare in ACT Government Schools	Good Discipline and Effective Learning, Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations; & Supporting Children and Young People.	School policies - Behaviour Management and Supportive School Environment, determined by School Council.	Supportive School Community Policy Framework. Anti-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Support Materials	A 'behaviour code' is required of each school, Identifies rights & responsibilities of students, details grievance procedures.	Each school has a Behaviour Management Policy	Schools develop policy on bullying, sexual harassment and violence within department's Behaviour Framework.	Management of Behaviour in a Supportive School Environment: Schools and Discipline
Intervention	Early intervention and prevention strategies promoted. Specialised educational, psychological and student welfare support services available.	A comprehensive system of support exists for schools to manage bullying incidents and to resolve concerns. This includes the School Response Unit.	The training of students as Peer Supporters or Mediators strongly promoted.	Schools are encouraged to provide or access training for students as peer supporters, peer mediators, peacekeepers.	Schools are encouraged to access training for students as peer mediators, peacekeepers.	The training of students in peer mediation and peer support encouraged.	Training of peer supporters is encouraged and staff members are trained as mediators.	Funds are provided to districts for programs that respond to local needs and the particular needs of individual students.
Training/PD	PD available eg mediation, conflict resolution & restorative justice.	District personnel provide - Peer Mediation & setting up of student anti-bullying committees.	PD about bullying and harassment occurs within annual pupil-free days.	Behaviour Support Team, District Support Service provide PD. Schools also organize own PD.	Schools arrange for PD as needed. A train-the-trainer manual is being developed to support a whole-school approach to managing bullying, harassment and violence.	Available to all schools from District Offices.	Full day in-service to deal with bullying and harassment offered.	Funds are provided to districts for programs that respond to local needs and the particular needs of individual students.

Curriculum	Gender & race-based harassment addressed in curriculum. Pro-active approaches emphasised.	Relevant skills, understandings and values are taught in PDHPE. Bullying and harassment is a strong component within child protection education.	Via Health and Personal Development curriculum. Activities, lesson plans available through the Victorian Anti-bullying Website.	<i>Essential Learnings</i> curriculum materials developed for use in Studies of Society and Environment to address issues of inclusion and disability.	Included in the curriculum areas of Health and Personal Development, Society and Environment and Languages.	The Curriculum Framework makes core shared values explicit and includes concepts in the overarching learning outcomes that are applicable to all students.		Range of materials available to address discrimination & issues relating to gender, race, sexuality, socio-economic status.
Specialist staff	Anti-harassment and anti-racism contact officers in every school.	Student support teams in districts, including specialist behaviour teachers.	Student Welfare Officers in all secondary schools; 200 secondary school nurses; Students Support Services Officers in regions; a new initiative will place Student welfare Officers in primary schools.	Behaviour Support Team and District Support Services.	Behaviour consultants support students who persistently act aggressively.	District Officers case manage 'at risk' students.	School based police in high schools & service feeder primary schools.	300 behaviour management support staff are based in district offices to support schools.

Current jurisdictional arrangements in relation to bullying, harassment and violence

National Trends

There appear to be consistent approaches among educational jurisdictions, both government and non-government, to preventing and responding to issues of bullying, harassment and violence in schools. Written advice has been provided to schools, which are expected to develop appropriate policies. They are also encouraged to obtain information about the nature and incidence of bullying and harassment (through, for example, the use of questionnaires) and to include relevant content in the curriculum. In general, the training of school staff, students and parents in countering bullying is encouraged and advice, resources and services are provided to this end.

Independent Schools

In general, documents exist providing written advice on how abusive behaviour in school may be addressed, for example the *Racism No Way* kit and the *Bullying No Way* website. The overarching outcomes and agreed values of the curriculum frameworks in most states imply the need for content relating to bullying and harassment. *Mind Matters* and *Program Achieve* are examples of programs associated with the development of resilience and optimism among people as an antidote to involvement in bully/victim problems. School boards provide a valuable focus for parent and community involvement.

ACT

ACT Department of Education and Community Services

Policy

Student Management and Welfare in Act Government Schools

Intervention

Early intervention and prevention strategies promoted. Specialised educational, psychological and student welfare support services available.

Training/professional development

There is provision for teacher training as part of professional development in methods of countering bullying and harassment, for example, through mediation, conflict resolution and restorative justice.

Curriculum

Gender and race-based harassment are addressed in the school curriculum. Schools are encouraged to form partnerships with parent and community group, "Schools as communities" being a major group that promotes the benefits of these linkages. The use of proactive approaches to countering discrimination is emphasised.

Specialist staff

Anti-harassment and anti-racism contact officers are present in every school.

Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Education Office

Policy

Bullying and harassment are addressed by a Behaviour Management Policy within an overarching Pastoral Care Policy.

Intervention

In dealing with incidents, it is recommended that aggressive students be counselled and their behaviour modified and monitored using individualised management strategies. Where parents believe that their child is being bullied at school, it is expected that the school will involve the parents at all stages in the resolution of the matter.

Curriculum

The curriculum includes content that aims at increasing understanding and tolerance of differences of a racial, cultural, religious and special needs nature. It specifically addresses observed discriminatory attitudes and behaviours and provides protective behaviour skills for coping with threatening situations and assisting others.

Specialist staff

No.

NSW

New South Wales Department of Education and Training

Policy

Bullying is addressed in the Good Discipline and Effective Learning, Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations and Protecting Children and Young People policies.

Intervention

A comprehensive system of support exists for schools to manage bullying incidents and to resolve concerns. The School Response Unit has been established to provide advice and support in the management of violent incidents.

Training/professional development

Specific training in addressing problems of bullying and harassment. District personnel provide relevant training using a Peer Mediation Training Kit and advise in the setting up of student anti-bullying committees.

Curriculum

Relevant skills, understandings and values are taught in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) which is mandatory from Kindergarten to Year 10. Bullying and harassment is a strong component within child protection education.

Specialist staff

Student support teams in districts including behavioural specialist teachers, provide direct assistance to schools.

New South Wales Catholic Education

Policy

Action relevant to countering bullying derives, in part, from policies on racial and sexual discrimination.

Intervention

Peer Support and peer mentoring are strongly encouraged, together with leadership camps. Schools are supported in applying principles of restorative justice, and parents may be involved in this process. Funding is being made available to support school anti-bullying campaigns.

Training/professional development

In-service assistance is available to help teachers work more effectively with students who are persistently aggressive. It is planned that in 2003 a system approach to counter bullying will be instituted and all principals will be appropriately in-serviced.

Curriculum

Pastoral Care and a Religious Study Program (K-12) address these issues.

Specialist staff

No.

Victoria

Department of Education and Training

Policy

Bullying is addressed in school policies that relate to Behaviour Management and to Supportive School Environment. The School Council determines policy relating to student behaviour in consultation with the school community and parents are invited to become actively involved.

Intervention

The training of students in ways of dealing with conflict as Peer Supporters and/or Peer Mediators is strongly promoted.

Training/professional development

The education of school staff about bullying and harassment occurs within professional development sessions for which four pupil-free days are made available annually.

Curriculum

Guidelines encourage schools to provide teaching about bullying and harassment in the subject, Health and Personal Development. A wide range of activities including lesson plans are available for teachers through the Victorian Anti-bullying Website.

Specialist staff

No.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Education Department

Policy

Actions to counter bullying and harassment are guided by an overarching Supportive School Communities Policy Framework. Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Support Materials. Schools are encouraged to provide or access training for students as peer supporters, peer mediators or peacekeepers. Social skills and conflict resolution are taught as part of Essential Learnings Curriculum and/or as specific program interventions.

Training/professional development

Schools organize their own or use Behaviour Support Team or District Support Service staff to provide relevant professional development for teachers or whole school staff. Parents are sometimes involved in this learning and parents may also become involved in addressing bullying and harassment through their participation in School Councils and Parents and Friends Associations.

Curriculum

Essential Learnings such as Building and Maintaining Relationships, Maintaining Well Being and Valuing Diversity provide ample opportunity to educate all students about bullying and harassment issues in constructive ways. Schools are encouraged to explore bullying and violent behaviour through an understanding of basic attitudes, values and beliefs, for example, in relation to gender, sexuality, race, disability and physical appearance. Curriculum materials have been developed for use in Studies of Society and Environment to address issues of inclusion and disability.

Specialist staff

Behaviour Support Team and District Support Service staff.

Tasmanian Catholic Education Office

Policy

Schools are expected to have written policies addressing bullying, sexual harassment, racial harassment and violence. These are to fit within a Policy on a Supportive School Environment. Schools are encouraged to make use of student questionnaires to obtain information about the nature and incidence of bullying and harassment.

Intervention

Peer support and 'buddy' systems are promoted. Parents are encouraged to be involved in addressing bullying and harassment at 'parent nights' and sessions are provided by 'Mind Matters.'

Curriculum

The school curriculum includes content on protective behaviours and resilience. Project officers are available to assist teachers in dealing with cases of persistent student aggression.

Specialist staff

No.

South Australia

Department of Education and Children's Services

Policy

A 'behaviour code' is required of each school, consisting of a statement of the school community's values and expectations relating to student behaviour and its management. It identifies individual rights and social responsibilities of students and details grievance procedures that are available to students on their site. Parents are consulted in the course of its development.

Intervention

Schools are encouraged to access training for students as peer mediators or peacekeepers.

Training/professional development

Schools arrange for professional development as needed. A train-the-trainer manual is being developed to support a whole-school approach to managing bullying, harassment and violence.

Curriculum

Teaching about bullying and harassment is included in the curriculum areas of Health and Personal Development, Society and Environment and Languages.

Specialist staff

Behaviour consultants are available to support a school with students who persistently act aggressively.

South Australian Catholic Education Office

Policy

A strong emphasis is placed upon the development of personal responsibility among students and this offers direction for individual school policy development. Schools are expected to have anti-bullying policies and these are generally incorporated in a general Behaviour Management Policy. The use of questionnaires to obtain information about the nature and incidence of bullying is encouraged.

Intervention

Peer support and peer mediation are promoted.

Training/professional development

Professional Development sessions for staff and Parent Workshops are provided.

Curriculum

Content used in developing curricula to address bullying draws upon a range of publications in the area, for example, "Bullying, a whole school approach."

Specialist staff

Schools are encouraged to make use of outside services and programs.

Western Australia

Western Australian Department of Education and Training

Policy

The Behaviour Management Policy, requires the principal to develop, document and implement a School Behaviour Management Plan that promotes positive social relations and supportive learning environments. The school Behaviour Management Plan must be developed in consultation with the school community, including the School Council. All decisions relating to the management of student behaviour must be made according to principles or procedural fairness, be culturally sensitive and responsible to specific parent or student needs.

Schools must develop learning environments that are welcoming, supportive and safe, and convey ways in which individuals are valued and reflect expectations regarding behaviour. It must be an educational environment free of violence, coercion and discrimination and one that minimises the impact of disruptive behaviour. School communities are required to share responsibility for the maintenance of good order and personal safety with schools and encourage positive social participation and self-discipline. Effective teachers provide inclusive, flexible and relevant curriculum to address both social and academic learning outcomes. Schools initiate and maintain strong inter-agencies relationships for families.

Intervention

There are a number of intervention strategies, including individual behaviour management plans; consultation with parents, training of Student Services staff on Countering Bullying, the Behaviour Management and Discipline strategy; Building Inclusive Schools, Students at Educational Risk strategy; Social-Psychological Education Resource Centres, school based community Liaison Officers (Family Links); Pathways to Social and Emotional Development; 'Bullying No Way' website; Mind Matters, Racism No Way; and the employment of Aboriginal Education Officers in schools. Individual schools have developed and implemented specific strategies to address the needs of their students.

Training/professional development

Professional development, training and consultation is provided for all schools, by Central and District Offices Student Services Teams.

Curriculum

The Curriculum Framework defines inclusivity as providing all groups of students, irrespective of educational setting, with access to a wide and empowering range of knowledge, skills and values. The Framework makes core shared values explicit and includes concepts in the overarching learning outcomes that are applicable to all students.

Specialist staff

Schools are supported by District Office Student Services teams including School Psychologists, Social Workers and by school-based Student Services staff including nurses, chaplains and year coordinators to case manage 'at risk' students.

Western Australian Catholic Education Office

Policy

Written documents have been provided to schools indicating the jurisdictions general policy on bullying, sexual harassment, racial harassment and violence, for example, "Bullying and harassment in schools (students)." Schools are expected to produce a specific 'stand alone'

policy on bullying and harassment. The use of questionnaires to obtain relevant information from students, staff members and parents is encouraged.

Intervention

Schools are encouraged to provide or access training for students as peer supporters, peer mediators and membership of anti-bullying committees.

Training/professional development

A School Psychology Team provides central and school based PD for staff.

Curriculum

Content on bullying and harassment is included in religious education where emphasis is placed upon the dignity and worth of individuals. The subject of Drama is seen as lending itself to addressing these issues.

Specialist staff

School Psychology Team

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Education Department

Policy

It is expected that schools develop a written policy addressing bullying, sexual harassment and violence as part of a Behaviour Management Policy. This is to be done within an overarching Behaviour Framework provided by the jurisdiction.

Intervention

Training of peer supporters is encouraged and staff members are trained as mediators.

Training/professional development

Professional Development programmes are offered for schools in an effort to enable school staff to deal with bullying and harassment. Full day in-service is provided for schools. These focus on activities or issues of harassment and strategic solutions.

Specialist staff

School based police constables are placed in High Schools and Service feeder Primary Schools.

Queensland

Education Queensland

Policy

Management of Behaviour in a Supportive School Environment: Schools and Discipline

Intervention

Funds are provided to each district for executive directors and school principals to establish relevant programs and approaches that respond to local needs and the particular needs of individual students.

Training/professional development

Funds are provided to districts for programs that respond to local needs and the particular needs of individual students.

Curriculum

There is considerable emphasis upon addressing discriminatory behaviours in ways that produce sustainable long term change through a curriculum that addresses issues relating to social factors such as gender, race, sexuality and socio-economic status. A wide range of materials is being made available to schools. These include "Enough's enough! Sexual harassment and violence: a resource kit for primary schools" a resource which examines gendered violence and suggests action to counter such abuse.

Specialist staff

300 behaviour management support staff are based in district offices to support schools.

Queensland Catholic Education Office

Policy

Currently this jurisdiction is in the process of developing an approach to address all forms of abuse that may occur in schools under the general heading of 'harm to students.' A document in draft stage is called "Manual- Student Protection." The underlying concept is that students have a right to expect that their rights will be safeguarded in a Catholic school and that they will receive support in addressing any instance of harm suffered. Schools will be required to put in place a program of education for students in personal safety.

Training/professional development

Authorities adopting the draft manual will be asked to list what measures they have in place to prevent harm to students and what is being done to educate staff members in these matters.

Curriculum

See above.

Specialist staff

No.

Professional development materials

Action Research

OHT masters & reading

Action research

getting the best outcomes for learners and teachers

The workshop will

- ★ Provide an overview of action research
- ★ Encourage discussion about what it means for school practice.
- ★ Encourage discussion about the value of having people from all parts of the school community of views in the research process.
- ★ Identify key issues for action research project
- ★ Identify existing data sources and appropriate techniques
- ★ Develop an initial draft of an action research plan

What is action research?

Action research is a way of conducting research which combines action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time.

It does this by

- ★ using a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection; and

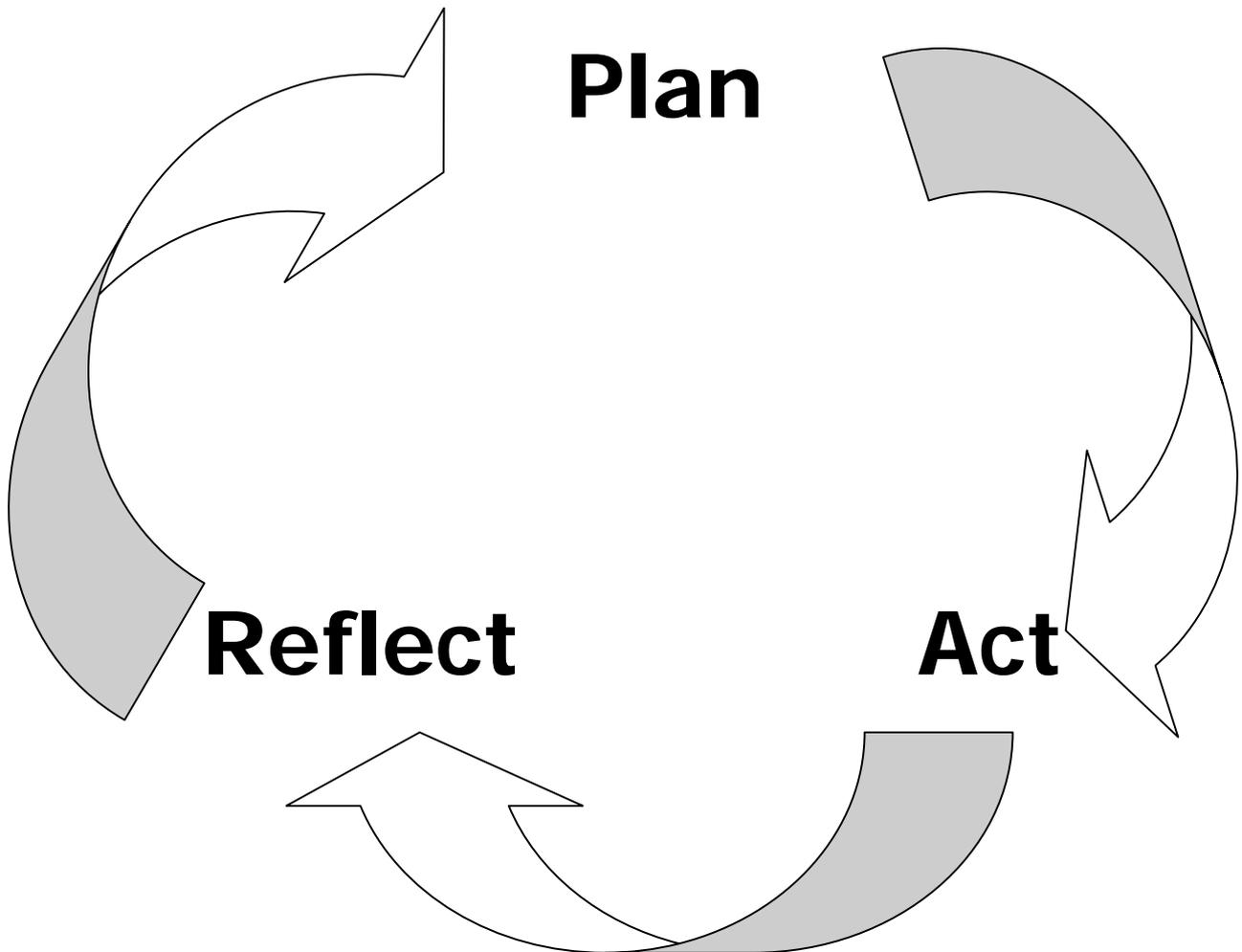
- ★ in the later cycles, continuously refining methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles.

It is thus a process which takes shape as understanding increases.

A better understanding of what is happening develops as the process unfolds.

The cycle of action research

Action and critical reflection take place in turn. Reflection is used to review the previous action and plan the next one.



Action research is participative

Action research is

- ★ participative (among other reasons, change is usually easier to achieve when those affected by the change are involved); and
- ★ qualitative.

Action learning and action research are closely related processes.

Action learning

A process in which a group of people come together more or less regularly to help each other to learn from their experience.

An action learning team may consist of people with a common task or problem. They may work with or without a facilitator.

Action research and experiential learning

- ★ Action research and action learning may be compared to experiential learning.
- ★ Experiential learning is a process for drawing learning from experience.
- ★ Action learning and action research are intended to improve practice.
- ★ Action research intends to introduce some change; action learning uses some intended change as a vehicle for learning through reflection.

The experiential learning cycle

- ★ At its simplest, it consists of two stages:

action → ***reflection***

in an ongoing series of cycles.

- ★ However, reflection leads to learning, which in turn leads to changed behaviour:

action → ***reflection*** → ***action***

- ★ Reflection is partly a critical review of the last action, and partly planning for what will happen next.

action → ***review
action*** → ***planning***

The role of “theory”

- ★ When we review, we can only make sense of the world in ways which build on our prior understanding.
- ★ In enhancing that understanding, we become better able to act on the world.
- ★ When we are acting, we often don't have the time to be deliberate about what we are doing.
- ★ The "theories" we draw on are intuitive theories.
- ★ In review and planning our theories can be made explicit.

What was that again?

Action research is a way of combining research and action which allows you to develop knowledge or understanding as part of putting ideas into practice.

It allows research to be done in situations where other research methods may be difficult to use. For instance, you may find it useful if...

- ★ or you wish to involve the people in the system being researched
- ★ or you wish to bring about change at the same time
- ★ or the situation is too ambiguous to frame a precise research question
- ★ or any combination of the preceding conditions.

It is a useful way of doing research if you are a practitioner who wishes to improve your understanding of your practice.

How does it work?

Action research usually proceeds like this.

- ★ The researcher, often involving clients as co-researchers, plans the first or next step. This is then carried out.
- ★ Researchers meet to recollect and critique their experience.
- ★ In the light of this, they decide what to do for the next step: what information do they need or what outcome to pursue, and what method to use.

In short, action research alternates between **action** and critical **reflection**.

The reflection consists of **analysing** what has already happened in previous steps, and then **planning** what next step to take.

An approach to action research/action learning

Effective action research:

- ★ Tries to work towards effective action through good processes and appropriate participation.
- ★ Tries to collect adequate data, and interpret it well.
- ★ Focuses on building relationships and clarifying roles with participants and clients.

An approach to action research/action learning

Methods of collecting and interpret data:

- ★ Uses an open-ended approach to data collection.
- ★ Uses of multiple and diverse data sources.
- ★ Uses a number of different data collection methods.
- ★ Uses a step by step process in which the later steps could be designed to take account of what was learned from the early steps.
- ★ Maintains a continuing focus on challenging the data and interpretations already collected.
- ★ “When there were apparent *agreements* between informants we deliberately sought *exceptions*; when there were *disagreements* we sought *explanations*.”

One-on-one interviews

- ★ At the start of each interview explain your role in some detail.
- ★ Make clear what use will be made of the data.
- ★ Explain that you will take pains to protect the identity of those interviewed when reporting.
- ★ Ask a simple direct question to begin (e.g. "Tell me about ...").
- ★ Use attentive listening, and other verbal and non-verbal signs of attention.
- ★ Towards the end of the interview it might be necessary to ask more specific questions.
- ★ During the interview listen for important themes.
- ★ For each theme identified, develop probe questions to explore the theme further in later interviews.

Focus group interviews

- ★ Plan in detail before group interviews.
- ★ Describe your role and the purpose of the interview.
- ★ Give guarantees about anonymity when possible, and explain what will be done with the information.
- ★ Ask people to reflect on the issue to be discussed and jot down some notes.
- ★ Follow with an unstructured discussion in which everyone is encouraged to speak.
- ★ During this discussion ask people to note down the emerging issues and collect them after the discussion.
- ★ Record the most important themes and issues and discuss further.
- ★ Ask and record the answers to the more specific questions which have not already been answered earlier in the focus group.

Use other data sources

- ★ Written accounts by participants about what they had learned from their experience.
- ★ Data already held by the school
- ★ Data held by other agencies.

A planned community participation activity

- ★ A process intended to achieve high levels of participation.
- ★ At each step, you need only enough information to decide the next step.
- ★ The process can go forward by informed trial and error.

Main phases

Phase 1: Preparatory work.

- ★ negotiating role
- ★ setting up working party

Phase 2: Defining the issues

- ★ Using interviewing and media to define the issues and inform all those who have a stake in the issues.

- ★ A series of meetings to:
 - define the issues which are most prominent for different groups

 - bring these to the attention of all stakeholders so that people develop an understanding of different needs and interests

Phase 3: Seeking common ground

- ★ bringing key stakeholders from different interest groups face to face; help them to reach decisions which, as far as possible, meet all needs and interests
- ★ maintain communication between the groups so that they are well informed and able to develop commitment to the decisions which are made.

Participative processes

Seven dimensions of participation

Four relate to the content of the situation:

- ★ providing data - the participants are informants.
- ★ interpreting data - the participants are interpreters.
- ★ planning change - the participants are planners and decision-makers.
- ★ Implementation - the participants are implementers.

Another two are part of the research process:

- ★ managing the process of data collection and interpretation - the participants are facilitators.
- ★ designing the overall study - the participants are researchers or co-researchers.

The seventh may be about process, or content, or both:

- ★ being kept informed about the study and its implications - the participants are recipients only.

Participative processes

On **each** dimension, there is a choice:

- ★ who is to participate?
 - some people have relevant information
 - it may not be feasible to involve everyone - you may need to choose.

- ★ to what extent are they to participate?
 - You might interview a small number of people, on several occasions, in depth.
 - Others might be interviewed only once.
 - Yet others may respond briefly to a written survey or the like.

information from interviews may be interpreted by a working party or reference group which is broadly similar to the community of stakeholders.

A beginner's guide to action research

Bob Dick

Action research consists of a family of research methodologies which pursue action and research outcomes at the same time. It therefore has some components which resemble consultancy or change agency, and some which resemble field research.

Conventional experimental research, for good reason, has developed certain principles to guide its conduct. These principles are appropriate for certain types of research; but they can actually inhibit effective change. Action research has had to develop a different set of principles. It also has some characteristic differences from most other qualitative methods.

Action research tends to be...

- cyclic -- similar steps tend to recur, in a similar sequence;
- participative -- the clients and informants are involved as partners, or at least active participants, in the research process;
- qualitative -- it deals more often with language than with numbers; and
- reflective -- critical reflection upon the process and outcomes are important parts of each cycle.

In fact, some writers insist on those characteristics.

To achieve action, action research is **responsive**. It has to be able to respond to the emerging needs of the situation. It must be flexible in a way that some research methods cannot be.

Action research is **emergent**. The process takes place gradually. Its cyclic nature helps responsiveness. It also aids rigour. The early cycles are used to help decide how to conduct the later cycles. In the later cycles, the interpretations developed in the early cycles can be tested and challenged and refined.

In most instances the use of qualitative information increases responsiveness. It is possible to work in natural language, which is easier for informants. There is no need to develop a metric (which may have to be abandoned later if it doesn't fit the emerging situation).

The use of language also makes the whole process more accessible to participants. They can develop enough understanding to become co-researchers in many situations.

One crucial step in each cycle consists of **critical reflection**. The researcher and others involved first recollect and then critique what has already happened. The increased understanding which emerges from the critical reflection is then put to good use in designing the later steps.

The cycle best known in Australia is probably that of Stephen Kemmis and his colleagues at Deakin University. The steps are:

plan --> act --> observe --> reflect (and then --> plan etc.)

The reflection leads on to the next stage of planning. The "planning" isn't a separate and prior step; it is embedded in the action and reflection. Short, multiple cycles allow greater rigour to be achieved.

As change is intended to result, effective action research depends upon the agreement and commitment of those affected by it. This is usually generated by involving them directly in the research process. In many instances, researchers try to involve them as equal partners.

Action research in more detail

I regard action research as a methodology which is intended to have both action outcomes and research outcomes. I recognise, too, that in some action research the research component mostly takes the form of understanding on the part of those involved. The action is primary. In distinction, there are some forms of action research where research is the main emphasis and the action is almost a fringe benefit.

I regard all of these as action research. This definition is capable of encompassing a variety of research and intervention methods. It is broad enough to include, as examples, the critical action research approach of Carr and Kemmis (1986), the soft systems methodology of Checkland (1981), and perhaps even the evaluation of Guba and Lincoln (1989), to name just a few.

The responsiveness of action research allows it to be used to develop hypotheses from the data, "on the run" as it were. It can therefore also be used as a research tool for investigative or pilot research, and generally for diagnosis or evaluation.

Cyclic, participative, qualitative

Most writers on the topic state or assume that action research is cyclic, or at least spiral in structure. To put this differently, certain more-or-less similar steps tend to recur, in more-or-less similar order, at different phases of an action research study. At the same time (so the action researcher hopes) progress is made towards appropriate action and research outcomes.

A commonly known cycle is that of the influential model of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) mentioned earlier -- plan, act, observe, reflect; then, in the light of this, plan for the next cycle.

It is also generally held that action research is participative, though writers differ on how participative it is. My own preference is to use participative methods. On the other hand I don't see why action research must be limited to this.

So, the extent of participation may vary. In some instances there may be a genuine partnership between researcher and others. The distinction between researcher and others may disappear.

On other occasions the researcher may choose for whatever reason to maintain a separate role. Participation may be limited to being involved as an informant. The participants, too, may choose something less than full partnership for themselves under some circumstances.

Most action research is qualitative. Some is a mix of qualitative and quantitative. All else being equal, numbers do offer advantages. In field settings, though, one often has to make other sacrifices to be able to use them. Most importantly, sometimes numbers are not easily applied to some features of a study. If these include features of particular interest or importance, the choice is between qualitative research or omitting important features.

In addition, developing a suitable quantitative measure is often difficult and time-consuming. It may be more time-efficient to use qualitative data. As I mentioned before, it is also easier to be flexible and responsive to the situation if you are using qualitative methods.

In short, it is my view that action research more often than not exhibits certain features. It tends to be, in some sense of the terms, cyclic, participative, qualitative and reflective.

I see all of these features except the last as choices to be made by the researcher and the other participants. In my view, good action research (and good research of any variety) is research where, among other features, appropriate choices are made. Perhaps even critical reflection might be abandoned for sufficient reason.

"Good" action research

Whatever action research is, I suspect it is mostly or always emergent and responsive. In fact, I think that the choices made about its cyclic and qualitative nature are mostly to be justified in terms of the responsiveness which they allow. This may be true of decisions about participation too.

In many field settings it is not possible to use more traditional quasi-experimental research methods. ² They can't readily be adjusted to the demands of the situation. If you do alter them in midstream you may have to abandon the data collected up to that point. (This is because you have probably altered the odds under the null hypothesis.)

But to achieve both action and research outcomes requires responsiveness -- to the situation, and the people, and the growing understanding on the part of those involved. Using a cyclic process in most circumstances enhances responsiveness. It makes sense to design the later stages of an action research activity in such a way that you capitalise on the understanding developed in the early stages.

It is the cyclic nature of action research which allows responsiveness. It is often difficult to know just where a field intervention will end. Precise research questions at the beginning of a project may mislead researcher and clients.

Imprecise questions and methods can be expected to yield imprecise answers initially. But if those imprecise answers can help to refine questions and methods, then each cycle can be a step in the direction of better action and research.

In other words, there are times when the initial use of fuzzy methods to answer fuzzy questions is the only appropriate choice. Action research provides enough flexibility to allow fuzzy beginnings while progressing towards appropriate endings.

To my mind, a cyclic process is important. It gives more chances to learn from experience provided that there is real reflection on the process and on the outcomes, intended and unintended. Qualitative information is less constraining of the process.

Participation is a somewhat different issue, more to do with action than research. Action outcomes can usually be achieved only with some commitment from those most affected. One of the most important ways of securing that commitment is through involving those affected.

There may well be other reasons, too. For instance, for some researchers it is more ethical to use participative methods (in general, this is my position in the action research I do). On some occasions the eventual interpretation of information is richer if involvement is greater.

So far, I have taken the view that action research can take many forms. There are some conditions, however, that I believe are more important. As a starting assumption I assume that good action research is empirical: responsive to the evidence. I also think it is important that the evidence is used critically rather than uncritically.

Again, a cyclic process allows this to happen more easily. If each step is preceded by planning and followed by review, learning by researcher and client is greater.

The quality of evidence can also be increased by the use of multiple sources of evidence within all or most cycles. Differences between data sources, used critically, can then lead the researchers and the participants towards a deeper and more accurate understanding. Literature can be such an alternative data source.

I would sum up my recommendations for good action research in this way:

- Use multiple cycles, with planning before action and critical analysis after it.
- Within each cycle --
 - use multiple data sources;
 - and try to **disprove** the interpretations arising from earlier cycles.

Action research is a family of research processes whose flexibility allows learning and responsiveness. Vague beginnings can move towards better understanding and practical improvement through the critical analysis of the information, the interpretation of it, and the methods used.

Good action researchers, I think, critique what they do and how they do it, the better to learn from the experience. It is the balance between critical reflection and flexibility which allows adequate rigour to be achieved even in confused field settings.

In summary, I assume that action research is true to label: it pursues action and research outcomes. It is most effective when the end result emerges from the data. The conclusions drawn are data-based, preferably drawing the data from multiple sources. The conclusions emerge slowly over the course of the study. At each cycle the researchers challenge the emerging conclusions by vigorously pursuing disconfirming evidence.

I think that the major justification for action research methods is that they can be responsive to the situation in a way that many other research methods can not be, at least in the short term. On these grounds I think action research will usually, though perhaps not always, be cyclic in nature. In the interests of rigour, each cycle will include critical reflection. In most instances it will also be qualitative and participative to some extent.

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Professional development materials

**Case Studies of good practice in
preventing bullying, harassment
and violence**

Readings

Valuing cultural diversity

"We have events like NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration) and hundreds of people come to the school. We parents and community members feel like this is our school and we have a say in what happens." *Parent*

We are a small regional school community with a high Indigenous population. We are working hard at creating a safe, happy and inclusive school where differences and group identities are positively developed and recognised, and where at the same time there is a strong sense of community.

Where it all began ... Prior to 1996 the school identified a lack of cultural identity among the students, poor self-concept, erratic school attendance and poor learning habits. Some students' racist attitudes led to bullying, harassment and a range of other conflicts.

Getting started ... In 1996, the school community initiated a Cultural Studies Program to foster racial and cultural understanding and respect, and to combat racism. This program has become a cornerstone of our culturally inclusive curriculum.

How we went about it ... We based the Cultural Studies Program upon an inclusive curriculum that integrates English and SOSE, Lifeskills, and Art and Music curricula. Respect for all cultures, groups and individuals is encouraged and taught through explicit themes. The program uses a wide variety of sources and is strongly literature-based. It relies on Indigenous writers, artists and community leaders.

Cultural Studies units include The Aboriginal Dreaming and Torres Strait Islander Creation Stories, Languages, Bush Tucker and Bush Medicine, Hunting and Gathering, Ceremonies — Dance and Music and Sports, Family and Kinship Issues and Art. Students have also studied issues around cultural identity, Reconciliation, and the Stolen Generation. Integrating these units within the regular curriculum ensures that cultural knowledge is valued and recognised as important for all students.

Over the years our school's cultural room has also evolved into a parents' room which community members use for socialising. It has been decorated with paintings and 'smoked' and dedicated by a local elder.

The Commonwealth Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP) has enabled us to provide important staff.

- A 0.5 curriculum coordinator coordinates the Cultural Studies program.
- A community development worker supports the involvement of Indigenous parents in their children's education.
- A teacher aide is employed to work with students at risk of suspension.

What we are learning ... There has been tremendous support and enthusiasm demonstrated for the Cultural Studies Program by students, staff, parents and community members. Cultural Studies has provided a relevant and timely curriculum which empowers all involved. The school is a much happier environment and we have seen some amazing results:

- Bullying, harassment and suspensions have been reduced and there are fewer children in the 'quiet room' at lunchtime.
- More students are solving conflicts equitably.
- Our highly successful literacy initiatives have significantly improved the literacy standards of many students in the school (and we have won national literacy awards three years in a row).
- Education is now valued and supported by our community. Many parents and community members are involved in the school, with adults participating in lessons by sharing stories, helping with art and NAIDOC activities.
- Student numbers are stabilising after having dropped.

The Cultural Studies Program has been a vital addition to our supportive school environment. Our experiences support the belief that bullying, harassment, aggression and other misbehaviours are much less likely to occur when students are coping academically in the classroom, especially with literacy, and when cultural knowledges of the community are valued and included as a central part of the curriculum.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Getting over homophobia

"It is not just gay students who suffer. I have a son who isn't gay, but who was harassed for being gay because he liked certain subjects. It really had a long-term effect on him as an adult." *Parent*

Our secondary school is in a semi rural zone, on the border between two cities. The school has 750 students, mainly from lower socioeconomic families. We have been using drama and discussion to challenge homophobia.

Where it all began ... Although we had a broad anti-harassment program dealing with acceptance of difference, our school had not publicly identified homophobia as an issue within our school community - until school community members reported that homophobic attitudes were rampant, and name-calling and harassment were regularly experienced by both homosexual and heterosexual students.

Getting started ... A two-day conference on creating a safe and supportive school environment free from homophobic abuse, violence and silence helped us decide what to do.

How we went about it ... We designed drama activities to raise awareness and educate about homophobia and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (glbt) issues within schools. These activities then acted as a catalyst in developing whole school responses to homophobic beliefs.

The drama allowed the target audience to participate instead of passively reacting to information. Drama students explored the issues by:

- devising short scenes and monologues based on stories collected from gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people about their experiences of homophobia in schools
- participating in a 'theatre of the oppressed' workshop that explored homophobia in schools. This strategy was taken from the Victorian 'Breaking Through' program that works in schools to increase tolerance of sexual diversity in rural communities.

Through role-play and forum theatre, the drama-based program addresses some of these barriers by developing strategies for challenging harassment and coping with difference.

The school also developed support structures and community support through:

- providing safe environments for parents, students and staff to discuss the issues and identify relevant safety and educational needs
- establishing links with the wider community, including 'out' gay and lesbian people who worked with staff and provided positive role models for students involved in the drama project
- establishing a staff position as contact for students.

We now have a balanced depiction of the issues facing glbt students, and an understanding of the importance for educational programs to cover positive aspects such as love and relationships, as well as the abuse, violence and silence resulting from homophobia.

What we are learning ... As strategies are implemented across the school, there is increased support for glbt students, a decrease in bullying and the potential for further widespread attitudinal change.

The links formed with the community have proved very useful. The gay and lesbian people who worked with the students on the initial drama activities have since returned to school to trial curriculum resources with Studies of Society and Environment and drama classes, and to conduct consciousness-raising workshops with other classes.

Where to from here ... We are hoping to continue using the drama project with different year level groups at the school as part of our whole school approach to dealing with bullying and harassment. The structure of these activities is such that other material can also be used, as well as that which specifically looks at homophobia.

It's not enough to have a policy. It's about the school structure that supports and empowers teachers, students and parents to do something about it - in all curriculum areas and in our relationships. *Teacher*

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Examining gender, race, class and power

"To be really effective in dealing with bullying and other forms of violence, we need to create a safe and supportive climate where students can raise issues, talk about things like race and gender and class, and be supported in finding their own solutions." *Administration staff member*

We are a large urban school in Brisbane with more than 900 students from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. We used action research and integrated curriculum planning to increase acceptance of difference.

Where it all began ... More students were getting into trouble and being sent to the office. We found that the problem was often caused by issues relating to race, gender or class - and that the school's approach to bullying was inconsistent.

Getting started ... We gathered data within the school, consulted the local university and discussed the issues in the school community. We decided to follow a long-term, proactive solution based on the principles of early years education, middle schooling and inclusive curriculum. We wanted our curriculum to challenge, engage and include all members of the community.

How we went about it ... A 'critical friend' from a local university helped us set up a staff Action Research Group, and we worked towards understandings and skills that would make the need for 'behaviour management' almost nonexistent.

Our group developed an integrated curriculum planning framework that incorporates critical analysis; knowledge and understandings of gender, race and class; investigation of cultural contexts; negotiation; active citizenship; and investigative processes such as action research.

Students and teachers used action research to investigate questions about violence and justice in their lives. These questions were raised in class meetings, in journal writing and in surveys.

Teachers cooperatively planned integrated units across year levels to introduce and progressively build on skills and understandings from the framework. Teachers have time each term to plan together.

Year 7 students and teachers were involved in a year-long active citizens project, supported by outdoor education leaders. These students have since worked with younger students in classrooms and in the playground, teaching and facilitating activities and working on issues of bullying and harassment.

Year 5 students researched bullying issues. They discovered that they needed to investigate and discuss their ideas of 'dobbing' if they were to feel comfortable about reporting bullying.

Students used drama and dance, and particularly Forum Theatre, to work through unjust and violent situations and to consider points of view different from their own.

A tracking system records who is responsible for bullying and other behaviours in the playground, and what individuals have done. This allows for specific action to be taken with individual students if necessary.

What we are learning ... This year, the playground is a lot calmer. There has been a significant drop in the number of students being sent to the office for bullying. Parents who attend parent representative sessions at the school have been positive and support the actions taken. Students are far more proactive and able to use their skills and understandings to prevent or stand up to bullying.

Where to from here ... We still have a long way to go. We are about to review and reflect upon the steps we have taken to date. Sharing good practices about how to and not just what to teach and continuing professional development for staff are essential for the future.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Creating partners for success

"I respect Athe because he is an elder of the community. He helps our school stay safe and happy." ...Year 6 student

We are a remote island school. We have been working towards creating safe, positive learning environments that improve student educational outcomes by developing strong relationships with the local community.

Where it all began ... Our school was feeling estranged from the community. Teachers were unsure of the cultural implications of some mainstream behaviour management strategies. Community members saw the school as a place where the 'experts' took charge of their children for 5 hours every day. We were observing bullying and harassment among students. Parents said things like, 'These kids today have no respect. Not like when we were young.' There was a clear misunderstanding between school and community expectations and contributions.

Getting started ... To provide a safer and more supportive environment, we needed the support of parents and the community. A community meeting decided that a respected elder would work closely with the school to teach community values to the children. This would strengthen the link between the school, the community and community agencies.

How we went about it ... Athe (Grandfather in island language) was employed as our Community Liaison Officer. He visits classrooms daily and makes home visits to discuss behaviour, attendance and any other concern. Athe is available to students and staff, and he is the first point of contact for parents who have a concern and who are not confident to come into the school.

What we are learning ... Since Athe has been working within the school the incidence of bullying has definitely reduced. Athe's knowledge of the families and culture has enabled us to see beyond the surface issues and get to the bottom of bullying behaviours. He has made school staff aware of the small things we would not have identified as bullying, but which have deep cultural significance for our students.

Athe's emphasis on the importance of education has influenced the community. We now have a much stronger bond between school and community, for example - the community council and other community agencies. At a recent behaviour management meeting an unprecedented 60 members of the community attended. Everyone is now better informed on protocols and processes to deal with various school issues and we have established clear expectations of our roles and contributions.

Where to from here ... The strength of the relationship is enabling us to continue working towards better educational outcomes for all our students. Elders will continue to play an important role in the daily life of the school.

Athe Walter cares about our school and always has time for children. He makes us happy and keeps us safe. Everyone in the school loves Athe Walter. When he is in the classroom all of us listen. The school needs him. Every day he helps children who do the right and wrong thing. *Year 6 student*

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Social action through literacy

"I wanted to develop, in the boys, an interest in literature. I also wanted them to try and see themselves as worthwhile human beings even if they weren't the stereotype male and that enjoying reading was a positive thing." ...*Teacher*

Our 540 primary students come from semi rural to suburban areas. We have been using critical literacies to integrate issues of gender and power through the curriculum. This involves using research and academic discussion to support our teaching staff to implement the process.

Where it all began ... Some boys were underachieving and showing little interest in literacy, and more boys were exhibiting aggressive and bullying behaviours. Neighbouring schools were reporting the same issues of literacy and boys' aggression.

Getting started ... Our school joined a working group looking at gender equity. We helped organise a conference on 'Boys, Gender and Schooling', which confirmed that our concerns were valid.

We also participated in a 'Which Boys/Which Girls' project with three local schools, which focused on students at educational risk. Readings, awareness raising at the conference, professional development and discussion moved teachers away from simplistic, quick-fix solutions for boys and helped them see that the problem required a whole school community discussion around the concept of gender equity.

How we went about it ... Teachers in the 'Which Boys/Which Girls' project selected an individual research problem. In addition, we developed a Learning Circle as an opportunity for teachers to share the processes and problems of the research, while focusing on background theory through reading, discussion and debate.

Teachers chose social action through literacy as a focus. They implemented classroom learning activities to look at the role of gender and power in writing and mass media available at home and at school. Through critically examining forms of literature, students have developed an increased understanding of their personal choices.

What we are learning ... Teachers are undergoing considerable changes in their thinking and practices. Classroom practices are focusing on a broader notion of literacy and teachers are endeavouring to empower students through exploring some of the major influences on students' lives.

Students not only enjoy this learning, they are being empowered to understand how power affects them.

Our students have realised that it's not just physical size that matters in relationships. Their learning about power is now prompting them to question their choices about their behaviour and relationships - to realise that they have greater choices, and to take greater responsibility for their actions. This has resulted in a marked decrease in aggression and bullying among students - and an increase in positive social interaction among boys and girls.

Where to from here ... It will be a long journey before the questions posed for this research can be answered. Sharing the projects with the school communities will stimulate further discussion. We hope this will encourage a focus on gender equity in all Key Learning Areas.

We are also increasing levels of participation from parents and the community in projects and inviting them to share ideas on gender equity and their children's learnings.

Power is understanding how you make people do things. It's not just bullying. My idea has changed from knowing that big people aren't the only ones with power and I feel good that big people don't have all the power. *Year 5 student*

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Maintaining pregnant and parenting young women in education

"I didn't know why young parenting women left. I just wished they would finish their education. Apparently bullying is a huge part of their reasons for leaving school, and they think that they won't be welcome back. It just never occurred to me." ...*Teacher/librarian*

Our large outer urban secondary school, realising the impact of bullying on pregnant teenagers and young mothers, has developed strategies to support these students in continuing their education.

Where it all began ... Our teacher/librarian had a student who wanted to be the first person in her family to complete her schooling but then became pregnant. She tried to stay at the school but left as a result of ongoing harassment from other students and the unspoken attitudes of some members of staff.

Getting started ... The report *Present, Pregnant and Proud*, published by the Association of Women Educators, stimulated us to form a group to support our pregnant students and young mums.

How we went about it ... At our first meeting, we had an open forum and heard from our two students who were also mothers. They spoke candidly about their experiences as pregnant students. They were unhappy with aspects of the school culture which included bullying and physical threats from students; criticism, negativity and even hostility from some teachers, guidance and Administration; and a general feeling of not being made to feel welcome.

Through this discussion we identified strategies to support parenting students. These included:

- The need for teacher mentors to advocate on the student's behalf
- A student support network
- Special educational days when community health workers provide information about pregnancy, contraception, abortion, parenthood issues, etc
- More flexibility in timetables to allow time for parenting responsibilities
- Providing easy access to community support
- Flexibility of uniforms
- Improved channels of communication within the school
- The need for the school to keep in contact to encourage a return to school after pregnancy
- Holding meetings of interested staff members to continue to work towards making our school one where pregnant students and young mums can continue their education in a supportive environment free from bullying and harassment.

Some practical steps were implemented to assist students, but it was felt that the 'big picture' issue of the school culture has been critical - particularly a written anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policy.

The support group feels that, with such policies in place as a firm part of the school's ethos, within five years we will achieve our aim of making all of our students feel welcome and included.

What we are learning ... Bullying and harassment have a long-term (and even generational) impact upon the lives of young pregnant and parenting teenagers, on their relationships, on their education and on their future wellbeing. We can make a huge difference through empowering parenting young women by supporting their participation in education.

"It never even occurred to me at the time that I could have offered her part-time schooling. Here I was doing it all the time for the sporting kids. It is a whole culture change. It is easy to do. Just put her in the system." ...*Deputy principal*

Sharing the anti-bullying focus

"Our anti-bullying campaign is one small step towards a better world. It's about people learning to get along with other people. It's about finding peaceful solutions to differences and problems." ... *Teacher*

Our high school of 750 students is a comprehensive coeducational community school that focuses on effective learning through a diverse curriculum for both mainstream and support class students. Students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Where it all began ... We believed it was important to recognise and reinforce to the school community that although bullying is part of many areas in society, it is absolutely unacceptable in our school. We wanted to highlight the impact of bullying both on people who bully and on those who experience bullying, and that we must all share responsibility for addressing the issue of bullying.

We wanted everyone to know what we meant by bullying behaviour and to develop a strong anti-bullying feeling in the school. Our target was to implement an anti-bullying campaign and to reduce bullying within the school environment.

Getting started ... We developed an anti-bullying campaign with guidance from state policies and guidelines. This school initiative focused on enhancing a positive learning environment for all students.

How we went about it ... We carried out a bullying survey among students in Years 7-10 to gauge their attitudes to and experiences of bullying. The survey results identified some areas of concern and helped teachers set targets for a cross-curriculum anti-bullying program.

To monitor behaviour, staff initiated an active bullying register to identify the students using bullying and individuals targeted for bullying. Workshops were provided to support students who were involved in bullying.

A second survey was part of an ongoing program to counter bullying behaviour and attitudes. We used this data to refine the overall anti-bullying program.

Our anti-bullying awareness week focused on the right everyone has to be treated with respect and dignity, without fear of being bullied at our school. We produced an information pack for students that included definitions and general statements about bullying. For that week, teachers were provided with lesson plans about bullying that highlighted the issue of power in relationships.

A new school magazine provides an outlet for students and staff to express their feelings about bullying and harassment, especially those students who do not normally have a voice. All students receive the magazine and can help in its production.

Like the magazine, student initiatives and participation have been the stimulus for so many of our activities:

- student participation and the involvement of the Student Representative Council (SRC)
- the student body's own surveys, which informed the school community's future initiatives
- the school's anti-bullying pamphlet
- the concept of 'Anti' our soft toy anti-bullying mascot, who also appears as a student in costume
- drama performances for school assemblies

What we are learning ... The initial survey results showed that most students felt safe at school and believed that the staff acted effectively when students reported bullying.

Attendance has improved and continues to stay above state and district attendance rates.

There has been a noticeable decrease in bullying behaviour in the playground and classrooms.

More students are willing to tell and talk about bullying with teachers. Practical advice is more accessible for students whose confidence is enhanced, as victims say 'no way to bullies'.

Where to from here ... The school's anti-bullying campaign will increasingly become a starting point for curriculum and welfare initiatives in related areas such as anti-racism and gender equity.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Increasing students' pride in themselves and their school

"I'm glad I changed to this school. Never have I felt more welcome." ...*Female student*

Our high school provides a diverse curriculum for both mainstream and support class students. A shared approach to student welfare also helps to promote a safe and peaceful learning environment. An important feature of our school is its multicultural makeup, with students coming from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Where it all began ... We believed it was important to recognise and reinforce that while bullying is part of many areas in society, it is absolutely unacceptable in our school. Our challenge was to highlight the impact of bullying on everyone involved, and to encourage shared responsibility so that our school is even safer and more peaceful.

Getting started ... From the survey results, teachers identified some areas of concern and set targets for a cross curriculum anti-bullying program.

- conducted a bullying survey with students in Years 7-10 to gauge their attitudes and experiences of bullying.
- conducted an anti-bullying awareness week that focused on the belief that everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, without fear of being bullied at our school.
- produced an information pack for students that included definitions and general statements about bullying.
- provided teachers with lesson plans about bullying to be taught in this week. The issue of power in relationships was highlighted within this program.

How we went about it ... From the survey results, teachers identified some areas of concern and set targets for a cross curriculum anti-bullying program.

- Staff initiated a bullying register that helped identify the students using bullying behaviour and those individuals targeted for bullying. Support for these students was provided in a series of workshops.
- A second survey was conducted as part of an ongoing program to counter bullying behaviour and attitudes. The data collected was used to refine the overall anti-bullying program.
- A new school magazine provided an avenue for students and staff to express their feelings about such areas as bullying and harassment. The magazine reaches out to all students in the school and encourages students to participate in the development and production process. Students who do not normally have the opportunity now have a place to voice their opinion about such issues as bullying.

What we are learning ... The initial survey showed that the great majority of students feel safe at school and believe that staff act effectively when students report bullying. Attendance has improved and continues to stay above state and district attendance rates. Student participation and the involvement of the Student Representative Council (SRC) has also been constructive, with the student body conducting its own surveys, which in turn inform future school community initiatives.

The campaign's success is based primarily on student ideas and imaginations. The school's anti-bullying pamphlet, the concept of "Anti", our soft toy anti-bullying mascot who also appears as a student in costume, the dramatic performances for school assemblies, and most of the contributions to two of the school magazines have all come from students.

The school community has a greater understanding of the issues that surround bullying and harassment. The level of awareness about bullying has increased across the whole school community. Students and teachers feel more confident about dealing with bullying behaviour in our school. Students have been encouraged to voice their opinions about such issues as bullying in more constructive and creative ways.

There has been a noticeable decrease in bullying behaviour in the playground and classrooms. The school community is safer. Responsibility is more widely accepted and there is an increase in the number of students willing to tell and talk about bullying with teachers. Practical advice is more accessible for students so their confidence is enhanced and they can say 'no way to bullying'.

Where to from here ... The school's anti-bullying campaign is providing a starting point for curriculum and welfare initiatives in related areas such as anti-racism and gender equity. "Our anti-bullying campaign is one small step towards a better world. It's about people learning to get along with other people. It's about finding peaceful solutions to differences and problems." ...*Teacher*

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools>

Professional development materials

**Evidence based reform in
education**

OHT masters & reading

Evidence based practice

- The integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction.
- One type of such evidence is scientifically based research, which can focus on practices or on programs.
- The second type of empirical evidence is objective measures, which can consist of benchmarks or local data.
- The second source for evidence-based education is professional wisdom, which can include personal experience and consensus views.

Professional wisdom and empirical evidence (i)

- Professional wisdom is the judgment that individuals acquire through experience
- Increased professional wisdom is reflected in numerous ways, including the effective identification and incorporation of local circumstances into instruction
- Empirical Evidence is
 - scientifically based research from fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and neuroscience, and especially from research in educational settings
 - objective measures of performance used to compare, evaluate, and monitor progress

Professional wisdom and empirical evidence (ii)

- Without professional wisdom education cannot
 - adapt to local circumstances
 - operate intelligently in the many areas in which research evidence is absent or incomplete.
- Without empirical evidence education cannot
 - resolve competing approaches
 - generate cumulative knowledge
 - avoid fad, fancy, and personal bias

How to use existing evidence

- Search literature
- Screen literature
 - Relevance
 - Quality
- Evidence will not make the decision
 - Be skeptical
 - Consider other ways of achieving goal
 - Consider consequences and local circumstances
- Consult with experts who understand evidence before making costly decisions (This is different from consulting authorities who may know the subject area but not rules of evidence)

A Manifesto for Evidence-Based Education

"Evidence-based" is the latest buzz-word in education. Before long, everything fashionable, desirable and good will be "evidence-based". We will have Evidence-Based Policy and Evidence-Based Teaching, Evidence-Based Training - who knows, maybe even Evidence-Based Inspection.

But "evidence-based" is more than just trendy jargon. It refers to an approach which argues that policy and practice should be capable of being justified in terms of sound evidence about their likely effects. Education may not be an exact science, but it is too important to allow it to be determined by unfounded opinion, whether of politicians, teachers, researchers or anyone else.

The notion of "evidence" is not without problems. Many will say that one person's "evidence" may be another's opinionated nonsense. It is important not to deny these problems. However, in other areas, such as in the law or in medicine - even in science - the concept of evidence is potentially just as problematic, but has nevertheless been used successfully as a basis for decision making.

It is arguably a waste of public money and professionals' time to impose policies without good evidence that they will lead to an improvement over what previously existed...

We need a culture in which evidence is valued over opinion, in which appropriate action (or inaction) is valued over just action for the sake of being seen to do something. By advocating such a culture, we hope to reclaim debates about policy and practice for the professionals who know most about them. In this way we hope to be able to do justice to the enormous responsibilities and hopes that are attached to education.

Sources of evidence

The only worthwhile kind of evidence about whether something works in a particular situation comes from trying it out. Arguments from theory are simply no match for something that has been tried and tested. Education has too many examples of plausible, convincing strategies for improvement that, when put into place, have either not had the desired effects or have had them, but at too high a price in terms of costs or unintended side effects. Schools and other educational systems are just too complicated for us to be able to make reliable predictions in the absence of realistic experimental trials. In the language of research, that means doing well controlled field experiments.

Much of the research that is done in education takes the form of surveys or "correlational" research: looking for relationships within existing systems. This kind of research can provide valuable insights into how different features of a situation are related, but it cannot tell us what the effects will be of making changes. For example, correlational studies of class size show that children taught in large classes learn as much as, and often more than, children in smaller classes. A few moments' thought can provide explanations for this apparently anomalous result. When schools have a choice, do they not put more manageable children into larger classes, thereby allowing more difficult pupils to be taught in smaller groups? And are not more popular, "successful" schools likely to be oversubscribed and so have larger classes than those with lower levels of achievement?

However, if we were to take this correlational research as a basis for action, we might be in danger of advocating large classes as a way of raising achievement. This, of course, is exactly the error committed by much of the research on "school effectiveness". Correlations between factors such as "high expectations" and high achievement are taken to imply that encouraging teachers to expect more would lead to a rise in achievement.

It is only by doing an experiment in which children are randomly allocated to classes of different sizes that we could truly separate the effects of class size from all the other related factors, and so judge the likely effects of a policy of say, reducing class sizes from 35 to 20. When such experiments have been done, they have found that indeed the children in smaller classes do

learn more - although the size of the difference is perhaps not as large as might have been hoped (Finn and Achilles, 1990; Blatchford and Mortimore, 1994). When experiments have been done to see whether achievement can be raised by raising expectations, it has been found that - at least for experienced teachers who know their material and their students - it is not really possible to raise their expectations artificially. So this plausible strategy turns out not to be very helpful in practice (Raudenbush, 1984).

The results of experiments can sometimes be disappointing, and this has led to some rejection of the experimental method of enquiry. However, this is a version of "shoot the messenger": if the method is sound but fails to demonstrate the success of a particular strategy, then perhaps the strategy is at fault. It is a strange kind of logic that would argue that if a strategy is unlikely to be successful it would be better not to know this before implementing it. Surely, it is always better to know. Educational researchers are often disappointed if they get negative results, but negative results, particularly if they were to prevent us from wasting time and money on ineffective policies, might actually be more useful than positive ones.

One further objection to the use of experiments is that they are hard to do because they require large samples in order to obtain a "significant" result. This, however, is a misconception. Using the technique of "meta-analysis" (Fitz-Gibbon, 1984, 1985) it is possible to combine the results of numerous studies, of whatever size, as if they were all parts of a single overall study. Meta-analysis can give estimates of how big an effect is, based on an "average" of the available evidence. This "effect size" is an important concept in evidence-based education. Meta-analysis can also identify the factors on which the effect may depend: if some studies have found it and others not, meta-analysis can help to say why. This ability to combine results from separate experiments is a very powerful research tool. A small experiment in a single school could be quite hard to interpret; but if other schools have done the same experiment and the results are combined, the overall findings could be highly significant.

Problems with evidence

The notion of "evidence" is quite problematic. Some of the issues are acknowledged here:

- Evidence is not value-free.
Try to get a roomful of teachers, politicians or educational researchers to agree on the meaning of even something as apparently simple as "effective practice". One person's "effective practice" is another's "neo-liberal hegemony"... Opponents of the "evidence-based" philosophy cite the value-laden nature of all "evidence" as a major problem with the approach. But need this be a problem? All educational endeavour carries its own values and objectives. If we tried to make these explicit we might be able to have an honest and democratic discussion about what values are important, instead of passing off a concealed values debate as a debate about evidence. We may not agree about the particular values, but at least we will then know what we are talking about.
- There are no universal solutions or quick fixes.
Education is so complex that slight and subtle differences in context may make all the difference to the effects of some change in policy or practice. One of the things that makes teaching so interesting is that what works for me may not work for you, and even may not work for me the next time I try it. This makes it seem unlikely that simple, universal strategies will produce the improvements intended, although only by trying them can we really be sure. However, this complexity does not mean that there can never be any worthwhile evidence about anything. A more useful kind of evidence would be that which seeks to throw light on exactly which features of the context are important, to find the conditions on which the outcome depends. When we have this kind of evidence we will understand better which strategies are likely to be most effective in each situation.
- Evidence is often incomplete or equivocal.
[Sometimes there is a feeling that we] need to act, despite the absence of any clear evidence about what action is most appropriate. A more mature response in many areas of educational policy would be to acknowledge that we do not really know enough to support a

clear decision. If the notion of using evidence as a basis for policy and practice is to take hold, then perhaps we need to face up to this [difficulty]... One of the implications of adopting evidence-based education would be that where evidence about some issue of importance is incomplete or ambiguous, we would not simply accept the fact, but seek to obtain the evidence we need. Equally where evidence is equivocal, we would need to explore the nature of the conflicting evidence and design further experiments to try to resolve it. Sadly, however, this almost never happens in educational research.

- Evidence can be quite complex.

In particular when statistical analyses are involved, evidence can be hard to interpret simply. Of course, it would be wrong to over-simplify, but it would be just as wrong not to make the evidence as accessible as possible. As good teachers know, most people can understand most things if they are explained well.

How could education be "evidence-based"?

There are three main ways in which education could become more "evidence-based". These concern, firstly, the development of evidence-based policies, secondly, of evidence-based practice and, thirdly, the general promotion of a "culture of evidence".

Evidence-based policies

The need for evidence-based policies is clear... Change of any sort is always disruptive and should surely have to be justified. It would generally not be difficult or expensive to evaluate policies before they are [implemented], and this should be routinely required.

There is an important difference between the kind of evidence that may justify advocating something as "good practice" and requiring it as policy. In the former case, teachers can make a judgement about whether something is applicable to their context or can adapt it to be most effective. Evidence derived from schools who have volunteered to try a particular innovation may well be relevant here: if it has worked for them, then it may well work for you. In the case of policy, however, where all schools are compelled to change what they are doing, the evidence to support it must be much stronger. It is not enough to know that something has worked in a selected group of volunteer schools. It may well be that schools who volunteer to take part in an initiative would have improved no matter what they did: identifying that there is a problem and being prepared to address it are often the largest parts of solving it. To justify imposing something as policy we must have evidence that it will work (or at least do no harm) in the hardest pressed, least amenable, most unlikely schools, who may well not volunteer for anything, as well as in schools that are already excellent and may reasonably feel no need to change.

Evidence-based practice

There already exists a sizeable body of evidence on "good practice", though there may be questions about how sound some of it is, how familiar it is to practitioners and the extent to which it actually influences practice.

I have already argued that for practice to be soundly based on evidence, that evidence must come from experiments in real contexts. "Evidence" from surveys or correlational research is not a basis for action. This is not to say that these kinds of research are worthless; far from it. In order to know what strategies are worth evaluating experimentally we need to have the kind of *prima facie* case for their effects that is most easily gained from correlational and survey research. However, we should not make the mistake of thinking it is all over when we have done this research. The only really sound evidence about what works comes from actually trying it.

There has been a good deal of controversial debate recently about the extent to which practitioners are aware of research evidence, and whose fault this is. "Dissemination" is now a major part of many research contracts, which means that researchers are expected to disseminate their findings to practitioners. Certainly, much educational research is not presented in a form (or a forum) that makes it very accessible to teachers.

But there is more to the issue of dissemination than this. [Systems]... may send performance information into schools, [but] it is only those who work in the schools who can interpret it. This makes the whole activity into a research collaboration, since research is not just about measuring things, but, crucially, about *interpreting* the results.

In the same way, practitioners must be more than just the recipients of researchers' findings. Teachers' local knowledge makes them vital participants in the processes of framing research questions and in collecting and interpreting data. "Dissemination" must take the form of communication among practitioners as well as between practitioners and researchers - in both directions.

A culture of evidence

The need for both policy and practice to be founded on evidence is part of a wider inadequacy in our approach to decision making across a range of social activity. It is part of a pre-scientific approach to social "science" that would look extremely incongruous in applied sciences such as engineering or medicine. No one would advocate building a particular structure, investing in an industrial process or using a medical treatment without good evidence to justify it. But it is part of the culture of social science that opinion can often have a status equal to - or even greater than - that of evidence as a basis for action.

We need to change that culture so that the question, "Where is the evidence?" becomes the first thing we think of when presented with a suggested change of practice or policy.

References:

- Blatchford, P. and Mortimore, P. (1994) "The Issue of Class Size for Young Children in Schools: what can we learn from research?" *Oxford Review of Education*, 20, 4, 411-428.
- Finn, J.D. and Achilles, C.M. (1990) "Answers and Questions about Class Size: a Statewide Experiment." *American Educational Research Journal*, 27, 3, 557-577.
- Fitz-Gibbon, C.T. (1984) "Meta-analysis: an explication." *British Educational Research Journal*, 10, 2, 135-144.
- Fitz-Gibbon, C.T. (1985) "The Implications of Meta-analysis for Educational Research." *British Educational Research Journal*, 11, 1, 45-49.
- Fitz-Gibbon, C.T. (1996) *Monitoring Education: Quality, Indicators and Effectiveness*. London: Cassell.
- Raudenbush, S. (1984) "Magnitude of Teacher Expectancy Effects of Pupil IQ as a Function of Credibility of Expectation Induction: A Synthesis of Findings from 18 Experiments." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76, 1, 85-97.

Adapted from : *Evidence based reform in education*

Source: <http://www.cem.dur.ac.uk/ebeuk/>

Implications of the NSSF for schools

A common framework

It is clear that across jurisdictions and in many schools throughout the country, excellent work is being done to create and sustain safe and supportive learning environments for students. The introduction to the NSSF describes the typical practices to prevent and respond to harassment, bullying, violence and child abuse and neglect.

The strength of the NSSF is that it provides a common national framework, agreed by all education authorities, to support schools and their communities to address these issues, while acknowledging the critical need for policies, programs and practices to be adapted so that they are responsive to local needs.

Jurisdictional alignment

Each jurisdiction operates within a policy framework deriving from state/territory and Australian Government legislation, and developed in response to state/territory and systemic issues. The work schools do in response to the National Safe Schools Framework must also meet the requirements of relevant employing authorities. To that end, the Implementation Manual includes an overview of current jurisdictional arrangements in relation to harassment, bullying, violence and child protection as part of the professional development materials.

Key national initiatives

In addition, there are a number of key national initiatives which overlap with the National Safe Schools Framework. The aim of the National Safe Schools Framework is to encourage schools to maximise the impact of their efforts to provide safe and supportive learning environments by supporting the alignment of initiatives in critical areas.

Two critical initiatives in this regard are:

MindMatters

MindMatters is a mental health promotion program for secondary schools which was developed as a result of the 1996 audit of Mental Health Education in Australian Secondary Schools. The Audit recommended that schools were appropriate sites for promoting mental health among young people.

MindMatters supports secondary schools to develop ways of promoting and protecting the mental health of members of school communities by providing:

- resources for schools.
- a national professional development and training strategy.
- a dedicated website.
- evaluation processes.
- a quarterly newsletter.

It acknowledges that social and emotional health are connected learning, employment and relationship outcomes, young people's social development, and to the rate of youth suicide. It uses a whole school approach to mental health promotion and suicide prevention, and aims to enhance the development of school environments where young people feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful.

<http://online.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/index.htm>

National Health Promoting Schools Strategy

The National Health Promoting Schools Strategy which began in 1997 takes the view that “both education and health are compromised unless a school is a healthy place in which to live, learn and work.” Strategy documents note that the “health of students, teachers and families is a key factor influencing student learning”; in light of this, a whole school approach to coordinating policy and program initiatives was endorsed, within a school improvement framework of decision making by all members of the school community.

The vision statement of the National Health Promoting Schools Strategy demonstrates the clear parallels between it and the National Safe Schools Framework and MindMatters.

All children in Australian will belong to school communities which are committed to promoting lifelong-learning, health and well-being.

This commitment should engender:

- A safe, healthy and supportive leaning environment.
- The improvement of the schools community health literacy.
- Community participation based on a sense of common purpose.
- Promotion of student, staff and parent well-being.
- Respect for, and an ability to harness, the energies of diverse cultures and groups within the community.
- Strategic partnerships which make the most effective use of the available expertise and resources.

It is clear that many of the same issues are being addressed in these three strategies, and that schools working on either MindMatters or National Health Promoting Schools Strategy, or both, are well positioned to embed current projects and initiatives within their planning around the National Safe Schools Framework.

Local responsiveness

The key issues to be considered in relation to local responsiveness is the quality of the school’s understanding of the unique nature of the local community. The point is made repeatedly in the literature on school change that while change may be driven by central reform initiatives, a key factor in achieving sustainable outcomes is ensuring that the process developed, the strategies employed and the pace of change respond to the circumstances of the local context.

This pre-supposes that a deep knowledge of those circumstances is shared by all the partners in the change process.

If this is not the case, then steps need to be taken to acquire the information and insights that are needed. This requires identification of the varied sources of local knowledge, some of which will be text-based and relatively easy to locate, but many of which will be held by various groups in the school community, and often not easily shared.

This is particularly the case for the least powerful and most marginalised members of the school community, and care must be taken to create the climate of trust which will allow essential insights to be shared if valid assessments and equitable decisions are to be made.

Information about the National Health Promoting Schools Strategy is available at:

<http://www.hlth.qut.edu.au/ph/ahpsa/>

Links between MindMatters, Health Promoting Schools and the National Safe Schools Framework

	MindMatters	National Health Promoting Schools Strategy	National Safe Schools Framework
Common concerns			
<i>Well-being</i>	Social and emotional well-being	Physical and mental health	Social and emotional well-being in a safe and supportive environment
<i>The school environment</i>	Enhance the development of school environments where young people feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful.	A safe, healthy and supportive learning environment.	All Australian schools are safe and supportive environments.
Common approaches			
<i>Holistic</i>	A whole-school approach.	A whole-school approach.	A whole-school approach.
<i>Proactive</i>	Strengthening schools' roles in promoting mental health.	Health promoting schools display commitment to enhancing the emotional, social, physical & moral well being of all members of their school community	Focus on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and intervention.
<i>Celebrating diversity</i>	Celebrating diversity enables a sense of belonging for all members of the school community.	Respect for, and an ability to harness the energies of diverse cultures and groups within the community.	Promote care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity.

Common strategies

Partnerships

MindMatters encourages schools to work together with their communities, particularly families, to make sure that everything that happens in school promotes the wellbeing of all the students .

Strategic partnerships ... make the most effective use of the available expertise and resources.

Partnerships result in action which is more effective, efficient and sustainable.

The support of relevant specialists is enlisted, including support for staff dealing with child abuse cases.

Action planning matrix

Key element					
Objective	Actions	Resources	Timeline	Performance indicators	Evaluation

Using the matrix - steps in the process

1. Specific objectives - what do we need to do?

The key stakeholders meet to discuss the goals of the National Safe Schools Framework and to develop objectives which respond to the situation on the ground in the local area. This will involve sharing the **outcomes of the audit process** and may require **professional development and training** for some or all of the stakeholders.

Discussion should focus around developing a shared understanding of the possible contributions each stakeholder could make to the process. It is likely at this point that **teams** will be established to respond to each of the six key elements of the Framework.

Each team should then work to establish their objectives for the coming period. Objectives should be clear, specific and achievable within a given time frame.

Because each of the six key elements is inter-related, teams should meet to share their objectives and ensure that **duplication and overlap** are minimised.

2. What actions will we take to achieve our objectives?

Teams identify what actions need to be taken to achieve each objective, and describe the steps involved in the process.

3. Resources - what/who will be needed to complete the actions?

The next step in the process is to look at the resources that may be required, for example - funds, staff, equipment etc. It will almost certainly be necessary for teams to compare the resources they think they will need at this point. It may be necessary to redefine some objectives if resources are not available, or to negotiate access to resources.

4. Time-line - by what date will actions be taken?

Every objective needs to have a time limit. While they need to be realistic, excessively long time frames carry the risk of action being put off indefinitely – it has been suggested that a timeline longer than three months undermines the motivation of those involved. 'Bigger' objectives need to be broken down into manageable parts (or milestones).

5. How will we measure our progress?

Each team then needs to identify the specific measures of success (**performance indicators**) for each objective. Measurement is important because it enables progress to be tracked, and problems to be identified early in the process. Teams need to decide how they will measure and record progress towards their objectives.

6. Evaluation – are we meeting our objectives?

An important part of the process should be to schedule regular follow-up meetings of the team to **evaluate progress** towards achieving objectives and to revise expectations as necessary. The team should share their perceptions of progress, discuss and solve problems, and change plans where needed. It may be necessary to decide to use existing data sources or to develop specific tools to collect information that demonstrated the extent to which objectives are being met

At the end of the specified timeframe established for the objectives, the team should look at the results achieved in terms of the overall goal. What is the evidence that shows the extent to which objectives have been met? Do strategies need to be revised, refined or expanded? Do new objectives now need to be developed? Does a new action plan need to be made?

This section has been adapted from

Action Planning Guidelines

<http://www.staff.curtin.edu.au/recruit/rocs/apguidelines.html>

Additional Resources

The list of resources below represent only a small part of the multitude of resources available via the internet on bullying, harassment, violence and child protection issues, and other topics of interest to schools seeking to develop safer and more supportive environments. They are intended as a starting point for school communities looking for further information.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What Works: Explorations in improving outcomes for Indigenous students</i> 	http://www.acsa.edu.au/publications/whatworks_sections.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Curriculum Studies Association <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education site</i> 	http://www.acsa.edu.au/indigenous/index.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Indigenous Network</i> 	http://www.indignet.com.au/ablinks.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Message Stick - ABC website</i> 	http://www.abc.net.au/message/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Centre For Aboriginal Studies: Links</i> 	http://gunada.curtin.edu.au/links/index.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies</i> 	http://www.aiatsis.gov.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Indigenous Peoples of the World - St Mary's College, Ipswich – excellent links to Australian and international Indigenous sites</i> 	http://www.smc.qld.edu.au/indilink.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Koori History Website 	http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/indexb.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice web-page</i> 	http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/statistics/index.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATSI Education Webpage 	http://www.atsic.gov.au/classroom/default.asp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Internet Guide to Aboriginal Studies 	http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVLPages/AborigPages/History.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koori Internet Australia 	http://www.koori.net/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action 	http://www.faira.org.au/issues.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 	http://www.reconciliation.org.au/council/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Dare to Lead: taking it on</i> coalition supports Australian school principals to improve Indigenous education outcomes and to work for reconciliation in their schools. 	http://www.apapdc.edu.au/daretolead/

Action research and action planning

• <i>Southern Cross Institute of Action Research</i>	http://www.actionresearch.net.au/
• <i>Action research international</i> - a refereed on-line journal of action research.	http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/arihome.html
• <i>Action Learning, Action Research & Process Management Association Incorporated</i>	http://www.alarpm.org.au/
• <i>Reconnect Action Research Kit</i> - designed to explain Action Research. It provides practical examples and tools for applying Action Research.	http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-reconnect_action_research_kit.htm
• <i>Action Research On Web - AROW</i>	http://www2.fhs.usyd.edu.au/arow/
• Australian Curriculum Studies Association Action Research Network	http://www.acsa.edu.au/networks/netpages/action_research.htm

Bullying, harassment and violence

• <i>Bullying. No Way!</i>	http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/
• <i>Bullying. Everybody's Business.</i> A Kids Help Line initiative.	http://www.kidshelp.com.au/INFO7/contents.htm
• <i>Bullying Online</i>	http://www.bullying.co.uk/
• <i>Addressing bullying behaviour. It's our responsibility.</i>	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/bullying/index.htm
• <i>Bullying at school</i>	http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully/index.html
• <i>Lawstuff – find out about bullying at school</i>	http://www.lawstuff.org.au/
• <i>Bullying in schools and what to do about it</i>	http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/
• <i>Australian Clearing House for Youth Studies - Bullying</i>	http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/ncys/topics/bullying.htm
• <i>Bullying in Schools</i>	http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/eece/pubs/digests/1997/banks97.html
• <i>Peer resources – peer mediation etc</i>	http://www.peer.ca/Links.html
• <i>Goodness and Kindness campaign – empowering children with a vision of changing the world</i>	http://www.goodness.org.au/
• <i>Sexual Harassment and Educational Institutions: A Guide to the Federal Sex Discrimination Act</i>	http://www.hreoc.gov.au/sex_discrimination/sexual_harrassment/education.html
• <i>Recognising sex-based harassment</i>	http://www.education.qld.gov.au/students/advocacy/equity/gender-sch/issues/better-recog.html
• <i>Discrimination, bullying & harassment</i>	http://www.doe.tased.edu.au/equitystandards/discrimination/default.htm

Child abuse and neglect/Child protection

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)</i> – excellent information and resources. 	http://www.napcan.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Child Protection Clearinghouse</i> (Australian Institute of Family Studies) 	http://www.aifs.org.au/nch/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stronger Families Learning Exchange</i> 	http://www.aifs.org.au/sf/resources.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Integrating personal safety programs into the curriculum</i> – UK paper 	http://www.ccea.org.uk/pdf/cprotect.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do schools deal with child protection?</i> 	http://www.brent.gov.uk/faqs.nsf/0/964351b763bb6581802569ea00448a87?OpenDocument
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who's Looking after the Kids? An Overview of Child Abuse and Child Protection in Australia</i> 	http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/ChildAbuse.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kids Help Line</i> 	http://www.kidshelp.com.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Child Safety Network of Australia</i> Internet site aims to provide families, kids, teachers and other professionals with information. Information which prevents child abuse and neglect. The site draws together community organisations concerned with the safety of kids and the special needs of children. 	http://www.childsafe.net.au/

Community partnerships, community building & planning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community Planning Web-Site</i> - easily accessible "how-to-do-it" best practice information 	http://www.communityplanning.net/index.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to community development resources 	http://www.community.gov.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Australian Centre for Community Services Research</i> 	http://www.flinders.edu.au/accsr/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Community Development Foundation</i> (CDF) is a non-departmental public body supported by the Active Community Unit of the Home Office (UK). Its role is to pioneer, study and promote new forms of community development. It aims to strengthen communities by ensuring the effective participation of people in determining the conditions which affect their lives. 	http://www.cdf.org.uk/index.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Building community collaboration and consensus</i> 	http://www.communitycollaboration.net/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Building community participation</i> – a paper by Richard Munt 	http://www.aifs.gov.au/sf/pubs/bull2/rm.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Centre for Rural Social Research</i> 	http://www.csu.edu.au/research/crsr/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Checklist for Healthy Communities</i> 	http://www.makeanoise.ysp.org.au/voicearticle.asp?ArticleNo=119
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community Development - Australia</i> 	http://www.cds.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal of the <i>Community Tool Box</i> is to support community health and development. The Tool Box provides over 6,000 pages of practical skill-building information on over 250 different topics. 	http://ctb.ku.edu/

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community Builders NSW</i> – a NSW government site. “Characteristics of stronger communities include empowerment, inclusiveness, reconciliation, safe and healthy environments, crime prevention, economic development and partnerships. “ 	http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/building_stronger/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Family Community Network Initiative (FCNI)</i>. The Family and Community Networks Initiative is an example of the practical opportunities the Australian Government provides to support families and strengthen communities. 	http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/community-fcni.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community Building Infoexchange</i> 	http://www.infoxchange.net.au/menu/community_building.html

Cultural and linguistic diversity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cultural and linguistic diversity</i> 	http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/issues/cultural.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural Australia 	http://www.multiculturalaustralia.com.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia 	http://www.fecca.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Multicultural Foundation 	http://www.amf.net.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Immigration & Multicultural Studies - Australian National University 	http://cims.anu.edu.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of Multicultural Youth Issues 	http://www.cmyi.net.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 	http://www.immi.gov.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Face the Facts</i> Draws on information from a wide variety of sources to correct some common myths. 	http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/face_facts/index.htm

Gender

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools</i> 	http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/public/genderequity.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Schools work towards gender equity</i> 	http://www.detya.gov.au/archive/schools/genderequity/7_6.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policy on Gender Equity</i> – Australian Education Union 	http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Policy/GenderEquity2001.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Towards Gender Equity in Catholic Education</i> (1996) 	http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/ncec3.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gender equity: a case for moving beyond his 'n hers!</i> Judith Gill and Karen Starr, University of South Australia 	http://www.aare.edu.au/00pap/gil00388.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plumpton High Babies</i> – ABC TV (Plumpton High school's support program for pregnant and parenting students) 	http://www.abc.net.au/plumpton/stories/s802942.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys' education resources 	http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/gender/resources/boysed.htm

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Equity Professional Support – NSW DET 	http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/yrk12focusareas/gendered/prosupport.php
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body image 	http://education.qld.gov.au/tal/equity/bodyimg/index.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body image and eating disorders 	http://www.reachout.asn.au/home.asp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Putting Gender Up-Front</i> – link to gender equity resource 	http://www.awe.asn.au/rdresguf.php
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boys gender and schooling</i> - reference list 	http://www.education.qld.gov.au/students/advocacy/equity/gender-sch/resources/res-references.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boys and Literacy Learning: changing perspectives</i> – link to publication 	http://www.aate.org.au/Catalogue/literacy.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will Boys Be Boys? Boys Education in the Context of Gender Reform – link to publication 	http://www.acsa.edu.au/publications/equity.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Factors influencing the educational performances of males and females in schools</i> – research paper 	http://www.detya.gov.au/schools/publications/2000/Gender_Report.pdf

People with disabilities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association for Children with a Disability 	http://www.acd.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access e-bility</i> e-bility's website offers access and links to a wide range of information, resources, services and products of interest to people with disability, their families and carers, as well as health professionals and other service providers. 	http://www.e-bility.com/index.php
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council on Intellectual Disability 	http://www.dice.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Information Resource 	http://www.accessibility.com.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities 	http://www.adec.org.au/

Poverty

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'No Child . . .': Child poverty in Australia</i> by Alison McClelland – National Coalition Against Poverty 	http://www.bsl.org.au/ncapwebsite/no_child.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children growing up trapped in poverty</i> Brotherhood of St Laurence study 	http://www.bsl.org.au/media/63.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Poverty in Australia</i> 	http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/poverty.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Poverty</i> – link to publication (2002) and information 	http://www.spinneypress.com.au/170_book_desc.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Dynamics of Child Poverty in Industrialised Countries</i> – link to publication 	http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/nonsprc/dynamics-of-child-poverty.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning for Life</i> Smith Family scholarship program based not on academic performance but on equity. Scholarships are offered to students whose families meet the eligibility criteria of low income and commitment to their child's education. 	http://www.smithfamily.com.au

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Socio-Economic Inequality and its Negative Health Impact for Children and their Families</i> - The Public Health Association of Australia | http://www.phaa.net.au/policy/CHPoverty.htm |
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Sexuality and homophobia

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stop Homophobia</i>. A website about preventing and reducing violence against lesbians and gay men. It contains a range of information about homophobia and homophobic violence, designed for young people, their families, youth workers, teachers. 	http://www.stophomophobia.org/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One of the Boys: Masculinity, Homophobia, and Modern Manhood</i>. Link to research that looks at the formation of modern male sexual identities. 	http://fehps.une.edu.au/F/d/health/books/OneoftheBoys.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project</i> 	http://avp.acon.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Getting over homophobia</i> – from the Bullying. No way! Website. 	http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/chillout/homophobia.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homophobia</i> – discussion paper Gay & Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW 	http://www.glcsw.org.au/pdf/08_homophobia.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homophobia How We All Pay the Price</i> – link to book, Family Planning Association 	http://www.fpahealth.org.au/reading-room/healthrites/hwapp_20010409.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boys Talk – diverse masculinities</i>. Please note these are real quotes from real boys and their language may offend. 	http://www.education.qld.gov.au/students/advocacy/equity/gender-sch/issues/matter-diverse.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homophobia: What are you scared of?</i> 	http://www.qnet.org.au/content/faqs_and_articles/pts/homophobia_what.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homophobia and sexuality-based violence in schools</i> – link to paper, Family Planning Queensland 	http://www.fpg.asn.au/current_issues/current_issues_homophobia.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby 	http://www.glr.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service NSW 	http://www.glcsw.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Victoria 	http://home.vicnet.net.au/~glswitch/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay and Lesbian Community Services WA 	http://www.glcs.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service SA 	http://www.glcsw.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association Qld 	http://www.glwa.org.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group 	http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/tasqueer/tasqueer.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sexuality and Sexual Health - Understanding Your Sexual Orientation</i> – Family Planning Victoria 	http://www.sexlife.net.au/2_9_1.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>OutReach</i> - Information and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in Australia 	http://www.also.org.au/outreach/

Racism

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Racism. No Way.</i> 	http://www.racismnoway.com.au/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Streetwize Communications</i> specialises in communicating social issues to young people and other hard to reach groups. Streetwize produces entertaining, relevant and accessible publications on issues such as the law, health, employment, drug and alcohol, violence and Indigenous specific issues 	http://www.streetwize.com.au/about_sw.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Australians Against Racism</i> – education materials 	http://www.australiansagainstracism.org/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Australian Human Rights Centre</i> 	http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/ahric/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commission for Racial Equality</i> – UK site 	http://www.cre.gov.uk/

Young people in regional and remote communities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rural and Remote Education Inquiry</i> – Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission 	http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/rural_education/index.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Callers from rural and remote Australia – Kids Help Line 	http://www.kidshelp.com.au/research/infosheets/26RuralandRemoteCallers2003.pdf
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child Health and Wellbeing</i> Regional disparities in the health of children living in metropolitan, rural and remote areas are highlighted in the report. 	http://www.aihw.gov.au/childyouth/childhealth/index.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Youth Portal - Research, Policy and Publications : Rural and Regional</i> (ways of improving access to education for school children in rural and remote areas) 	http://www.youth.gov.au/research/rural_regional.htm

KEY INFORMATION FROM THE LITERATURE ABOUT BULLYING

Section 1 – A brief background

Bullying is widely regarded as a particularly destructive form of aggression with harmful physical, social and emotional outcomes for all involved (bullies, victims and bystanders). The research of the last 25 years confirms its widespread nature where it is particularly likely in groups from which the potential victim cannot escape, e.g. schools.

While bullying at school has long been recognised as existing in Australian literature, the empirical study of the problem really did not begin until 1989 – 90. We now hold clear evidence of the nature, extent and effects of bullying in Australian schools. The bulk of it is from studies conducted by Rigby and Slee.

The issue of conflict in schools was recognised with the publication of *Sticks and Stones* by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Violence in Schools (1994). This influential report focused mainly on aggression and violence but also paid attention to the more specific problem of bullying. The inquiry concluded that while violence was not a major problem in Australian schools, bullying was. A recommendation of the inquiry was for the development of intervention programmes to reduce school bullying.

Section 2 – What is bullying?

There is no standard or universally accepted definition. However, some progress has been made toward a consensus regarding what elements should be included in an acceptable definition. Bullying is now regarded as a distinct form of aggressive behaviour, and not as aggressive behaviour in general (National Crime Prevention, 2002). The most frequently cited definition of bullying is the “repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons” (Rigby, 1996). Three critical points are important in this definition:

- *Power.* Children who bully acquire their power through various means: physical size and strength; status within a peer group; and recruitment within the peer group so as to exclude others.
- *Frequency.* Bullying is not a random act; it is characterised by its repetitive nature. Because it is repetitive, the children who are bullied not only have to survive the humiliation of the attack itself but live in constant fear of its re-occurrence.
- *Intent to harm.* While not always fully conscious to the child who bullies, causing physical, psychological and emotional harm is a deliberate act (Morrison, forthcoming).

What is conceived as constituting bullying behaviour has expanded over the past few years. It had been conceived narrowly as involving physically threatening behaviour only. It is now generally seen as including verbal forms of aggression, as in the case of ridicule and name calling. More recently, it has become customary among researchers and educators to include indirect or ‘relational aggression’ as aspects of bullying behaviour – for example, deliberate exclusion or the spreading of destructive rumours.

Section 3 – What leads to bullying?

Morrison (forthcoming) argues that the family, peers, the school and our broader social institutions play a developmental role.

3.1 The family

In general, the relationship patterns that children first learn at home are the ones they bring to the school environment. The importance of family variables in predicting bullying has emerged from a number of studies. Morrison (forthcoming) suggests that two features of family life are particularly influential in the social development of bullying behaviour: parenting style and family disharmony.

Parenting style:

Parenting style has been differentiated in terms of whether it is authoritarian or authoritative. An authoritarian parenting style is characterised by harshness and punitiveness. The behaviour of children in this family environment is controlled through the assertion of power and domination. Parents who bully their children produce children who bully others. In contrast, an authoritative parenting style is characterised by support for the autonomy of the child while providing clear boundaries as to what is acceptable behaviour. Children who perceive their parents to adopt this style are less likely to engage in bullying behaviour (Rican et al., 1993).

Parent-child relationship:

The parent-child relationship has also been shown to be important. Children with positive relationships with their parents are less likely to participate in bullying (Rican et al., 1983; Rigby, 1993). In other words, children who are insecurely attached to their parents are more likely to bully their peers.

Family disharmony:

Along consistent lines, it has also been shown that children who perceive their families to be less cohesive and less caring for each other, are also more likely to participate in school bullying (Bowers, Smith & Binney, 1992, 1994; Berdondini & Smith, 1996).

Morrison (forthcoming) concludes that generally speaking, the family life of children who bully others can be characterised by neglect, dominance, hostility, and harsh punishment (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1993, 1994). This family dynamic can be overt or insidious. The children of these families model the conflict resolution style to which they have been exposed. Children who observe their parents behaving aggressively begin to behave aggressively, as they come to believe that aggression is the norm, in the home and outside (Ahmed, et al., 2001).

Children's interaction with their siblings is also a factor (Patterson, 1986). Aggression between siblings has been found to be the most common form of family violence (Struas et al. 1981). By not intervening when siblings fight, parents can inadvertently support bullying. Children cannot proceed to productive levels of resolution unless parents signal the inappropriateness of their behaviour and ensure they have effective role models in resolving conflict (Morrison, forthcoming).

Child maltreatment:

Research published in January 2003 by the Australian Institute of Criminology also demonstrates a direct path from *child maltreatment* to juvenile offending (Stewart, Dennison & Waterson, 2002). A major study focussing on 41,700 children born in Queensland in 1983 found that by the time they were 17, 10% of these children had been the subject of a child protection matter with the Department of Families – 25%

of the male children and 11% of the female children who had been maltreated subsequently offended, with 5% having appeared in court for a proven offence. The study found that physical abuse and neglect are significant predictive factors for youth offending, but sexual and emotional abuse are not. 23% of children who were victims of physical abuse subsequently offended, compared with 15% of maltreated children who were not physically abused. Maltreated Indigenous children were four times more likely to offend than non Indigenous children.

Domestic violence and aggression in later life:

Rigby, Whish and Black (1994) present evidence that children from homes in which interpersonal conflict is common are more likely to be bullies at school, and that children who are inclined to bully others at school continue to be highly interpersonally aggressive in later life (1994: 8). In their study, conducted with secondary school students, they examined both the common features of bullying in schools and abuse in the home, and also causal links.

One of the study's findings was that:

boys especially who are bullied at school are more pre-disposed than others to feel that wife abuse is legitimate. Hence it is not simply being a bully at school that constitutes a threat to society at a later stage in the child's development ... being a victim appears to have implications for approval of violence against weaker people, which suggests that wife-abusers are not uncommonly men who, as children, were continually abused by their peers at school.

The study also showed that support among school children for the use of physical abuse by husbands is disturbingly high. "Two boys out of five indicated that hitting a wife to resolve a disagreement was acceptable even in some relatively non-serious matters" (1994:11). This research supports the focus on prevention of violence in schools as a direct means towards prevention of and early intervention in domestic violence (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003).

For perpetrators of violence in schools, longitudinal studies have shown that there is often a continuity of aggressive and dominating behaviours over time (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz & Walder, 1984; McCord, 1991; Moffitt, 1993; Pepler & Rubin, 1991; Tremblay, McCord & Boileau, 1992).

Pepler and Craig's (1997) work reveals that the form that bullying takes changes with life stage: from playgroup bullying and gang violence, to sexual and workplace harassment, to child abuse and domestic violence, as well as abuse of our elders and disabled.

3.2 Peers

Peers play an important role in understanding bullying and victimisation. An interesting finding shows that 85% of bullying episodes occur in the context of a peer group (Atlas & Pepler, 1997; Craig & Pepler, 1997). While most (83%) students report feeling uncomfortable when confronted with an incident of bullying, peers have been observed to adopt many roles; joining in, cheering, passively watching and, on occasion, intervening. This observational research has spotted the following pattern of interaction between peers. More often than not, positive attention is given to the bully over the victim. This reinforces the bully's dominance over the victim and their position within the peer group. Peers attracted to aggression become excited and join in, more often in the case of boys than girls (Salminvalli et al., 1996).

3.3 The school

School culture also contributes significantly to the reduction of bullying. Schools differ significantly in the amounts of reported bullying, even when socio-economic and other variables are controlled (Rigby, 1996).

Morrison (forthcoming) argues that without the support of those in power in the school, addressing bullying in a systematic way can be an uphill battle. It is important for everyone in the school to be committed to reducing bullying in the school. In particular, teachers need the support of the principal if school bullying is going to be reduced (Charach et al., 1995). Positive and supportive school relationships between all members of the school community (principals, teachers, students and parents) can have a positive impact on reducing school bullying. Having all members of the school community share in the decision-making that affects their lives has also been found to be particularly effective (Olweus, 1987). This process has been applied to the development of the school bullying policies, as it aids in making the message clear that bullying behaviour is not condoned and that follow-through is consistently applied (Olweus, 1991). It is also incorporated in the *National Safe School Framework's* guiding principles.

It is also important that schools and their classrooms are well structured physically and well integrated culturally. More behaviour problems occur in classrooms where this is absent (Doyle, 1986). Teachers' organisational skills are essential to the goal of maintaining order. Effective teachers have a very clear communication style; monitor and respond to student behaviour; and endorse student responsibility and accountability for their work (Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Duke, 1989). In contrast, disorderly schools are characterised by teachers with punitive attitudes; rules that are loosely enforced and perceived to be unfair or unclear; ambiguous responses to student misbehaviour; a non-consensual attitude between school staff about appropriate responses to misconduct; and general staff disagreement. Lack of appropriate resources within schools is also associated with higher levels of school bullying (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1995). The parallels with the risk factors associated with family life are clearly evident. Schools need to be consistently authoritative rather than authoritarian (Morrison, forthcoming).

Schools also play a role through recognising where bullying occurs. Generally, students are much more aware of bullying than teachers (Section 4 refers). When there are consequences for bullying at school, children who bully are careful about where and how they exert their dominance. One UK study showed that teachers only intervene in one in 25 bullying episodes (Craig & Pepler, 1997). There are times and places at school where bullying is most likely to occur. Bullying often occurs when there is little or no supervision, such as on the school playground (Olweus, 1991; Pepler et al., 1997). Bullying is also more likely to occur during more competitive or aggressive activities (Murphy et al., 1983). Morrison (forthcoming) concludes that this highlights the importance of supervision of students during non-classroom time and the maintenance of behaviour codes during all school activities.

3.4 Social institutions

Morrison (forthcoming) argues that the assertion of power, across many contexts, is rewarded in many ways. Violence, and other forms of bullying, are legitimated by corporate bodies, sporting institutions and the family. The consistent message in the media, be it the evening news, the latest block buster production or morning cartoons, is that bullying works – i.e. that domination of others is an effective means to an end. Aggressive children are more likely to be drawn to and imitate media violence (Huesmann et al., 1984). Those developmentally predisposed to bullying

and other forms of school violence are also predisposed to seek out aggressive acts in the media and others who perpetrate it (i.e. through the internet, television and street gangs).

Section 4 – How pervasive is school bullying?

The full extent of bullying is very hard to detect. It usually happens out of sight, away from teachers or other adults. The people most likely to know what is going on are other children. Children who are being bullied often do not tell anyone because they feel weak or ashamed, or are frightened that it will only make things worse.

If they do tell, it is most likely they will tell their parents – usually their mother or their friends – before they will tell a teacher (DEST, 2000). In fact, it has been suggested that only a very small percentage of children ever tell anyone they are being bullied.

Bullying in schools is a world-wide phenomenon. The data in Australia mirrors that of other countries, such as Canada, Scandinavia, Ireland and England (Morrison, 2001). The first systematic empirical study of bullying in schools in Australia, drawing upon reports from children in South Australia, was published in the early 1990s (Rigby & Slee, 1991). From this it was clear that bullying was prevalent in Australian primary and secondary schools.

Six years later, results from a large scale national survey of more than 38,000 schoolchildren between 7 and 17 years established that approximately one child in six was bullied by peers each week in Australian schools (Rigby, 1997). To date, no comparable study has been published in relation to Australian children under 7 years old in schools or preschools (National Crime Prevention, 2002). However, it has been reported that bullying is prevalent in Australian kindergartens. Following an observational study conducted at four early childhood centres in Canberra in 1994, graphic evidence was presented of both physical and verbal bullying, perpetrated mainly by boys and frequently ignored by kindergarten staff (Main, 1999).

Victimisation is more frequently reported by younger students and girls generally report less victimisation than boys. In secondary school the amount of bullying is highest in Years 8 and 9.

Research involving approximately 5,884 primary and secondary students from Catholic, Independent and government schools around Australia (Slee, forthcoming) found that boys report that they could 'join in' bullying another child more than girls (9% compared to 4%) and secondary students are more likely to report that they could bully another child than primary school students (11% compared to 5%). Approximately 5% of students reported that they have 'often' bullied another child either in a group or by themselves.

In 2002, Kids Help Line received almost 6,000 calls about bullying from young people in Australia. Overall, it is the fourth most common reason young people seek help from the service. Among those under 15, it is the third most common reason. The reasons young callers to Kids Help Line give for victimisation include: ethnicity (the rate of bullying calls from Indigenous and non-English speaking callers is higher than for other callers); resistance to pressure to behave in a certain way; physical differences; high achievement; being new; sexual orientation; and socio-economic background.

There is no evidence to suggest that the size of the school, or whether the school is single-sex or co-educational, or government or non-government, makes any significant difference to the amount of bullying that goes on.

Bullying may be physical, psychological or verbal. While boys bully in overt physical ways, girls are more insidious (Craig and Pepler, 1997). The Australian research of Owens, Slee and Shute (2002) has provided new insight into the nature of girls' aggression and to the damaging effects of indirect or relational aggression in peer relationships.

The research has shown that while most bullying lasts for a day or two, for a disturbingly high percentage of students it lasts weeks or more. Research now leaves little doubt regarding the cumulative negative effects of being subject to repetitive acts of bullying or violence (Slee, 2001).

Section 5 – The effects of bullying

The harmful effects of school bullying are now well documented. Generally, the findings confirm that bullying is a physically harmful, psychologically damaging and socially isolating aspect of an unnecessarily large number of Australian children's school experience (Slee, 2001). Bullying, harassment, violence and discrimination are harmful to both victims and perpetrators.

5.1 Students who are bullied

The damaging physical effects have been highlighted in Australian studies. Children who are bullied have higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression and illness, and an increased tendency to suicide (Cox, 1995; Rigby, 1998; Rigby, 1999). The victims of bullying are two to three times more likely to contemplate suicide than their peers (Rigby, 1998). Psychological well-being (e.g., self esteem and happiness) has been shown to suffer with bullying, while loneliness and alienation from peers is also linked with victimisation. Research has clearly linked victimisation with poor school adjustment (Slee, 2001).

Victims are typically withdrawn and anxious, characterised by tenseness, fears and worries (Neary & Joseph, 1994; Slee, 1995). This is particularly evident in younger years. Try as they may, they find it difficult to fit in with others. As a result, victims report lower self-esteem (Besag, 1989; Egan & Perry, 1998) and depression, characterised by sadness and loss of interest (Slee, 1995; Craig, 1998). The anxiety and depression associated with victims has also been linked to lower immunity to illness (Cox, 1995). A study reported in the British Medical Journal showed that children who were bullied suffered health problems such as eating and sleep disorders, headaches and stomach aches (Williams, 1996 and Williams et al., 1996). An Australian study has shown that victims have higher levels of anxiety, social dysfunction, depression and other somatic symptoms (Rigby, 1998). They report more headaches, sore throats and mouth sores. Victimisation has also been associated with suicidal ideation (Rigby, 1998). Furthermore, the effects are long term (Rigby, 1999).

Just as bullying eases the way for children who are drawn to a path of delinquency and criminality (Farrington, 1993; Junger, 1990), a number of general points can be made about the path of children who are victimised. Over time, they are less inclined to relate positively to the school environment and may exclude themselves. Rigby (1998) found that 9% of girls and 6% of boys reported staying away from school at least once because of school bullying. The high anxiety levels that these children

report interferes with their ability to concentrate and their capacity to learn. Finally, their health, mentally and physically, is affected, both short and long term.

In extreme cases, victims of bullying may resort to violent retaliation. While experts say that suffering bullying at school would rarely lead to murder, they do agree that bullying is a common theme emerging in school shootings. A study by the U.S. Secret Service found that most perpetrators of school shootings were the victims of bullying (Boston.com news, 25/09/03). A study of 37 school shootings from 1974 to 2000 by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education found that more than half the time, revenge was cited as a motive (Marcotty, Star Tribune, 26/09/03).

5.2 Students who bully others

Victims of bullying are not the only ones who are adversely affected. Those who bully are more likely to drop out of school, use drugs and alcohol, as well as engage in subsequent delinquent and criminal behaviour (Gottfredson, Gottfredson & Hybl, 1993). Young bullies carry a one in four chance of having a criminal record by the age of 30 (Huesmann et al., 1984).

A more recent, large-scale study in Sweden found that 60% of the boys labelled as bullies in Years 6 – 9 (ages 13 to 16) had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24. Further, 35 – 40% of the young bullies had been convicted of at least three officially registered crimes by the age of 24. In contrast, this was true of only 10% of boys who were not classified as bullies. In other words, former school bullies were four times more likely than other students to engage in relatively serious crime (Olweus, 1994).

Morrison (forthcoming) argues that the process of becoming a chronic offender (and victim) in society is often fed by the cycles of bullying and victimisation that develop in the school system. Not all children who bully are on the trajectory that leads to violence and criminality later in life. But of all children, these are the ones most at risk for eventually committing violent crimes.

In Australia, this evidence has been clearly recognised. The National Crime Prevention Branch of the Attorney-General's Department has identified school bullying as a risk factor associated with antisocial and criminal behaviour in its publication "Pathways to prevention: Developmental and early intervention approaches to crime in Australia" (National Crime Prevention, 1999).

5.3 Students who bully others and are bullied

A number of surveys have identified students who report being both bullies and victims. This category covers the smallest percentage of students. A recent Australian sample found it to be just over 8% of students (Ahmed et al, 2001). By comparison, a Canadian sample found that 2% of students fit into this category and a British sample report 6% (respectively, Pepler et al., 1997; Stephenson and Smith, 1989).

Given that students in either one of these categories are already at high risk of maladjustment, these children are at an even higher risk of developing a range of adjustment problems and subsequent antisocial behaviour. They are the most insecure, the least likeable and the most unsuccessful in school (Stephenson & Smith, 1989).

Section 6 – What strategies are effective in dealing with bullying?

The clear message from the literature is that a 'whole school approach', in which the resources of the whole school community are drawn upon and coordinated in a systematic manner in addressing the problem of bullying, is much more likely to be successful than single-factor interventions. "A key ingredient seems to be the conceptualisation of the school community in a holistic way, consisting of students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders, combined with the acceptance by management of their responsibility to achieve and maintain a harmonious and caring school environment" (Homel, year?). Section 3 (e.g., *The school*) also refers.

Peer intervention and mediation can reduce overall levels of bullying in schools. Mediation is often effective when peers become involved in whole school anti-bullying programs. One study has shown that peers often intervene more than adults – respectively, 11% compared to 4% (Morrison, forthcoming).

There is a lack of independent evaluative evidence about the effectiveness of Australian anti-bullying programmes (Attachment 2 refers). A June 2002 meta-evaluation of worldwide research, commissioned by the Attorney-General's Department and authored by Ken Rigby, reports on programmes and procedures that have led to significant reductions in bullying in schools. Strategies have varied somewhat between programmes, but have generally had the following in common:

- Education of school staff about bullying and harassment through in-servicing, with a focus on what is happening between students in the school, making use of appropriate data gathering methods (e.g., surveys) and related discussion.
- The development of specific policy to counter bullying in the school, employing a consultative approach involving students and parents. Emerging policy has normally included an agreed definition of bullying and harassment, a statement of rights and responsibilities of members of the school community and an outline of how the school is undertaking to address the problem. In developing such a policy, it is considered necessary to take into account the content of other relevant documentation, e.g., that relating to Behaviour Management, Sexual Harassment and Racial Harassment.
- The use of the school curriculum to provide lessons and activities designed to help children develop knowledge, attitudes and skills that will help them deal more effectively with issues of bullying, including sessions relating to: anger-management, the distinction between assertiveness and aggressiveness, methods of conflict resolution, how bystanders can discourage bullying, the development of cooperativeness and empathy, and the identification of prejudice and discrimination, for example, as they relate to racism, gender bias and homophobia.
- The empowerment of students to assist in reducing conflict, for example, through the use of programmes to train students to act as peer mediators, peacekeepers, peer supporters, peer counsellors, buddies or members of anti-bullying committees working with school authorities.
- Clarification of the roles of staff members in countering bullying in schools, for example, in monitoring student behaviour in the schoolyard and intervening and reporting where necessary, and in modelling and encouraging respectful, pro-social behaviour. (Note links with values education.)

- Working closely with parents to prevent bullying, informing and consulting with them on relevant issues, especially when their children become involved in bully/victim problems, either as perpetrators, victims or both.
- Addressing cases of bullying that arise, taking into account the nature and severity of the problem and the likely effectiveness of possible modes of intervention. Currently available research does not enable Australian educators to conclude that one intervention method is, in general, more effective than another (divergent) approach. Programmes that have emphasised the use of clear rules about bullying and negative sanctions for their infringement have been no more effective than programmes that have advocated problem-solving approaches such as Mediation, the Method of Shared Concern, the No Blame Approach and Community Conferencing based upon principles of restorative justice. Rigby concludes that possibly each may be applied, depending upon particular circumstances.
- The clear documentation of steps that have been taken in particular cases together with outcomes in order to facilitate evaluation and justify possible modification in approaches.
- A focus on restoring the well-being of students who have been psychologically damaged by continued harassment, especially through providing adequate counselling and social support.
- Collaboration with appropriate agencies with a related or complementary function, for example, the police and mental health organisations.

It is important to note that, of the 13 studies selected as meeting rigorous research criteria which enabled the researchers to reach conclusions about the effectiveness of an intervention program, only one was Australian, because it is currently the only published study of an intervention evaluation in Australia. In the report, Rigby argues that the dearth of Australian research in evaluating interventions is of serious concern. He stresses that even though Australian educators can learn from the work conducted overseas, there is always the suspicion that generalisations across cultures may not be valid. The meta-evaluation also showed that:

- there is fairly consistent evidence from evaluations conducted in many countries that bullying behaviour between children in schools and centres can be reduced significantly by well-planned intervention programs;
- the chances of success in reducing bullying are greater if interventions are carried out among young children, that is, in pre-secondary school;
- there is evidence from results from control groups composed of students with whom programs were not implemented that, in the absence of interventions, bullying tends to increase;
- the commitment of a school to a program and strong involvement by staff in its implementation appears to be an important and possibly crucial factor in reducing bullying.

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