Bullying (including cyberbullying)

The National Centre Against Bullying defines bullying 'as an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through intentional and repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm' (n.d.). Research evidence clearly supports the harmful impact that bullying has on the lives of children and young people and their families.

Bullying is now recognised as a significant problem in Australian society and across the world. Its effects on individuals can result in poorer physical, psychological, cognitive and social outcomes for many involved, targets, perpetrators and often bystanders; negative effects that can persist into later life. Bullying can become entrenched. When an organisation tacitly condones it by failing to put in place explicit preventative and responsive measures, a culture emerges where power over others is endorsed and which allows bullying

Bullying may occur in person and/or online. 'Cyberbullying' refers to bullying that is carried out through the internet or mobile devices. The ready access that children and young people have to online environments means that bullying in person can be supplemented with online behaviour that targets the child or young person beyond the physical structure of an organisation.

- 84% of students who were bullied online were also bullied in person.
- 83% of students who bully others online also bully others in person.

Bullying. No way! 2018

BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Possible behaviours that characterise bullying include:

- verbal assaults (e.g. threats, teasing, name-calling, inappropriate tagging of images online, insulting comments or messages)
- physical assault (e.g. hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping and pushing)
- sexual harassment (e.g. making inappropriate sexual comments)
- discrimination (e.g. based on sexual orientation, racial, religious, disability, gender identity)
- excluding someone purposefully or influencing others not to interact with a particular person (e.g. creating hate sites on social networking sites, excluding other from online communication)
- engaging in gossip and the spreading of rumours
- sharing personal information and/or images online without consent to humiliate or embarrass others
- taking or damaging the possessions of others.

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

Possible physical indicators of bullying include:

- academic difficulties
- reluctance to attend school or other settings (avoidance)
- reluctance to talk about what is happening

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Bullying (including cyberbullying)

- physical injuries (e.g. bruises, cuts, scratches)
- feelings of anxiety and fear
- feeling sick (e.g. frequent headaches, stomach aches) or the pretence of sickness to avoid situations
- changes in eating habits (e.g. not eating, skipping meals)
- changes in sleeping patterns (e.g. insomnia)
- loss of friends
- secrecy about online communication.

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Possible behavioural indicators of bullying are:

- helplessness
- depression
- low self-esteem
- hopelessness
- loneliness and isolation
- self-harm
- suicidal behaviour.

> Approximately one in four Year 4 to Year 9 Australian students (27%) reported being bullied every few weeks or more often ...
>
> Bullying. No way! 2018

USEFUL RESOURCES

Bullying. No Way! provides useful information about understanding bullying and responding to bullying.
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au

Bully Stoppers is a resource website developed for schools to prevent bullying and provide support to those impacted by bullying. In addition to information sheets, online learning modules have been developed for primary and secondary school students.
www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx

Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides useful information about online safety issues:
E-safety www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues
Cyberbullying https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/cyberbullying

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