

# ANTI-BULLYING for Schools

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HANDBOOK November 2019

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## Statement of Purpose

Our school rejects all forms of bullying behaviours, including online (or cyber) bullying, by maintaining a commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning community that promotes student wellbeing.

Our staff are committed to establishing evidence-based approaches and strategies that promote a positive climate where bullying is less likely to occur.

These guidelines reflect the requirements of the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Student Anti-Bullying Policy and provide information for our school community to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying.

## Scope

These guidelines apply to all student bullying behaviour, including online (cyber) bullying, and apply to outside of school hours and off school premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the school.

These guidelines will be implemented within the context of related Diocese and school policies and frameworks such as wellbeing and pastoral care, behaviour, acceptable use of technology, and complaints handling.

## Understanding Bullying

These guidelines are based on the widely accepted definitions of bullying behaviour that emphasise the following characteristics:

- Bullying is deliberate – there is an intention to cause physical and/or psychological pain or discomfort to another person.
- Bullying involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship – there is an actual or perceived unequal relationship that may be based on physical size, age, gender, social status or digital capability and access.
- Bullying is ongoing and repeated – bullying behaviour is usually not one-off. It is repeated over time, with the threat of further incidents leading to fear and anxiety. Repeated acts of bullying may involve single acts with different targets, as well as multiple acts with the same individual.
- Bullying involves behaviours that can cause harm – there is short or long-term physical or psychological harm on those involved, including bystanders.

Conflicts or fights between equals, or single incidents are not defined as bullying. These matters are dealt with according to the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy, Conditions of Enrolment and the School Community Code of Conduct.

Bullying behaviour is not:

- Children not getting along well
- A situation of mutual conflict such as teasing or disagreement
- Single episodes of hurtful words or actions, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

## TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying behaviour is complex and can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and social (or relational) bullying. All of these forms of bullying can take place in the physical environment and/or in the digital environment and all can cause damage and harm. Bullying behaviour can be overt (direct and easily observed) or covert (indirect and hidden or less easily observed).

All allegations of bullying are taken seriously to ensure they are followed up thoroughly.

## CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is one particular form of bullying that is enabled, enhanced, or in some way mediated through digital technology. Email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites, gaming and instant messaging can all be used to bully others verbally, socially or psychologically.

The characteristics of bullying behaviour may be expressed differently in the context of cyberbullying. For example:

- repetition – can be influenced by the ability of a single action to spread and be repeated rapidly to a wider audience and with a degree of permanence (e.g. forwarding texts).
- power imbalance – can also be a function of the anonymity of the person initiating the cyberbullying, or of an individual's ability to use technology.
- cyberbullying – can involve people who have never physically met and/or people who share no common acquaintances.

Examples of cyberbullying include:

- sending abusive texts or emails
- posting negative or inappropriate messages or images on social networking sites
- taking and sharing private images, including sexual images
- forming bullying groups on social networking sites
- assuming the identity of another person online and representing them in a way that may be harmful to them or cause them distress.

Bullying that takes place through digital technology has less boundaries than physical bullying. This is because digital information can be:

- rapidly duplicated, distributed, and accessed
- stored in multiple locations
- created and communicated automatically
- stored with varying levels of 'discoverability'
- in effect at any time of the day or night
- leave a permanent record (e.g. photos posted on the internet).

Cyberbullying may occur alongside bullying in a physical environment, which would intensify the effect.

## ROLES IN BULLYING

Bullying behaviour involves three parties: those that engage in bullying behaviour, those being bullied, and bystanders (those who witness the bullying).

Students who bully others often do so to gain status and recognition from their peers. Their bullying behaviour is reinforced when they intimidate their targets and when the peer group fails to challenge those engaged in bullying or reporting the bullying to staff.

Students of all ages can be at risk of being bullied for a whole host of reasons, including:

- being unassertive or withdrawn.
- differing from the majority culture of a school in terms of ethnicity, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socio-economic status, having a disability, special education needs or mental health issues.
- academic achievement (perceived as a high or low achiever).

- having recently transitioned into a school (through natural progression through schools, changing to a new school because of behavioural issues at a previous school or moving to the area).

Bystanders (i.e. witnesses to bullying behaviour) can have a powerful effect on either encouraging or inhibiting bullying behaviour. There are three main types of bystander:

- followers/assistants – do not initiate but take an active role in the bullying behaviour.
- supporters/reinforcers – support the bullying behaviour (overtly or covertly, e.g. by turning a blind eye) but do not take an active role in the bullying behaviour.
- defenders – dislike the bullying and try to help the target by intervening, getting teacher support or providing direct support.

## Our School's Approach to Preventing Bullying Behaviour

### PROMOTING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity and fosters positive relationships. A key component of a supportive school culture is building respectful relationships and an ethos that bullying is not accepted, in both online and offline environments. School staff will actively respond to student bullying behaviour.

### WHOLE-OF-SCHOOL APPROACH

Our school uses a whole-school approach to:

- Create and support an inclusive environment, which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Openly discuss differences that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language that does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Encourage positive and responsible use of technology, especially mobile phones and social media.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

### POLICY AND SUPPORT

- Provide a range of approaches for students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice and provide up-to-date advice and education regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with school policies, for any bullying brought to the school's attention, which involves or affects students, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online, etc.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Train staff to identify bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities.
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop the social and emotional skills of students, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

## STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Ensure students understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Ensure students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying and are clear on how to obtain support.
- Ensure students are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Ensure students who are bullied or bullying are offered appropriate support.

## PARENT/CARER INVOLVEMENT

- Ensure parents/carers are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Ensure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers, including via the school website.
- Ensure parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedures (<https://www.mn.catholic.edu.au/about/complaints-resolution-feedback/>), and how to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

## BULLYING PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Our school recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the school:

- A structured curriculum that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention.
- Training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Enabling an active student voice through forums such as the Student Representative Council (SRC).
- Maintaining vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision.
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a school community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying.
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/ carers.
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers.
- Encouraging reporting of incidents of alleged bullying, through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below).
- Maintaining records of alleged bullying incidents and analysing trends to enable targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.

- Promoting a 'no bullying' environment.

## REPORTING BULLYING

A key part of our school's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within our school.
- their concerns will be taken seriously.
- the school has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Reports of student bullying can be made to an appropriate staff member at our school.

## ANTI-BULLYING PLANS: RESPONDING TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Our procedures to respond to bullying incidents aim to:

- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- React to incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner.
- Protect and provide appropriate support and sensitivity for the student who has experienced bullying behaviour and the student that has reported / disclosed the bullying behaviour.
- Apply appropriate student behaviour support for the student/s who has engaged in bullying behaviour and ensure that there is a positive outcome, adequate follow up and that relationships are restored for all involved.

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances, our school:

- takes bullying incidents seriously.
- will provide reassurance that reporting the incident is the right thing to do.
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with all involved.
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved.
- will provide appropriate support for targets, bystanders and initiators of bullying behaviour.
- will involve parents/carers as early as possible and as appropriate.
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents.
- will escalate a response when dealing with persistent and/or severe incidents. If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services if it is reasonably believed that a child is at risk of significant harm.
- regularly monitors all incidents of bullying and identify patterns of behaviour.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- Notification of/consultation with parents/carers.
- Counselling support.
- Implementing effective follow up strategies, or
- Disciplinary action at the Principal's/Assistant Director's/Director of School's discretion including suspension and expulsion of persistent cases or in cases of severe incidents.

## RAISING AWARENESS



We recognise the importance of good communication between home and school to promote consistent messages and to ensure that any reported bullying can be recognised and responded to effectively. We will regularly raise the awareness of our school approach to bullying and celebrate our positive school culture, for example through parent evenings, assemblies, class-based activities, and displays. Our interaction with our wider school community will include information in school newsletters, and on the school's website (including the policy).

## EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Principal monitors the implementation of the Student Anti-Bullying Policy and these guidelines and reviews their effectiveness on an annual basis.

## Guidance for Students<sup>1</sup>

### What can I do if I'm being bullied?

- Tell the student who is bullying to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is against school values/rules and is offensive.
- Ignore them and walk away.
- Seek help. Talk about it to someone you trust. Tell a teacher or another adult at school. Feel confident that an incident can be solved.
- Tell your family.
- Take a friend with you if you are worried to tell someone by yourself.
- Keep telling people until someone listens.
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened.
- Do not retaliate with physical or verbal abuse.
- If you are experiencing bullying on the way to or from school, tell someone and walk home with a friend.

### If bullying happens on the phone or internet

- Don't respond to the message.
- Tell your parents/carers, a family member, a grandparent, teacher, friend or someone else who can help you work out what to do. Advice for parents and carers is available on <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>.

### What can I do if I see someone being bullied?

If you see bullying and feel confident enough to take safe action, there's a bigger chance that the bullying will stop. You can use words or actions to help someone who is being bullied (be an 'upstander'). A group of students standing up to bullying together helps everyone to stay safe.

- Tell the person to stop bullying.
- Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Encourage the person being bullied to inform someone.
- Seek help. You can decide to do something about it and help to protect others.
- Write a description of the event and give it to a teacher.
- Tell someone, talk it over with the teacher, your parents/carers or someone in your family.
- Include them in your group and introduce them to your friends.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Bullying. No Way!

- Suggest safe places for them to go.
- Show them how to set their privacy settings on social networking sites and mobile devices.
- Avoid joining in. Don't:
- Reinforce the bullying behaviour by encouraging, cheering and laughing, even if it is from a distance or when you hear about it later.
- Resend or respond to messages or photos that may be offensive or upsetting to someone.
- Harass, tease or spread gossip about otherseither in person or via social media or other fora.

## Guidance for Parents and Carers

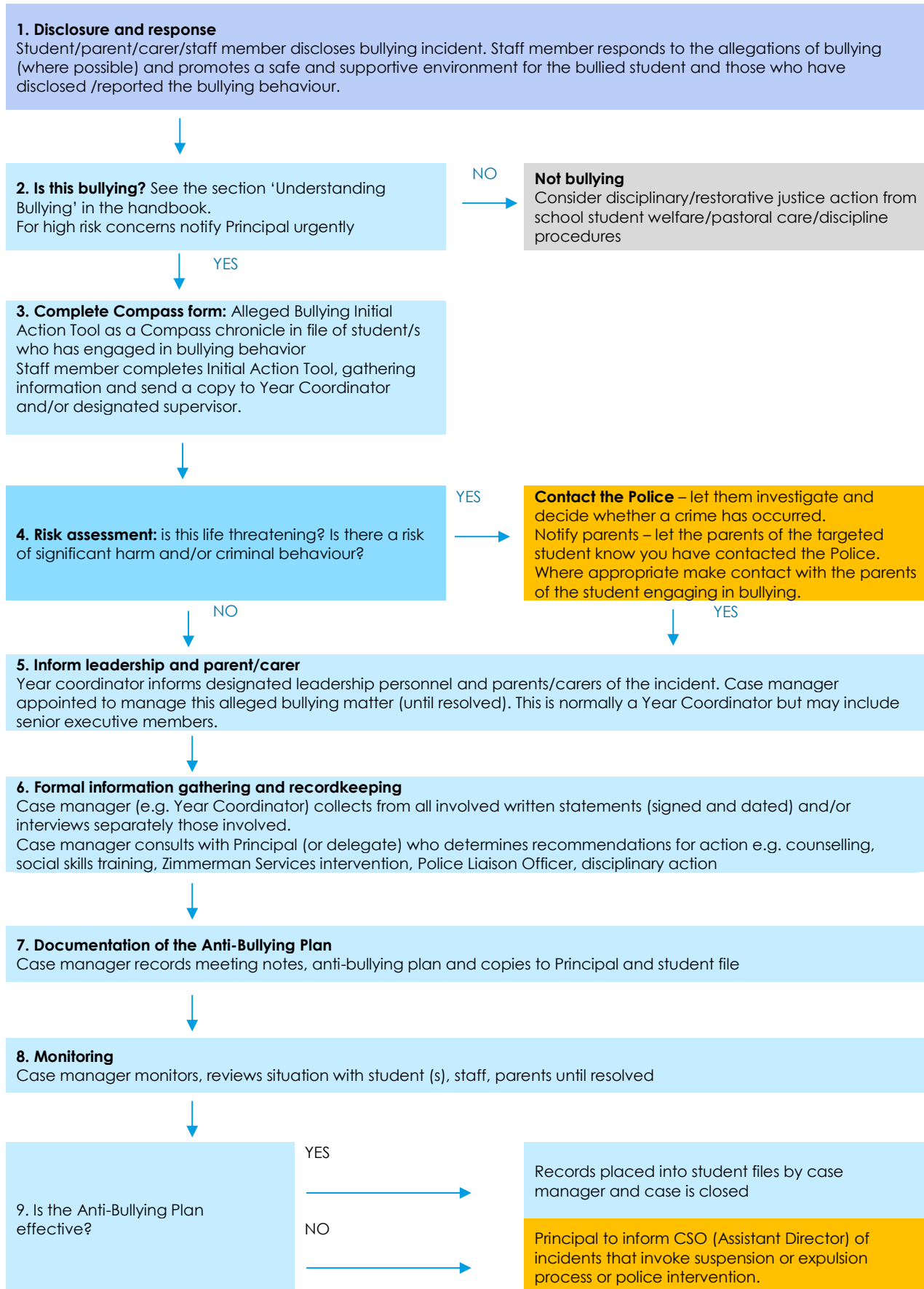
### **What can parents/carers do?**

- Be aware of signs of distress in your child, e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of illness, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged equipment or clothing.
- Inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your child is not directly involved or affected.
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances.
- Assist your child to discuss any incidence of bullying with a teacher. If possible, allow your child to report and deal with the situation. Your child can gain respect and confidence through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without direct parental involvement.
- If your child is being bullied, discourage any planned retaliation, either physical or verbal, by discussing positive strategies they can use.
- Be positive about your child's qualities and encourage your child to be tolerant and caring.
- Be willing to attend interviews if your child is involved in an incident of bullying, and work cooperatively with the school.
- Do not deal directly with the other children or their parents/carers but work through and with the school.
- Discuss the school's expectations about behaviour and how best to deal with bullying.

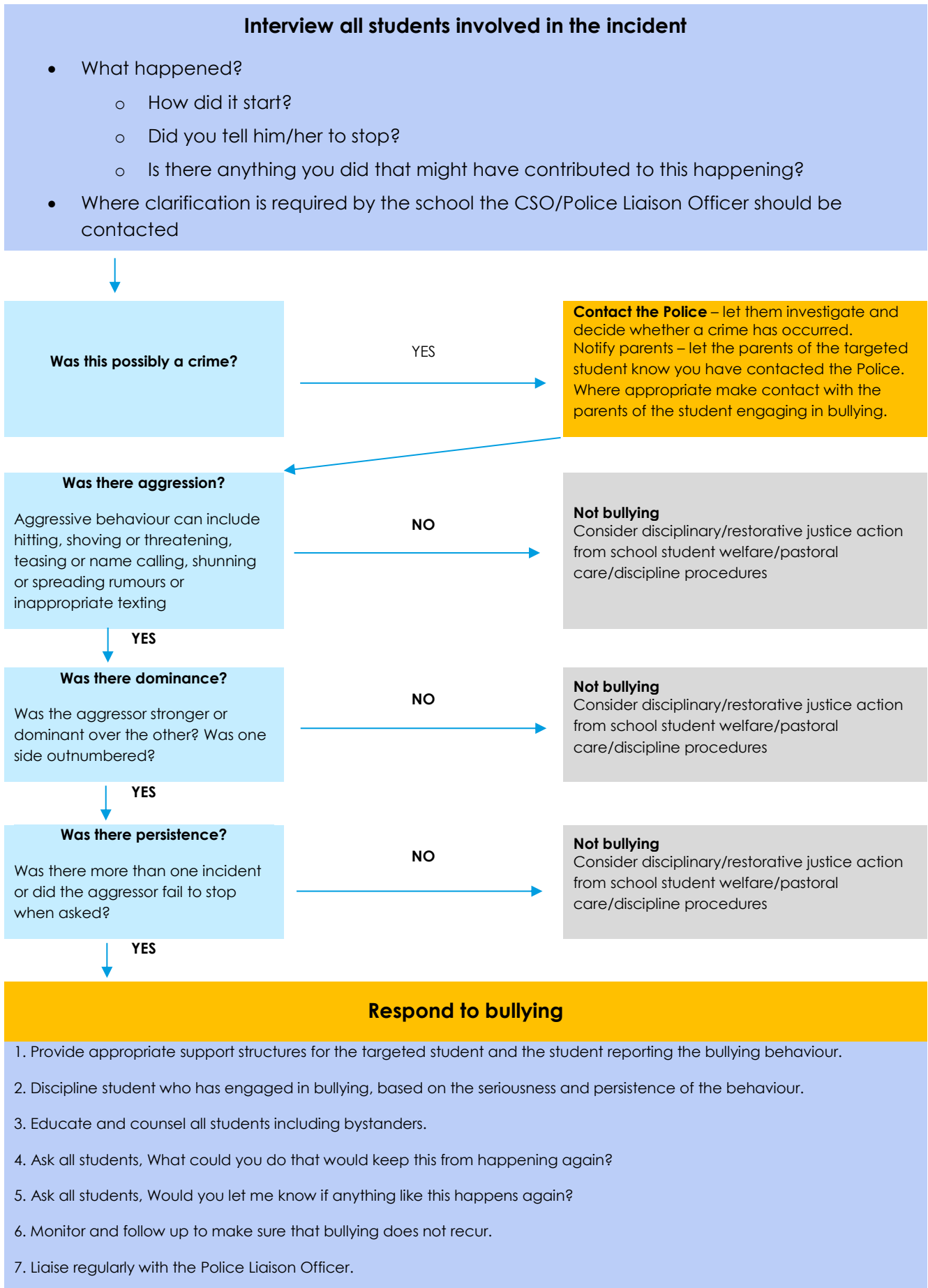
# Tools and Templates

## ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES FOR STAFF FLOW CHART

**ALL RELEVANT PARTIES ARE INFORMED ABOUT ACTIONS BEING TAKEN THROUGHOUT THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS.**



## BULLYING ASSESSMENT AND ACTION FLOW CHART



**ALLEGED BULLYING INITIAL ACTION TOOL**

This form is a Compass student chronicle to be completed as a record **on the files of all students involved in the incident/s.**

All school employees are required to report alleged violations and every act of bullying will be investigated, and parents/carers informed.

**Date of incident:**

**Time of incident:**

**Name of student who has engaged in alleged bullying behaviour:**

**Name of bullied student/s:**

**Date reported:**

**Reported to:**

**Location: Where did the incident occur?**

- On bus transport       In playground       In classroom       Outside school       Other
- Other (Please give details)

**Who reported the alleged incident?**

Name:

- Bullied student       Other student       Parent/carer       Member of staff       School community member

**Identify the nature of the alleged bullying incident:**

|   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Written</b><br>e.g. graffiti, notes, letters, writing on books, written threats, ridicule through drawings, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Social</b><br>e.g. lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberate exclusion, etc.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Verbal</b><br>e.g. name-calling, insults, threats, severe sarcasm, abusive comments, racist remarks, etc.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Physical</b><br>e.g. pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, hitting, poking, spitting, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cyber</b><br>e.g. using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites, etc. to verbally, socially or psychologically bully |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Psychological bullying</b><br>e.g. intimidation, manipulation and stalking  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Damage to property</b><br>e.g. Theft of bags, clothes, money, property, tearing clothes, ripping books etc.   |
| <b>Briefly outline what occurred in the alleged incident:</b><br><br><br><br>   |

**Is there concern the alleged incident may have been influenced by any of the following?**

- Race/culture       Disability       Gender       Socio-economic status

Other (provide details)

**Is there evidence of an imbalance of power in this incident?**

- Academic ability       Age       Social status       Strength       Size

Other (provide details)

**Is there evidence that this behaviour is deliberate or planned?**

**According to the alleged bullied student has he/she experienced other or repeated incidences of bullying from the alleged student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour? (If yes, please give dates, who was involved, outcomes.)**

**Is there any relevant background/history to this alleged incident?**

**Were there any witnesses? (Identify student names and year/class)**

**What do the witnesses to the alleged incident perceive happened?**

**What effect is the situation having on the student's wellbeing including self-esteem, feelings about school, motivation, relationships with peers, physical health, etc.?**

**What is required to resolve this situation now and in the future?**

**Indicate the investigative procedures carried out.**

- Interviewed student(s) involved
  
- Interviewed parent/carer of bullied student(s)
  
- Interviewed parents of student(s) alleged to have bullied

**Was the allegation of bullying substantiated?**

- Yes**    **No**

If **'No'**, documentation remains on both student/s files.

If **'Yes'**, two letters are to be completed: one to the parent/carer of the bullying student, and one to the parent/carer of the student being bullied. Copies of these letters are to be documented in student files and the incident referred to the House Coordinator or Principal as per the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Staff Flow Chart and the Bullying Assessment and Action Flow Chart.

## SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/CARERS OF STUDENT ENGAGED IN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Dear (Name)

At (school name), we seek to foster and develop a safe, positive physical and emotional school environment that creates a climate of trust. Students, staff, parents and the school community share the responsibility for making our school a respectful and inclusive environment.

On (insert date), a disclosure was made to the school regarding an incident that occurred on (insert date) alleging that (insert name) has participated in a bullying incident.

Careful investigation of this disclosure has confirmed that unfortunately, (insert name) has taken part in a bullying incident.

I would like to inform you that appropriate action has been taken, according to the school's Anti-Bullying Plan.

I am hopeful that (insert name) will not take part in any further incidents of this nature and seek your support to reinforce with your child the importance of respectful relationships and the impact of bullying on self and others.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you wish to discuss this matter further or need additional assistance to support your child.

We invite you to make contact with us so we can discuss the details of this incident. It is important that we work together to let students know that bullying is not OK. We are aware that this incident may have a negative impact on your child and their wellbeing. If you would like to access support for your child through our counselling team, please don't hesitate to make contact with me to discuss this on (02 phone number). You may wish to get advice from Kids Helpline who are trained to provide support, information and counselling for children and/or their parents (Tel 1800 55 1800).

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

✂ ----- (return this section)

I acknowledge receipt of this letter and support the school in its actions to address bullying.

Name ..... Signature .....

Date .....

**Please return to ..... by .....**



## SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/CARERS OF STUDENT BEING BULLIED

Dear (Name)

At (school name), we seek to foster and develop a safe, positive physical and emotional school environment that creates a climate of trust. Students, staff, parents and the school community share the responsibility for making our school a respectful and inclusive environment.

On (insert date), a disclosure was made to the school regarding an incident that occurred on (insert date) that (insert name) has been subject to bullying.

Careful investigation of this disclosure has confirmed that unfortunately, (insert name) has been subject to bullying behaviour.

I would like to inform you that appropriate action has been taken, according to the school's Anti-Bullying Plan.

If at a later date you become aware of any incidents of this nature occurring again, I would ask you to alert the school so that further action can be taken.

We invite you to make contact with us so we can discuss the details of this incident. We are aware that this incident may have a negative impact on your child and their wellbeing. Encourage your child to speak to their classroom teacher or another trusted member of staff. School counsellors are available at all Catholic schools, or you or your child may wish to contact Kids Helpline who are trained to provide support, information and counselling for children and/or their parents (Tel 1800 55 1800).

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

✂ ----- (return this section)

I acknowledge receipt of this letter and support the school in its actions to address bullying.

Name ..... Signature .....

Date .....

**Please return to ..... by .....**

## Evidence-Based Strategies and Programs

There is consistent evidence from evaluations conducted in many countries that bullying behaviour between children in schools can be reduced significantly by well-planned intervention programs that are evidence based. The following evidence-based programs are examples of leading practice in anti-bullying and cybersafety.

### E-SMART

The initiative was developed by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, and is a cybersafety and wellbeing framework for primary and secondary schools promoting the smart, safe and responsible use of information and communication technologies. It provides links to relevant resources through an online portal, support for schools in implementing the framework, and an online system for tracking and reporting on progress through the framework. Schools that satisfy the requirements are acknowledged as eSmart schools.

The Commonwealth Government provided \$3 million to pilot with 159 schools and evaluate nationally a comprehensive whole-school and community approach to the issue. The pilot clearly demonstrated the ability of the eSmart system to achieve its objectives as well as receiving enthusiastic support from participating schools. It also recommended eSmart schools as an effective and sustainable mechanism for implementing and satisfying most of the requirements of the National Safe Schools Framework.

### FRIENDLY SCHOOLS PLUS AND STRONG SCHOOLS PLUS

This is an evidence-based resource for primary and secondary schools designed by the Australian Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) and STEPS Professional Development. The program aims to build social skills and significantly reduce bullying in school communities.

Friendly Schools Plus and Strong Schools Plus draws on extensive and rigorous research into best practice, and includes evidence from four more major research studies, including ways to address cyberbullying, conducted by the CHPRC. The resources comprise over 75% new material, presented in a blended online and print environment. Friendly Schools Plus and Strong Schools Plus provide schools with the strategies and resources to achieve the vision and all nine elements of the newly revised National Safe Schools Framework.

The resources include:

1. *'Map the Gap'*: a quick online screening tool to help schools identify what they are doing well and what they need to build on to enhance their current social skills and bullying prevention initiatives.
2. *'Get Informed'*: a comprehensive book titled Evidence for Action that describes 'research-based practice' approaches which schools can implement to maximise and sustain effective social skill building and bullying prevention strategies.
3. *'Plan to Act'*: an in-depth planning tool with targeted strategies to address areas of need identified in the Map the Gap screening tool.
4. *'Walk the Talk'*: K-9 classroom resources and a range of online toolkits to assist schools implement whole-school strategies.
5. *'Review the News'*: evaluation and reflection tools to monitor the effectiveness of your school's social skills and bullying prevention activities and to inform planning for the following years.

A professional development model will be available to help schools build their capacity to provide high quality learning and support for teachers across the whole school to implement this resource.

## BE YOU

Be You was launched on November 1, 2018, transitioning from KidsMatter and MindMatters, and is being delivered by Beyond Blue, Early Childhood Australia and headspace. Be You is informed by current evidence and expert opinion about the factors that influence children's mental health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on factors schools can influence, such as social and emotional learning for students.

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS FOR LEARNING

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is derived from the Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach in the United States. It is a systems approach for establishing the whole school and individualised behaviour supports needed in order to ensure school is a safe and effective learning environment for everyone. The PBL framework is based upon a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model whereby intervention is provided universally, to all students in the school as a primary prevention approach. This means that positive social behaviours are defined for various settings in the school, explicitly taught through active lessons, and reinforced. Problem behaviours are also defined, and clear processes are established for discipline practices.

Additional interventions and supports are then provided for those students who are identified as requiring greater levels of support to learn and demonstrate the social behaviours that the school has defined. In this way, PBL aims to develop positive behaviour in students much in the same way that academic skills are taught, where students receive the level of intervention that matches their level of need in developing those skills.

A key part of a PBL approach is that behavioural data is collected to inform decision making. It guides staff on which behaviours within the school require the most support at any one time. It helps us see which settings within the school need more support. This data also informs staff as to which students are requiring higher levels of intervention, and with which specific behaviours.

Greater support for the PBL approach was a key recommendation within the report from the NSW Ombudsman's Inquiry into Behaviour Management in Schools (2017).

For implementation support contact a CSO Education Officer (Behaviour Support).

## RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative practices can resolve bullying issues and restore the sense of wellbeing for all involved, especially if the Method of Shared Concern, the No Blame Approach and social problem-solving methods are used. However, restorative practices section can be used in conjunction with any of the approaches listed in the handbook.

Restorative practices 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 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 practice is Community Conferencing. Following are the key principles of these methods:

- Bullying and harassment occur in the context of group behaviour.
- The aim is to develop empathy and concern for others.
- The dynamics that sustain bullying and harassment can be shifted by working with the perpetrators, and often their family and/or peer group.

- A shift in behaviour can be achieved by developing a sense of shared concern for the bullied or harassed persons.
- Punitive measures model and reinforce the abuse of power to meet individual needs, place the target at greater risk of revenge and may send the bullying underground.

Restorative practices require these factors to be in place first:

- The support of the victimised person, who needs to have identified that he/she is being bullied and is confident that the approach advocated will work.
- Preliminary investigation to clearly understand the issues before the process is implemented.
- Staff guidelines and professional development to build understanding, skills and confidence in using the strategies.
- Support within the school community for the approach.
- Agreement that the goal is to solve the problem rather than to interrogate, punish, blame or label individuals.
- Respectful facilitation of the process by trained people.
- Follow-up monitoring of the agreement.

## NO BLAME APPROACH

The No Blame Approach provides teachers with a way of encouraging empathy and dealing with individual bullying or harassment behaviours. The teacher acts both as facilitator and intermediary between the parties.

The No Blame Approach sequence:

1. Meet the victimised person to provide support, explain the proposed process and collect material on the impact of the bullying or harassment.
2. Consult with teachers who know the peer group well to establish a balanced group consisting of the main perpetrator and supporters, friends of the victimised person, and two assertive peers who have not attempted to prevent the bullying or harassment.
3. Convene a structured meeting of this group (without the targeted student present) to develop shared responsibility without blaming, to elicit suggestions for solving the problem, to encourage shared action and to establish a subsequent meeting (possibly in a week) to discuss progress.
4. Support the victimised person through daily meetings to check progress.

## METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN

This method (developed by Pikas, 1989) enables the trained teacher or counsellor to establish shared concerns and encourage shared solutions to the problem. The method includes initial individual meetings with perpetrators as well as a final meeting of all parties.

The Method of Shared Concern sequence:

1. Gather preliminary information to understand the problem.
2. Meet each of the perpetrators individually to encourage acknowledgment of the situation and to develop constructive responses and a plan to change the behaviour.
3. Meet the person being bullied or harassed.
4. Meet perpetrators individually to review progress of their agreement.
5. Following positive signs of change, hold a meeting of all perpetrators to reinforce the changes made and prepare for the next meeting.

6. Hold a final combined meeting of all involved as a public demonstration that the behaviours have ceased.

Instead of 'bullying the bullies', both of these strategies establish shared concerns and shared solutions to reconcile differences and encourage more equitable behaviour.

## FORMAL APOLOGY

The Formal Apology is a symbolic social contract that can mend relationships and restore personal wellbeing. As a learned negotiation process, it can help to develop empathy and show that the harmony of the group is more important than an individual's victory.

A successfully given and received apology involves:

- acknowledging that an accepted norm has been violated
- working out the appropriate time to make the apology
- naming the specific offence to the offended person
- explaining to the offended person why the offence was committed, that the behaviour isn't characteristic of the offender, and that it won't happen again
- communicating that the behaviour wasn't intended as a personal affront (and therefore the other person can feel safe in future)
- showing genuine regret for the behaviour.

As part of any of these restorative processes, individuals are likely to require assistance to develop understanding, skills, confidence and courage in giving genuine apologies.

Reference: A Meta-Evaluation of Methods and Approaches to Reducing Bullying in Pre-Schools and Early Primary Schools in Australia. Ken Rigby, 2002

## THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

This is a research/evidence-based school-wide program designed to prevent or reduce bullying throughout the school setting. The multi-component approach involves individuals, classrooms, entire schools, as well as parents/carers and communities, to successfully address bullying in schools.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

There are many SEL programs that schools may implement to meet their specific needs to build the social, emotional and motivational capacity of young people rather than focusing on their problems and deficits.

## QUALITY OF SCHOOL LIFE SURVEY

The ACER School Life Survey (primary school version) consists of 40 statements about school to which students are asked to indicate their level of agreement on a four-point scale from agree to disagree. The items encompass a number of different aspects of school life and form seven clusters of scales. Those clusters of scales are:

- General satisfaction: reflects favourable feelings about school as a whole
- Negative affect: refers to negative feelings about school
- Achievement: reflects a sense of confidence in ones ability to be successful at school
- Opportunity: a belief in the relevance of schooling for the future
- Teachers: adequacy of the interaction between teachers and students
- Social interaction: a sense of learning about getting along with other people
- Adventure: A sense of self-motivation in learning and that learning is enjoyable for its own sake.

## Useful Resources

### WEBSITES

☼ [www.beyou.edu.au/](http://www.beyou.edu.au/)

Be You launched November 1, 2018 and is being delivered by Beyond Blue, Early Childhood Australia and headspace. Be You is the Federal Government's renewed and expanded investment in children's mental health and wellbeing, covering the early years through school and up to the age of 18. The initiative builds on KidsMatter Early Childhood.

☼ [www.bounceback.com.au](http://www.bounceback.com.au)

This website developed by Toni Noble and Helen McGrath supports children and adults to develop a stronger sense of wellbeing and to be more resilient, confident and successful. The site provides useful resources (books, projects, articles, workshops) for schools to include in their pastoral care pursuits.

☼ [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

The Bullying No Way website has been developed in collaboration with other government and non-government authorities from the Commonwealth, states and territories. It showcases strategies that have to be successful in increasing safety and reducing bullying and harassment in schools throughout Australia. NSW schools are featured on this site.

☼ [cybersafetyforparents.mn.catholic.edu.au](http://cybersafetyforparents.mn.catholic.edu.au)

The purpose of the diocesan Cybersafety for Parents website is to bring together the huge variety of cybersafety resources into an easy to navigate, accessible site for parents. This site provides advice for parents to assist their children to stay safe on-line. It covers topics such as unwelcome websites, cyberbullying, strangers lurking on the internet and issues related to the use of mobile phones. Additional information around social networking, what to do when., and some important contact details are provided.

☼ [www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools.aspx](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools.aspx)

The Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) site houses the Cybersmart School's Gateway, which provides a wide range of cybersafety information and teaching resources for primary and secondary schools. These accessible and engaging materials are designed to help schools develop and implement an holistic approach to cybersafety.

☼ [www.deewr.gov.au/schoolingnationalsafeschools](http://www.deewr.gov.au/schoolingnationalsafeschools)

The National Safe Schools website gives links, within the program, to National Safe Schools Framework, Allannah and Madeline Foundation, What should I do if my child is being bullied?, state and territory anti-bullying policies, Keeping Safe and research in the area of bullying.

☼ [www.kenrigby.net](http://www.kenrigby.net)

Author/researcher Ken Rigby's site provides a plethora of information (books, articles, videos) in relation to 'bullying in schools and what to do about it'.

☼ [www.kidscape.org.uk/](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/)

Kidscape provides practical skills and resources to prevent bullying for children and young people under the age of 16.

☼ <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

The eSafety Commissioner website provides advice and resources for helping children stay safe online and how to combat and report cyberabuse.

### BOOKS

☼ *Bullying Solutions: Evidence-based approaches to bullying in Australian schools*. Edited by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble, Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd, 2006.

☼ *Schools, Courts and the Law: Managing student welfare*. Douglas J. Stewart and Andrew E. Knott, Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd, 2010.

☼ *Schools and the Law*. Des Butler and Ben Mathews, The Federation Press, 2007.