

MCEECDYA

Ministerial Council For Education, Early Childhood
Development And Youth Affairs

National Safe Schools Framework

RESOURCE MANUAL

This resource manual provides support for schools in their implementation of the National Safe Schools Framework.

CONTENTS

1. National Safe Schools Framework school audit tool

1

The Audit Tool enables schools to assess themselves against the National Safe Schools Framework's nine elements of safe and supportive schools. This tool is designed to assist schools to make informed judgments about what they are doing well and to identify gaps.

2. Frequently asked questions related to student safety and wellbeing

7

This section provides the evidence-informed answers to the most frequently asked questions posed by schools in relation to student safety and wellbeing. It is summary of section 6 which is a fully-referenced review of the research literature.

3. Key actions and effective practices for implementing the Framework's nine elements

17

This section elaborates on the key characteristics for each of the nine elements of the Framework. It also provides examples of key actions and effective practices for each characteristic that can enable schools to address the nine elements within the specific needs of their own school communities. The lists of key actions are not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive but instead are meant to be indicative of the practices that schools may consider adopting.

4. Commonly used terms and definitions

40

This section provides definitions for common terms used in this document and in the overall area of student wellbeing and safe schools.

5. Resources to support implementation of the Framework

52

This section provides an overview of useful resources such as legislation, policies, codes, guidelines, frameworks, curriculum activities and fact sheets. The list is not exhaustive, and is up to date at the time of publication. The majority of resources listed are available online, and most are either published by, or endorsed by, Commonwealth, state or territory governments.

6. Review of the literature on student safety and wellbeing in schools

72

This section provides a fully-referenced comprehensive review of the research literature on student safety and wellbeing, with a specific focus on bullying. This review elaborates on section 2: Frequently Asked Questions related to student safety and wellbeing.

1 SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL AND PLAN

The Audit Tool is designed to assist schools to make informed judgments about the extent to which they have created and maintained a safe and supportive learning environment. The Audit Tool enables schools to assess themselves against the following nine elements for safe and supportive schools:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community

This school self assessment tool has been presented to enable schools to tick the appropriate box that demonstrates the behaviour or action that is most characteristic of their school setting.

The following scale and explanatory notes are provided to help schools make an informed judgment about the current status of their school's safety:

Definitely true	There is extensive and consistent evidence of this action or behaviour
Mostly true	There is reasonable and consistent evidence of this action or behaviour
Only true to some degree	There is some evidence of this action or behaviour
Not true	There is no evidence of this action or behaviour

An analysis of the ratings given to each element will demonstrate those requiring urgent attention. The Audit Tool is best used to identify broad trends of the nine elements of the Framework. For example, if ratings within a particular element are only True to some degree or Not true, then this is an area that the school should follow up.

The Audit Tool will also identify those elements in which a school is currently performing well. In these circumstances, it is important to ensure that the successful strategies evident for this element are embedded within the school's systems and structures.

SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL

In relation to each of the statements below, tick the box that most commonly describes the situation at your school:

SAFE SCHOOL ELEMENT	Not True	Only true to some degree	Mostly true	Definitely true
1. Leadership commitment to a safe school				
The school leadership team takes responsibility for the development and maintenance of a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment.				
A clear vision for a safe, supportive and respectful school has been communicated across the school community.				
Plans are in place to ensure that the vision is sustained for the longer term.				
Within the school there is a clear understanding of the school's current capacity to enhance the wellbeing and safety of its students and actions that need to be taken to enhance that capacity.				
Data is collected about harassment, aggression, violence and bullying on a regular basis to inform decision-making about the safety of the school learning context.				
Resources are accessed to support the development and maintenance of a safe and supportive school.				
Key staff with specific responsibilities for student safety and wellbeing have been identified and supported.				
The school leadership team has a sound knowledge of the school community and its expectations for a safe school environment.				

SAFE SCHOOL ELEMENT

	Not True	Only true to some degree	Mostly true	Definitely true
2. Supportive and connected school culture				
Students feel connected to the school.				
Explicit pro-social values are taught, modeled and promoted across the school (e.g. respect, acceptance of diversity, fairness, honesty).				
Positive and respectful peer—teacher relationships are maintained.				
Positive and respectful peer—student relationships are maintained,				
Positive and respectful teacher to teacher relationships are maintained				
Parents and carers feel connected to the school.				
The school has a focus on staff wellbeing.				
The needs of specific groups (e.g. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or refugee and immigrant communities, people with a disability) in the school community have been recognised and addressed.				
3. Policies and procedures				
Safety and wellbeing policies have been developed.				
Step-by-step procedures are in place for staff when responding to child abuse and neglect, harassment, aggression and bullying.				
All staff are aware of these procedures.				
A responsible technology usage agreement is in place in the school.				
Clear procedures are in place enabling students, staff, parents and carers to confidentially report safety and wellbeing issues and concerns.				
Clear grievance procedures are in place for staff, parents and carers who experience harassment, aggression, violence or bullying.				
A risk assessment of the physical school environment has been done which informs effective risk management plans.				
Protocols about appropriate and inappropriate adult-student contact within the school context are followed.				
Protocols for visitors to the school are followed.				

SAFE SCHOOL ELEMENT

	Not True	Only true to some degree	Mostly true	Definitely true
Effective strategies are followed for record keeping, including the transfer of student records.				
A safe school and/or student wellbeing committee operates.				
There is a process for the induction of new staff, students and families on the school's safety and wellbeing policies, programs and procedures.				
4. Professional learning				
Information is available about the knowledge and skills of staff on student safety and wellbeing				
Opportunities are provided to address staff gaps in knowledge and skills in relation to student safety and wellbeing.				
Ongoing professional learning is undertaken on emerging school safety and wellbeing issues.				
Opportunities are regularly provided for more expert and advanced professional learning for staff.				
Non-teaching and casual/specialist/visiting staff are included in relevant professional learning opportunities.				
5. Positive behaviour management				
Decisions about the selection of behaviour support programs and resources are evidence based.				
Positive student behaviour is promoted and recognised.				
The school's selected approach(es) towards student safety are consistently implemented by all staff at both the school and classroom level.				
Effective risk prevention plans that focus on the use of technology in the classroom are in place.				
Effective risk prevention plans that focus on the organisation and supervision of the playground are in place.				
Effective risk management plans for all excursions, school camps, and other off-site or outside school hours activities are in place.				
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum				
There is a strong school focus on student engagement.				
Extensive use is made of cooperative learning and other relational teaching strategies.				

SAFE SCHOOL ELEMENT

	Not True	Only true to some degree	Mostly true	Definitely true
Skills and understandings are taught for cybersafety and for countering harassment, aggression, violence and bullying.				
A personal safety and protective behaviours curriculum is in place at appropriate year levels.				
Teachers act as positive role models safe online behaviour.				
A comprehensive social and emotional learning curriculum is embedded in all subjects.				
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership				
Effective pastoral care and peer support structures are in place.				
Opportunities are provided for students to develop a sense of meaning and purpose.				
A strengths-based approach to student learning and participation is evident across the school.				
A range of opportunities are provided for student ownership and decision-making, student voice and peer mentoring.				
8. Early intervention and targeted support				
Students and their families who could benefit from additional support are identified as early as possible.				
Appropriate early student intervention involving support, skill development and social restructuring is undertaken.				
Ongoing support is provided to identified students and their families.				
9. Partnerships with families and community				
The school provides opportunities for parent and carer education around issues related to safety and wellbeing and works collaboratively with parents/carers on issues related to student safety and wellbeing.				
The school works with community organisations to provide a consistent message about student safety and wellbeing.				
The school works with community agencies to maximise its effectiveness and extend support to students and families.				
The school works with the justice system to maximise its effectiveness and extend support to students and their families.				

STEPS TO DEVELOP A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PLAN

Step 1

Complete the school audit tool



Step 2

Identify the characteristics of the 9 elements that your school is already addressing well



Step 3

Identify the gaps in the 9 elements that your school still needs to work on



Step 4

Refer to the *Key Actions and Practices* chart to select and implement appropriate directions for your school



Step 5

Document your safe school policies and practice. This process could involve the broader school community



Step 6

Promote how your school is safe and supportive to the whole school community



Step 7

Repeat the audit every 12 months and build on your good practice

2 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

FAQS ABOUT STUDENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING

(with a specific focus on bullying)

There has been a growing awareness over the last two decades, both in Australia and internationally, of the harmful impact of bullying. The prevention of bullying in schools is now correctly recognised as a societal problem and as part of the Human Rights movement. Schools that do not address the problem of bullying can become breeding grounds for a process whereby the more aggressive and powerful dominate the less powerful, a process that underpins violence, domestic abuse and child abuse. The adverse effects of bullying on all students are well documented and anti-bullying initiatives in schools are also consistent with the current approaches to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in young people.

This is a very brief summary of the extensive research literature on student safety and wellbeing with a focus on school bullying. A comprehensive reference-supported literature review on student safety and wellbeing is available on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website www.deewr.gov.au

The frequently asked questions:

Q1: What is bullying?

Q2: What is the prevalence of bullying in schools?

Q3: Why do some students bully others? Why are some students more likely to be bullied?

Q4: What are the negative consequences of persistently bullying others? What are the negative consequences of being persistently bullied?

Q5: What school factors and social dynamics help to explain bullying?

Q6: What are the links between bullying and student wellbeing?

Q7: What legal Issues are related to bullying?

Q8: What can schools do to reduce bullying?

RESPONSES TO FAQs

Question 1: What is Bullying?

Bullying is a pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face-to-face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.¹

Cyberbullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyberbully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

Question 2: What is the prevalence of bullying schools?

Australian data suggest that between 19 per cent and 27 per cent of students are bullied at school and 10 per cent report being cyberbullied. These figures vary according to the age of the students. Bullying appears to peak during the year in which students move from primary school to high school and then decreases to relatively low levels at the end of the high school years.

Empathy for students who are bullied appears to decline with age, especially when the student being bullied is male. Boys bully more than girls and use more physical aggression. Girls use more covert relational bullying than boys. Both genders appear to use direct verbal aggression at similar levels.

Primary students are more likely to be bullied face-to-face in the playground. Secondary students are more likely to be bullied in the corridor and in class. Both primary and secondary students cyberbully.

Question 3: Why do some students bully others? Why are some students more likely to be bullied?

Bullying occurs at some level in all primary and secondary schools and all students can potentially become involved in bullying others or being bullied. However a small number of students engage in frequent and persistent bullying.

1

Students who frequently bully others

In summary, students who frequently bully others are more likely to:

- feel disconnected from school and dislike school
- demonstrate low levels of moral reasoning and high levels of egocentric reasoning
- believe that the use of aggression is an acceptable way to achieve their own goals
- be preoccupied with their own goals and not concerned about the rights of others
- show emotional instability
- be less friendly and less cooperative than other students
- have reasonable levels of peer acceptance and social status, but are more disliked than non-bullying peers
- associate with other aggressive and anti-social peers
- be less anxious than peers
- have high self esteem and an inflated view of themselves
- have lower levels of empathy
- have poor impulse control and poor anger management skills
- feel less confident about using non-violent strategies to resolve conflict
- be less likely to consider the negative consequences of their actions
- feel angry often and be inclined to attribute hostile intentions to other people
- be skilled at finding a student to bully who will pose little threat to them.

Students who frequently bully others are more likely to come from family backgrounds in which:

- their parents are not supportive and tend to use an authoritarian and harsh, punitive style of parenting
- their parents have a history of having bullied others (when they were at school) or have a history of criminal activity
- family relationships are strained and conflicted
- their parents supervise the children less
- the child has been maltreated by family members, been bullied by their siblings, or has bullied their siblings
- the child has high levels of disagreement with his/her parents
- their parents are relatively uninvolved with the child
- their parents are permissive towards aggressive behaviour
- the child has witnessed domestic partner abuse
- the child is part of a large family.

However many students who persistently bully others do not come from families with these characteristics and their parents are surprised and disappointed when they find out their child has been involved in bullying others.

There appears to be two sub-types of students who persistently bully:

1. Students who bully proactively and see their aggressive mistreatment of other students as 'instrumental' in achieving their goal of social dominance. These students show low levels of remorse and moral reasoning and have been described as cold and callous schemers with the capacity to socially manipulate others; and
2. Students who bully reactively are quick to anger and lash out impulsively and usually with physical aggression. These students have low levels of social competence and poor emotional control. These are often the students who have been described as 'bully-victims'.

Many students who persistently bully may have one or more of the following behaviour disorders: childhood psychopathy, conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. These students will require additional support.

Students who are frequently bullied or bullied over time

Any student can become the target of bullying. Research suggests students who are frequently bullied are more likely to:

- feel disconnected from and dislike school
- lack quality friendships with peers and teachers at school (but not necessarily outside school)
- display emotional behaviours that indicate vulnerability (e.g. look sad or anxious and cry, or become sad or angry easily) and a lack of resilience
- be less accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn
- have low self-esteem
- be relatively non-assertive
- lack confidence and skills in effectively interacting with peers
- be less likely to have other children come to their defence when they are bullied
- be different in some way (e.g. they have an unusual physical characteristic, choose to dress differently, have different musical preferences or have a disability of some kind).

Students who are bullied are more likely to come from family backgrounds in which there is parental conflict and disharmony. They are more likely to have parents who tend to be restrictive, over-protective, controlling and over-involved with their children. However, many students who are bullied do not come from families with these characteristics.

Question 4: What are the negative consequences associated with persistently bullying others? What are the negative consequences of being persistently bullied?

Bullying has serious short term and long-term psychological and social consequences for both students who are bullied and those who bully others. The following negative consequences have been identified for both students who frequently bully and for those who are bullied. They may:

- feel unsafe at school
- have an increased likelihood of being depressed or having suicidal thoughts, but this is especially true for those students who are bullied
- have lower levels of academic achievement than might otherwise be expected
- have negative attitudes towards school and relatively high levels of school absenteeism over time.

Longer-term consequences that are likely for students who frequently bully include:

- continuing to bully and, if they become parents, being more likely to bully their own children and have children who bully others
- excessive drinking and other kinds of substance use
- juvenile anti-social behaviour (e.g. graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting)
- carrying weapons and being violent outside the school context
- engaging in criminal activity
- involvement in other forms of aggressive or abusive behaviour as adults (e.g. sexual harassment in the workplace, dating violence, marital abuse, child abuse, and elder abuse).

Students who are frequently bullied:

- are more likely to have physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches
- have ongoing low self esteem
- experience high levels of anxiety and are more likely to be referred for psychiatric services
- may attempt or successfully commit suicide
- may resort to violent retaliation.

In many cases the negative effects of being frequently bullied at school have been shown to persist into adult life. These include:

- physical and mental health problems (especially anxiety and depression)
- high levels of loneliness and impaired relationships which are probably linked to difficulties with trust and reluctance to become involved in intimate relationships.

Negative effects of bullying on bystanders, school climate and school achievement

Bullying also has an impact on the climate of a school affecting many students who are not directly involved in bullying or being bullied. Witnessing peers being bullied can produce feelings of anger, fear, guilt, and sadness in student observers and many experience negative effects similar to those experienced by the students being bullied. Many are apprehensive about it happening to them and feel so unsafe that it affects their schoolwork. Bullying can also create a school culture where bullying is accepted and students feel powerless to stop it from happening.

Question 5: What school factors and social dynamics help to explain bullying?

Bullying is most often a group phenomenon occurring within a social context in which the school culture, the actions and interactions of peers and teachers and even the characteristics of the school's physical environment have some influence.

School Culture

A school's culture manifests itself in many different ways. When teachers are positive role models for respectful, and inclusive behaviours then students are more likely to act in these ways too. However when teachers use behaviour management strategies that are based on dominance and submission, they model this type of behaviour for students. Students who are already prone to bullying classmates may then feel justified in bullying others and also that these behaviours are acceptable.

The Dynamic of Social Positioning

A number of studies have demonstrated that one of the most common dynamics in bullying situations is that of 'social positioning.' This involves one student deciding to bully a more vulnerable student in order to enhance or maintain their own social status and attain social dominance and/or power. The targeted student becomes trapped in a destructive relationship in which they become increasingly powerless to escape. The targeted student becomes even more disempowered if their friends abandon them in order to enhance their own sense of 'belonging' and to protect their own social wellbeing.

The Dynamic of Rejecting Difference and Imposing Conformity

The most common explanation given by students to explain why some peers bully a classmate is that the classmate is different in some way (e.g. appearance, speech, preferences, friends, family, sexual orientation etc). The process of rejecting and isolating those who are different is part of an attempt to affirm the 'correct' way to be. Students who are apprehensive about their own social inclusion might be threatened if they dress, speak or act in the 'wrong' way and may take part in bullying the 'stigmatised' student in order to disassociate themselves from him or her.

The Dynamic of ‘Blaming the Victim’

The ‘Belief in a Just World’ theory refers to the tendency of most people to want to believe that the world they live in is ‘just’ and not unfair. Students may find it difficult to accept the injustice that occurs when another student is being bullied and might therefore search for things that the bullied student might have done to ‘deserve it’. This ‘blame the victim’ dynamic can be seen, for example, if a teacher asks a student who has been bullied ‘what did you do to deserve it?’

Students who bully will often blame the student they are bullying for their own situation and construct the bullying as a harmless ‘game’ that is justifiable because the real problem is the ‘deviance’ of the student. The bullied student may come to accept this incorrect view and blame him/herself as well. Students who blame themselves are less likely to seek support and more likely to ‘suffer in silence’.

The Dynamic of Misleading Teachers by Claiming ‘Provocation’

Some students can become quite adept at misleading teachers about their role in bullying (or in aggressive assaults) by claiming ‘provocation’ as a result of things that the bullied/attacked student has (supposedly) said about them or their family, or as a result of actions the bullied/attacked student has (supposedly) taken. This shifts the blame onto the student who is being bullied and encourages adults to see the bullying or aggressive behaviour as justified and therefore not respond to it as seriously.

The Dynamic of Bullying that Occurs Within a ‘Friendship’

Bullying can occur within the context of a friendship or friendship group, especially amongst girls. This dynamic can result not only in emotional pain but also confusion for the student being bullied, their family and the school. It can take some time to identify that a so-called ‘friend’ is bullying someone. Teachers are less likely to recognise bullying within a friendship and are more likely to perceive what is happening as a ‘friendship problem.’

The Roles of Bystanders

Bystanders (i.e. those students who witness bullying or know about it) are now recognised as a critical part of the group dynamics of bullying. Student bystanders can be divided into several categories:

1. Students who assist the students who are bullying and actively join in.
2. Students who encourage and give silent approval to the students who are bullying.
3. Students who watch the bullying (or hear about it) but are passive and do nothing.
4. Students who defend or support the student who is being bullied by intervening, getting teacher support or comforting them.

Students respect any student who stands up for someone being bullied. However very few students actually do this, even though bystander intervention and /or support can make a big difference. Most bystanders are passive, or behave in ways that support or reinforce the bullying. The inaction of most student bystanders has been explained in the following ways:

- They fear for their own safety and social inclusion
- There is a diffusion of responsibility (i.e. they are hoping someone else will do something to help)
- They are concerned they could make things worse
- They feel powerless: they do not know what to do and/or feel their actions will make no difference
- They believe it is none of their business

- They believe the student being bullied must deserve it
- They find it interesting & fun to watch someone else being mistreated.

Students who are more likely to defend and support someone who is being bullied:

- are usually not in the same friendship network as the student(s) doing the bullying
- have a strong sense of empathy and are well-liked
- feel connected to their school and have strong school-based peer relationships
- have a reasonable level of moral development and a general concern for the well-being of others
- are in a school where there is a positive sense of community
- have no history of bullying other students
- believe that their parents and friends would expect them to defend and support peers who are being bullied
- belong to a prosocial friendship network.

The Cycle of Inaction

The cycle of inaction can occur in response to a student complaint about covert bullying and involves the following processes:

1. A teacher receives the report about covert bullying
2. He/she does not respond to it seriously or effectively
3. The student who is being covertly bullied feels less empowered and becomes less willing to ask for teacher support if it happens again
4. The students who are doing the covert bullying interpret the teacher's inaction by forming a belief that covert bullying is tolerated in the school
5. All students who are bullied are less likely to seek help because they perceive that there is a culture of acceptance of (covert) bullying.

The Cycle of Over-reaction

The cycle of over-reaction can occur when a student decides to seek support from a teacher because they are being bullied and involves the following processes:

1. The teacher quickly responds by punishing the students who are bullying
2. The student who is being bullied receives either 'payback' or condemnation from the students who have been punished (or their friends) and is socially marginalised
3. The bullying goes underground for a while and other students may 'act on behalf of' the students who were punished as they 'lie low' for a while
4. The next time the student is bullied he or she decides to remain silent about it and assure the teacher that the bullying has stopped
5. Other students who are bullied are less likely to ask a teacher for support.

A punitive response by the school may ultimately (but not initially) be necessary in some circumstances. However, an approach that engages students who are bullying and attempts to enhance their feelings of empathy and understanding for the student they are harming is more likely to bring about a change in behaviour. Fear of retaliation and social exclusion as a result of classmates being punished often prevents students from letting teachers know that they are being bullied. The Support Group Approach, the Method of Shared Concern or a Restorative Practices approach can be used as a first step in responding to many incidences of bullying.

Question 6: What are the links between bullying and student wellbeing?

Student Wellbeing

Student wellbeing is a student's level of satisfaction about the quality of their life at school. Optimal (or desirable) student wellbeing is characterised by positive feelings and attitudes, positive relationships with peers and teachers, resilience, and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school. Both students who bully and those who are bullied experience reduced wellbeing. The wellbeing of students who are not involved in bullying can also be negatively affected. When students feel satisfied with their quality of life at school they are less likely to bully, less likely to be bullied and more likely (if bullied) to seek support and cope

The pathways to student wellbeing are very similar to the pathways that lead to safe schools and many of them are inter-related.

Factors that Contribute to High levels of Student Wellbeing and Low Levels of Bullying

Research studies suggest that (1) lower levels of bullying, (2) low levels of violence and school crime, and/or (3) higher levels of student wellbeing, are highly likely when the following circumstances are in place in a school:

- Most students feel connected to their school
- Students have sound levels of social and emotional skills
- There are strong school norms against bullying and violence
- Students perceive that teachers in the school actively promote student wellbeing and student welfare and that the environment of their school is positive, welcoming, cooperative and fair
- The classroom teacher uses effective behaviour management
- Teachers promote cooperation
- The culture of the school is positive, caring, respectful, and supportive.

A caring positive, respectful and supportive school culture is linked to both student wellbeing and school connectedness and is characterised by:

- Students perceiving they are in a classroom and school environment that is safe, positive, focused on learning and orderly (i.e. not in a state of disrepair or damaged by graffiti and vandalism)
- Students having meaningful involvement and feel they have some ownership of what happens in their school
- Positive classroom management and participation in extracurricular activities
- Positive relationships between students, and between students and their teachers.

Positive Relationships

Students who experience positive relationships with peers and teachers are less likely to engage in misbehaviour, including bullying, and less likely to use weapons. The systematic promotion and facilitation of positive relationships at school has been identified by many researchers as a core component for:

- improving student wellbeing
- enhancing school culture
- preventing school violence and bullying
- successfully engaging students' intrinsic motivation to learn and improving student academic outcomes.

When a school works to facilitate positive school-based relationships, bullying is less likely to thrive, student wellbeing is enhanced and there is a greater likelihood of higher student engagement with school.

Having high-quality friendships, or at least one best friend, can help prevent children from bullying and being bullied. High quality friendships are characterised by loyalty and support and a willingness to stand up for one's friends.

Students in schools with highly supportive teachers may be more open to directives from teachers and leadership as they perceive them to be fair, caring and respectful. Positive teacher-student relationships can contribute significantly to students' wellbeing, prosocial behaviour and resilience.

Question 7: What legal issues are related to bullying?

A range of criminal legislation is relevant to bullying and cyberbullying. These include: stalking, making threats to kill or harm and malicious damage. E-crime covers criminal offences when a computer or other electronic communication device (e.g. mobile phone) is used in committing an offence, are the target of an offence or is used as a storage device in committing an offence.

E-crime offences include: making or distributing child pornography (e.g. taking and sending nude photographs of someone under 16, even if the subject is oneself); impersonating someone; menacing, harassing or causing offence using a mobile phone or internet carrier.

Senior staff (may) have discretionary rights to take action to manage and respond to cyberbullying that involves students (or staff) from the school, occurs outside school hours and off-site and is enacted through the use of a student's personal mobile phone and/or computer.

The underlying assumption is that school leadership has the right to respond to this behaviour when they become aware of it if it could result in a substantial disruption of the school environment or adversely affect learning or wellbeing of students (or staff) at the school.

Question 8: What Can Schools do to Reduce Bullying?

There has been a small but significant decrease in the frequency of bullying in Northern European, Western European and most Eastern European countries between 1994 and 2006. This is encouraging news for countries all around the world as they continue their efforts to prevent and reduce bullying in schools.

A number of major international reviews and evaluations have sought to identify the most effective approaches, strategies and components for preventing and reducing bullying in schools. These reviews confirm that the following features are likely to be the most effective in preventing and reducing bullying. These are:

- A universal whole-school approach of long duration that takes a multi-faceted approach rather than focusing on one single component.
- An increased awareness of bullying in the school community through assemblies, focus days and student-owned plans and activities.
- A whole-school detailed policy that addresses bullying.
- Effective classroom management and classroom rules.
- The promotion of a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and student wellbeing.
- Effective methods of behaviour management that are consistently used, are non-hostile and non-punitive.

- Encouragement and skill development for all students (and especially bystanders) to respond negatively to bullying behaviour and support students who are bullied.
 - Social skill development within teaching and learning activities (e.g. through the use of cooperative learning).
 - Enhancement of the school physical environment and its supervision.
 - Teacher professional development and classroom curriculum units that address bullying and related issues (e.g. values education).
 - Counselling for individual students and collaboration with other appropriate professionals.
 - School conferences or assemblies that raise awareness of the problem.
 - Parent partnerships and education.

Additional evidence-informed approaches that have been identified as having significant potential include:

- Addressing boredom and disengagement both in class and the playground.
- Values education with a focus on respect for the rights and feelings of others, acceptance of diversity, compassion, fairness, cooperation and inclusion.
- The use of the *Method of Shared Concern* or the *Support Group Approach*.
- The use of the *Restorative Practices* approach.
- The use of *Positive Behaviour Support*.
- The use of 'social architecture' i.e. redesigning students' social interactions and facilitating social opportunities within a class or year-level context.
- Early intervention with students identified as being at-risk for bullying others or being bullied in order to provide them with developmental support.

The more comprehensive and reference-supported literature review on which these questions and answers have been based can be found at www.deewr.gov.au.

3 KEY ACTIONS AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

This section elaborates on the characteristics for each of the nine elements of the National Safe Schools Framework as shown in the diagram below

The nine elements of the National Safe Schools Framework

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community

The list of key actions and effective practices for each characteristic is not meant to be exhaustive nor prescriptive but instead is indicative of actions and practices schools may consider using and adapting to meet the needs of their own school community. Consider using the School Audit Tool to identify your school's strengths and any gaps that may need addressing. Use this table to identify the key actions and effective practices your school can implement to address any gaps.

Element 1: Leadership commitment to a safe school

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>1.1 Acceptance of responsibility for the development and maintenance of a safe, supportive and respectful learning and working environment for all members of the school community.</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledges it is responsible for ensuring that students learn in a safe and supportive environment and that this requires ongoing planning, development and maintenance • accepts responsibility for providing a safe working environment for staff and visitors to the school • reviews the current situation within the school context in relation to a safe and supportive learning and working environment (see Audit tool) • identifies and aligns school directions with both current research and relevant sector/state/territory legislation and policies.
<p>1.2 The development and communication of a clear vision for a safe, supportive and respectful school. This includes actions that encourage staff to commit to the vision and to feel confident about their participation in its implementation.</p>	<p>The principal and school leadership team (including where appropriate school council and board members):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regularly review and communicate the key principles and practices of a safe and supportive school • engage staff and representative members of the school community in the collaborative development of a vision of a safe and supportive school community that is practical and achievable and committed to by all members of the school community • identify existing school practices that are compatible with the vision • ensure that the vision statement and the strategies are clearly documented as an important school policy • systematically review progress in relation to the achievement of the vision • seek regular feedback on the achievement of the vision from representatives of the school community • reshape and adapt the vision and the accompanying strategies when required.
<p>1.3 Planning for sustaining the vision.</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans for continuous school improvement and the sustainability of safe school initiatives • clearly communicates safe and supportive school policy and practices to all staff including support staff and casual teaching staff, students, parents, carers and families • has overall responsibility for developing and maintaining a safe and supportive school. This should be reflected within their performance management plan • develops processes to implement and review school initiatives based on the vision, such as appointing a school safety and wellbeing team.

Element 1: Leadership commitment to a safe school

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>1.4 Regular evaluation and review of the school's current capacity to enhance the wellbeing and safety of its staff and students and identification of areas that need to be enhanced .</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • works with the school community, including parents, carers and students, to evaluate the school's capacity to develop and maintain a safe and supportive school • provides opportunities for gaps to be addressed through professional learning, visits to other schools and professional networking • ensures regular safety audits (e.g. occupational health and safety audit) are conducted within the school by accredited professional organisations • focuses on current policy analysis, resource allocation (e.g. staff, time, funds, materials), level of knowledge, skills and commitment, level of external support, potential barriers and partnerships • identifies staff learning needs in relation to safe and supportive communities and provides appropriate professional development opportunities • promotes the availability of wellbeing support strategies within the school to all staff and students.
<p>1.5 Facilitation of access to resources to support the implementation of the school vision for a safe and supportive school.</p>	<p>The leadership team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocates for and facilitates the availability of human, financial and technological resources to ensure the development of a safe and supportive school environment • identifies budget implications for implementation of the vision • makes regular provision for financial expenditure to ensure the development of a safe and supportive school environment • develops an annual professional learning calendar to ensure all members of staff are kept up-to-date with existing best practice.
<p>1.6 Identification and support of key staff with specific responsibilities for student safety and wellbeing.</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies key responsibilities in regards to student safety and wellbeing and selects and supports staff with these responsibilities • ensures that identified staff have the capacity to implement policy directions and inspire colleagues to do the same.

Element 1: Leadership commitment to a safe school

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>1.7 Ongoing data collection (including incidence and frequency of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying) to inform decision-making and evaluate effectiveness of policies, programs and procedures.</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures regular, ethical and valid data collection on issues related to student safety and wellbeing and uses the data to identify specific school needs, what's working and what needs to be improved • identifies the capacity of the staff to promote the safety and wellbeing of all students. • ensures that opportunities for regular data gathering about student safety are built into the school policy and understood by all members of the school community. This may include systematic recording of bullying and cyberbullying inside and outside of school hours • ensures consistency in recording and reporting information relevant to student safety • utilises appropriate mechanisms for school community representatives to gather and analyse data and provide regular feedback on implementation. These mechanisms, reflecting the school's context, may be facilitated by a school safety committee, school wellbeing team or school council/board.
<p>1.8 School leaders developing a comprehensive knowledge of the school community.</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds a knowledge base about the school community facilitates the maintenance of records, such as keeping class/year level photos of students on file • ensures that all family files are consistently kept up to date, particularly in terms of critical incidents • develops a network with key members of the community (e.g. specific groups of refugees or immigrants) to facilitate the maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment.
<p>1.9 An awareness of mandatory requirements and legal issues in relation to child maltreatment, aggression and violence and communication of these to staff.</p>	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liaises with sectors and systems to stay up-to-date about legislation and policies related to student wellbeing, child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence and bullying • develops processes for dissemination about changes and amendments to relevant policies and legislation.

Element 1: Leadership commitment to a safe school

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
1.10 An awareness of the rights and responsibilities of school leadership in relation to safety issues occurring outside school hours and off school grounds involving or affecting students and staff from the school.	<p>School leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises that it may need to respond to wellbeing and safety issues that occur outside school hours and off school grounds that involve students and/or staff from the school • ensures that school policy responds to safety and wellbeing issues outside school hours. This can include communicating the school's expectations and responsibilities associated with responding to instances of misuse of technology outside school hours.

Element 2: A supportive and connected school culture

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
2.1 Student connectedness to the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel a sense of belonging at school, perceive their school to be a good school, and are committed to caring for and supporting other students in their school community and contributing to the school's positive reputation. • The school systematically acknowledges and recognises student diversity in all academic and other school-based or community endeavours. • Students have opportunities to participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. • Teachers understand the importance of developing positive relationships with students to facilitate learning. The school has established peer support structures (e.g. buddy programs, forums, peer mediation, peer mentoring structures). • Students have opportunities to participate in activities and structures that promote cross-age interaction and relationships (e.g. cross-age house systems, cross age musical, art, drama productions, clubs, cross-age tutoring groups). • The school has established effective transition programs (e.g. for students entering school for the first time, moving from primary school to secondary school, and moving to a senior school or senior campus). • All students have access to opportunities, recognition and awards that focus on a wide range of student abilities and achievements and go beyond academic and mainstream sporting success.

Element 2: A supportive and connected school culture

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>2.2 Teaching, staff modeling and promotion of explicit pro-social values and expectations for behaviour in accordance with these values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers model, teach and encourage pro-social values in their interactions with the school community (e.g. respect, acceptance of diversity, fairness, honesty, friendliness and inclusion, compassion, kindness, cooperation and social responsibility). • The school curriculum explicitly includes opportunities for students to explore attitudes and values such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and students with disabilities that challenge various forms of discrimination. • Teachers engage in whole school planning processes to ensure that pro-social values are explicitly taught, embedded in many areas of the curriculum as well as highlighted and encouraged from year to year. • Teachers support colleagues (e.g. through team planning and teaching, peer coaching and peer feedback about their interactions with students). • All members of the school community are aware of both their rights and their responsibilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the right to seek help to resolve situations of aggression, discrimination, cyberharassment, bullying, cyberbullying) – the responsibility to support students who are impacted or who are experiencing other threats to their wellbeing.
<p>2.3 Clear demonstration of respect and support for student diversity in the school's inclusive actions and structures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly reflects on its practices to ensure they are inclusive of all students (e.g. cultural diversity is accommodated in events such as swimming carnivals, excursions and celebrations). • Student diversity is celebrated in various ways in all academic and other school-based or community activities. All students have access to opportunities to be recognised in a wide range of achievements. • The school, through both policy and practices, consistently makes provision for students with disabilities and learning and/or social-emotional difficulties. • The school is aware of and follows the guidelines in the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Amendments 2009</i>.

Element 2: A supportive and connected school culture

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>2.4 Positive, caring and respectful student-peer relationships, student-teacher relationships, and teacher-teacher relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is intentional development and maintenance of positive, caring and respectful peer relationships (both same-age and cross-age). • Teachers take responsibility for developing and maintaining a positive and supportive relationship with all students. • Cooperative learning structures and cooperative games as well as competitive games are extensively used. • Structures and procedures to build positive peer relationships and resolve interpersonal issues in a constructive manner are in place (e.g. circle time, reflection circles, classroom meetings and class committees).
<p>2.5 Parent and carer connectedness to their school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive teacher-parent relationships are built through regular formal and informal activities. • Parents are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school. Some examples of practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establishing a parent committee at each class or year level to connect with other parents – students writing letters inviting their parents to participate in school and social events – interpreters are available for parent-teacher conversations and newsletters – new families are provided with a welcome package to help them understand the school's policies, procedures and values.

Element 2: A supportive and connected school culture

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>2.6 A focus on staff safety and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff wellbeing is promoted as it is critical to student wellbeing and student learning. • The school has established structures that provide a systematic and coherent focus on staff wellbeing to identify appropriate actions and interventions. These structures may include a staff advocate, a staff wellbeing committee, or staff counselling services. • Staff achievements are recognised and celebrated, positive collegial relationships are actively promoted. • Leadership in the school accepts responsibility for ensuring a workplace in which staff are safe and supported. They take steps to ensure that the physical environment complies with occupational health and safety requirements and also support teachers in their professional development. Information about occupational health and safety is prominently displayed in the school. • Staff appraisal mechanisms include supporting teachers' professional learning about safety and wellbeing issues. • The school regularly collects information about staff satisfaction. • Staff induction manuals, supported by regular updates in staff meetings, reinforce policies relating to staff interaction, rights and responsibilities.
<p>2.7 Appropriate monitoring of and response to child protection issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school leadership accepts responsibility for ensuring that teachers have explicit knowledge of both early warning signs of child abuse and the specific systemic policy or legislative requirements for responding to the issue. • All school staff participate in ongoing professional learning on child protection issues, including the complexity of monitoring and reporting issues. • Teachers regularly monitor children's behaviour to identify and report early warning signs of abuse. • Teachers are regularly informed of the procedures to follow when potential child protection issues are suspected. • The school has established relationships with relevant external agencies responsible for child protection issues.
<p>2.8 Recognition of the distinctive needs of specific groups in the school community (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, refugee and immigrant families).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership works collaboratively with representatives of specific groups in the school (e.g. their Indigenous community, refugee and immigrant families) to identify those factors that contribute towards safe and supportive environment. • School leadership establishes links with relevant community and external agencies to identify additional and alternative strategies for these members of their school community.

Element 3: Policies and procedures

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>3.1 Whole school, collaboratively developed policies, plans and structures for supporting safety and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's policies on safety and wellbeing have been drafted, refined and reviewed in collaboration with teachers, parents, carers and students.• The policies include clear plain language definitions of terms including student wellbeing, aggression, violence, bullying, cyberbullying, cyberharassment and acceptable use of technology.• The policies should include information about:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– the school's expectations about students' positive behaviour towards others in the school including when outside school hours and off school grounds– all school community members' rights to and responsibilities for safety and wellbeing– the school's role in managing any behaviours that occur that are not consistent with school policy– procedures for dealing with critical incidents that impact on the effective operation of the school or create a danger or risk to individuals at the school or on school related activities (i.e. a critical incident management policy).• School policies on safety and wellbeing are communicated to all members of the school community at regular intervals (e.g. through assemblies, house meetings, school website, diaries).• Students have an opportunity to voice issues and concerns on emerging safety and wellbeing policies (e.g. use of mobile phones, acceptable use of technology and uniforms).• Staff implementation of safety and wellbeing policies is fair and consistent.• School regularly audits its obligation to mandatory legislation and jurisdiction policies on safety and wellbeing at regular intervals.• The school maintains easily accessible and current comprehensive information on aspects of safety and wellbeing (e.g. road safety, water safety, first aid, sexual safety, drugs and alcohol and OHS).

<p>3.2 Clear procedures that enable staff, parents, cares and students to confidentially report any incidents or situations of child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence or bullying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has clear procedures available for staff and students to confidentially report aggression, abuse, harassment, bullying, cyberbullying and cyberharassment. A dedicated email address could be set up which is regularly monitored. • Procedures for reporting issues and concerns are clearly communicated. • All reported incidents of aggression, abuse, harassment, bullying, cyberbullying and cyberharassment are recorded. Pro-formas are developed for detailed reporting (e.g. indicate the people involved, date and time, circumstances, observers, types of negative interactions, severity). • The school is proactive in informing staff and students about appropriate procedures to follow if they receive offensive or threatening communications sent by mobile phone or computer. This may include saving or copying of material.
<p>3.3 Clearly communicated procedures for staff to follow when responding to incidents of student harm from child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence, bullying or misuse of technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clearly communicated procedures for staff to follow when they become aware of possible incidents or situations of child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence, bullying or misuse of technology. • Monitoring is in place to ensure that these procedures are applied consistently, sensitively and confidentially. • These procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current mandatory government policies and relevant legislation including details as to when state/territory law enforcement agencies should be contacted. • Simplified flow charts of procedures may be developed and posted. • All allied staff are aware of procedures to be followed within their context. • The school considers and selects the most appropriate approach for managing bullying situations (e.g. the Support Group approach, Restorative Practices approach, the Method of Shared Concern and the punitive approach) These are clearly communicated to all members of the school community.
<p>3.4 Agreements for responsible use of technology by staff and students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the school community (including visitors to the school) are required to complete a responsible usage agreement each time they use a school computer or related technology. • The responsible usage agreements are clearly communicated and monitored. • School policies in relation to staff communication with students in social networking sites are clearly articulated.

<p>3.5 Regular risk assessments of the physical school environment, (including off-campus and outside school hours related activities), leading to the development of effective risk management plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments of the school's physical environment are conducted regularly to enhance student safety. This includes identification of high-risk times, locations and equipment. A risk assessment audit tool (plus a map of the school for indicating unsafe areas) is developed for this purpose and involves students in its construction and in the analysis of the resultant data. • Risk assessments of venues for off-campus and outside school hours activities are conducted. • Accident report forms are analysed to identify any high risk areas in the school. • Schools identify key policy documents relating to safe site management (e.g. OHS, fire prevention, floods, state and territory wellbeing documents, relevant legislation). • Schools identify and communicate to all members of the school community a consistent approach to school site management to ensure ongoing safety and wellbeing. • Regular monitoring and refinement of site management policy in light of emerging circumstance and changes in policy directions.
<p>3.6 Established and well understood protocols about appropriate and inappropriate adult to student contact and interactions within the school context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has established protocols and procedures to reasonably ensure the interaction between students and adults is safe at all times in the school context. All adults having regular contact with students have undergone current police checks or employment screening, where appropriate. • Protocols for visitors to the school grounds have been established and are consistently implemented by school staff.

<p>3.7 Effective strategies for record keeping and communication between appropriate staff about safety and wellbeing issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly collects data about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – student connectedness and satisfaction with school – students’ perceptions of their safety (e.g. frequency of bullying, cyberbullying, and cyberharassment incidents) and the effectiveness of the school’s responses – parents and carers’ perceptions of student safety and wellbeing – teachers’ perceptions and observations of student safety and wellbeing. • The school uses data on school attendance to help identify those students with low levels of school connectedness, or those who may not feel safe at school. • The school consistently follows up on the transfer of student records from previous schools when there has been previous safety concerns or risk management issues. • The school regularly collects data to evaluate student, staff, parent and carer perceptions of the effectiveness of its safe and supportive school initiatives. • Identified staff have responsibility for monitoring reports and records in order to identify patterns and students requiring more intensive monitoring.
<p>3.8 A representative group responsible for overseeing the school’s safety and wellbeing initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The representative group (e.g. a safety and wellbeing committee, school board or council) contributes to and monitors ongoing whole-school plans for the safety and wellbeing for all members of the school community. • The representative group may include staff, students, parents and carers and relevant community members where appropriate. • The representative group has a clearly established charter legitimised by the school leadership and communicated to the whole school community. • Members of this group have specific roles and responsibilities (e.g. to conduct annual surveys on students’ perceptions of safety at school; to identify appropriate professional learning opportunities for staff). • The representative group identifies the most appropriate strategies to ensure effective communication about safety and wellbeing issues with the school community (e.g. newsletters containing student ideas and school website link).

<p>3.9 Protocols for the induction of casual staff, new staff and new students and families into the school's safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols for the induction of new staff and casual staff are in place. • All staff are provided with access to appropriate documentation, professional learning as required, and staff mentoring. • New students and families are informed of the school's safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, made aware of where they can find appropriate information on the school's website, diaries and induction packages.
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ELEMENT 4: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>4.1 Evaluation of the current level of staff knowledge and skills to enhance the safety and wellbeing of students and enhance their capacity to respond to possible situations of child abuse/neglect, discrimination, harassment, aggression, violence and bullying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school regularly identifies the capacity of the current staff to promote the safety and wellbeing of all students and identifies quality professional learning opportunities to address gaps. Staff capacity can be evaluated in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – knowledge of school policy on safety and wellbeing and understanding of key terms (e.g. aggression, harassment, bullying (including covert bullying and cyberbullying), child abuse and child neglect) and steps to follow in responding to them – skills for identifying signs of bullying and cyberbullying and matching responses according to severity i.e. duration, frequency, number of students involved and type of behaviour – skills for responding to aggression, harassment, bullying and cyberbullying – skills for teaching social and emotional learning and using cooperative learning – skills for using positive behaviour management – skills for effective communication with students (e.g. active listening and empathic responding) – awareness of what not to do when handling sensitive situations of aggression, harassment, bullying and child abuse and neglect.
<p>4.2 Ongoing professional learning about emerging changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing professional learning is accessed to keep staff up-to-date as technology changes and new research about student safety and wellbeing becomes available.
<p>4.3 The inclusion of non-teaching and casual, specialist, and visiting staff in relevant professional learning opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual teaching staff, specialist staff, visiting teaching staff, support staff and associated staff are included in relevant professional learning opportunities to reinforce understanding of the schools approach to safety and specific responsibilities and procedures. • Professional learning needs of casual, specialist and/or visiting staff are monitored at regular intervals.

Element 5: Positive Behaviour Management

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>5.1 Careful selection of evidence-informed positive behaviour management approaches that align with the school community's needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school researches and considers evidence-informed and theoretically sound positive approaches to whole-school behaviour management. Schools may consider researching and adopting such approaches as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – positive behaviour support – restorative practices – programs that focus on recognition of pro-social behaviour and clear consequences for negative behaviour such as bullying.
<p>5.2 The promotion and recognition of positive student behavior.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulated procedures for identifying and acknowledging students who display positive behaviour consistent with the school's values (e.g. through awards and recognition at assemblies). • School leadership monitors implementation of these procedures so that they are perceived as valued, fair, transparent and consistent across the school. • The school plans strategies for helping students achieve goals relating to improvement in positive behaviour. This includes explicitly teaching social-emotional skills such as problem solving and encouraging students to accept greater personal responsibility for their actions. • The school facilitates student engagement and participation in clubs, committees or action teams that focus on prosocial values (e.g. compassion, fairness and respect).
<p>5.3 A clear understanding and consistent implementation by all staff of the school's selected positive behaviour management approaches both within the school and classroom contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers have a sound knowledge of the core elements of the school's positive behaviour approach and access to good resources that support this. • Strategies for monitoring consistency in the use of the school's approach are in place e.g. seeking feedback from staff, students, parents and carers about the effectiveness and implementation of the approach. • Teachers use classroom management strategies that are either linked to the school's overall approach or are consistent with it and share ideas for promoting positive behaviour.

Element 5: Positive Behaviour Management

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>5.4 Effective risk prevention plans for the use of technology in the classroom and for playground organisation and supervision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school playground is attractive and stimulating and there is enough equipment (e.g. game markings on the bitumen, basketballs and rings) to go around. Safe and quiet areas are also available for the use of individual students or for organised clubs. • Students' views on improving the design and organisation of the playground are sought at regular intervals. • A range of formal and informal games are taught to students and sessions are organised in the playground, for example by older students. • There is extra vigilant supervision of high-risk areas (e.g. canteen queues, the oval, lining up to go inside, locker areas) and during high-risk times (e.g. during group work). • The names of teachers on playground duty are clearly posted for students to see and the teachers are easily identifiable (e.g. by wearing fluorescent vests). • The library and 'safe' rooms (i.e. closely supervised spaces) are available for student use at lunchtime. • Teachers on playground duty record negative or concerning behaviours. • Teachers monitor student use of mobile phones and computers to ensure consistency with the school's policy and procedures.
<p>5.5 Effective risk prevention plans for student behaviour management during off-campus and school-related out-of-hours activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk prevention plans are developed for outside school hours and off campus school activities to ensure students know and practice appropriate behaviours in a range of social settings. • Teachers anticipate potential risks from prior risk assessments and plan strategies for minimising these risks. • Expectations for appropriate behaviour, including the use of technology outside school hours are communicated to students and their families on a regular basis. • Students participate in development of expectations for behaviour out of school and identifying consequences when these expectations are not met. • Expectations for student behaviour in off-campus activities, (e.g. school campus and excursions) are clearly communicated to students, parents and carers. Consequences for failing to meet these expectations are also clearly communicated.

Element 6: Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
6.1 There is a strong focus on student engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student engagement or investment in learning is actively promoted through a meaningful curriculum and effective learning and teaching strategies.• Higher order thinking approaches are utilised.• Technology is used effectively to enhance student engagement and learning.• Authentic, real-life and inquiry-based learning projects are undertaken to explore cybersafety issues.• A variety of activities such as role-plays, drama and digital story-making are used as part of safety curricula.
6.2 Extensive use of cooperative learning and other relational teaching strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers use a range of cooperative learning strategies.• Students are encouraged to work with a range of learning partners in the classroom and on specific projects.• Effective cooperative learning strategies are shared amongst staff.• Other relational strategies such as circle time and class committees are also implemented.

Element 6: Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>6.3 Teaching of skills and understandings to promote cybersafety and for countering harassment, aggression, violence and bullying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cybersafety and anti-bullying skills are effectively taught across all year levels and embedded across the curriculum and in the daily life of the classroom. • Students are provided with structured and sequenced opportunities that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – facilitate development of respectful relationships – have a strong focus on the application of higher order thinking skills about cybersafety issues (e.g. What can you believe? Who can you trust and how do you know? How can you check facts? What is a credible website?) – explore issues such as racism, homophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination – identify relevant legal issues associated with the use of technology, harassment and discrimination and violence against women. • Core messages are repeated across the school and reflected in school practices e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘If you self-respect then you self-protect’ – ‘You have a right to be safe and ask for support if you don’t feel safe’ – ‘Asking for help when you are in trouble or helping someone else who is in trouble is not the same as getting someone into trouble’ – ‘If you wouldn’t say something to someone’s face then don’t say it online’ – ‘If you forward a nasty message, then you are a part of the process’ – ‘You should not communicate with or share personal information online with people you do not know’.
<p>6.4 Teaching of skills and understandings related to personal safety and protective behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on personal safety is taught to younger students and, where appropriate, is integrated with other safety and student wellbeing curricula. • Teachers collaboratively plan to integrate a personal safety and child protection curriculum across all learning areas. • Higher order thinking skills are taught in all areas of the curriculum and linked to cybersafety (e.g critical thinking about unknown people who make online contact, pop-ups that offer prizes).

Element 6: Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
6.5 Teaching of social and emotional skills (e.g. listening, negotiation, sharing, empathic responding) in all subjects and across all year levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teaching is required for all students to develop appropriate social and emotional behaviour, and should allow students to demonstrate these behaviours in a range of settings. • Violence prevention and respectful relationships education are taught, based on the development of skills that help students make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. • Students are explicitly taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – social skills such as making, keeping friends and conflict management skills – empathy and resilience skills – skills for dealing with peer pressure and relationship break-ups – skills for being assertive and self-protective in a non-confrontational way – skills to empower students to act as supportive bystanders in risky or unsafe situations (e.g. bullying, abuse, drug use).

Element 7: A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
7.1 Defined structures and strategies for promoting student wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of student safety and wellbeing structures are established that involve students, teachers, parents, carers and families in different ways. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – teacher-student mentoring – events that include a special focus on family relationships (e.g. father-daughter nights) – cross-age pastoral care sessions – mentoring of students by adults outside the school – peer support structures.

Element 7: A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>7.1 Provision of multiple opportunities for students to develop a sense of meaning and purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting students to develop a sense of purpose through the pursuit of worthwhile goals for their own learning and development. • Assisting students to develop a sense of meaning through engaging in activities that have a positive effect on others as well as themselves. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – students take on peer support roles with younger students to model appropriate behaviour and build empathy with others – students participate in class and school leadership and decision making (e.g. class and school committees, student representative councils, class meetings, student action teams). • Students are provided with opportunities to participate in community service learning programs. Effective programs of this kind include opportunities for students to learn and practise specific skills; aim to develop students' attitudes and values; provide opportunities for authentic learning; and model active community membership.
<p>7.2 Adoption of strengths based approaches to student learning and participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have the opportunity to identify, apply and build their intellectual and character strengths in the curriculum through a range of learning activities and assessment options. • Students have access to opportunities to participate in a range of clubs, productions, exhibitions and festivals that allows them to apply and showcase their interests and abilities.

Element 7: A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>7.1 Provision of a range of opportunities for student ownership and decision-making, student voice and peer teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are offered opportunities to contribute ideas in the drafting and refining of safety and wellbeing policies. (e.g. invited to participate in safe school initiatives, as members on student wellbeing and safe school representative groups). • Students are provided with opportunities to participate in aspects of community engagement that promote school and broader community connectedness and a sense of meaning and purpose. • Students have opportunities to take responsibility for teaching anti-bullying and cybersafety messages to others (e.g. peers, younger students, teachers, parents and carers). • Schools provide multiple opportunities for hearing student voice and encouraging ownership of their own learning (e.g. establishment of democratic structures in classrooms, student representative activities, regular gathering of student views and negotiated curriculum). • Students have opportunities to develop anti-bullying and cybersafety resources such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – media clips, podcasts and DVDs – drama and role plays – brochures and posters – campaigns. • Students plan and deliver presentations to parents and carers around cybersafety and anti-bullying.

Element 8: Early intervention and targeted support

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>8.1 Effective processes for the early identification of students and families who need, or could benefit from additional support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and central collection (to ensure confidentiality) of teacher observations, records and recommendations as a basis for identifying 'at-risk' students and families. These may include students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have engaged in bullying, harassment or aggression – show early signs of anti-social behaviour and/or low empathy – are socially isolated or rejected – display signs of mental health difficulties (e.g. depression or anxiety) – have been the subject of child protection concerns • Referral to appropriate agencies where relevant (e.g. those dealing with child protection in line with legislative requirements or systemic policies).

Element 8: Early intervention and targeted support

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>8.2 Appropriate early intervention with students requiring support and/or skill development (e.g. students who exhibit anti-social behaviour or experience peer difficulties).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention may be provided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifying proactive strategies with students who engage in antisocial behaviour or whose wellbeing is at risk – providing opportunities for additional skill development (e.g. in prosocial values, violence prevention, respectful relationships, literacy, English language or social and emotional skills) – helping a student to establish positive peer relationships – the provision of parenting sessions and support – offering support in the form of peer counselling from older students (and training for this purpose). • Involvement of allied school staff (e.g. school psychologist or counsellor, student welfare, wellbeing officer, chaplains, school nurse, speech therapist). • Partnering with other specialist agencies or professionals (e.g. speech therapists, occupational therapists, mental health providers) to ensure early intervention support is made available.
<p>8.3 Ongoing and follow-up support to individual students and families in times of need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools provide access to appropriate counselling and other forms of additional support for students and their families in response to emerging issues. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – counselling (by school based or community agencies) – the use of inclusion strategies that build students' positive relationships with peers and teacher(s) and adapt curriculum to meet diverse student needs – helping families make links to community agencies and organisations – reviewing ways the school can provide continuing support after intervention (e.g. by maintaining regular communication with the family and child) – recognising that bullying and cyberbullying may go 'underground' after it appears to have been resolved and that the situation and students involved still need to be monitored and reviewed. • Seeking feedback from the student and their family on the best way to continue to support them. • Partnering with other specialist agencies when required (e.g. providers of emergency residential or respite care).

Element 9: Partnerships with families and community

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>9.1 Working collaboratively with parents and carers and providing opportunities for parent education on issues related to student safety and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers are given opportunities to develop their parenting strategies to empower them to offer effective parental support around these issues. • Parents and carers are encouraged to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work with the school and support the school’s responses to any safety or wellbeing issues – act as good role models and support messages about safety and wellbeing – let the school know of any concerns they have about the safety and wellbeing of their own child or any other student at the school. • Parents and carers are provided with opportunities to gain knowledge about bullying, cyber-risks and cybersafety and the social and emotional skills that are age-appropriate for their child. • The school communicates regularly with parents and carers to update their understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how to recognise signs that their child might be being bullied/cyberbullied, be involved in bullying/cyberbullying others or be engaging in unsafe use of technology – the procedures for communicating with the school about this – what actions the school will take in response to situations involving bullying/cyberbullying and aggression. • Parents and carers are referred to reliable and credible sites about cybersafety and bullying prevention and management. (See National Safe Schools Framework Resources list for examples of such websites).
<p>9.2 Working with community organisations to provide a consistent message about safety and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school liaises with a range of local organisations to promote self-respect, respect for others, acceptance of diversity and anti-bullying, anti-aggression and cybersafety messages. • Students are encouraged to practise promotion of safety and wellbeing in the community through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – making cybersafety brochures for the local library – giving talks to seniors groups on the importance of respect, how to use computers in a safe way.

Element 9: Partnerships with families and community

Characteristics	Examples of Key Actions/Effective Practices
<p>9.3 Working with community organisations to extend support to students and families as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools adopt a considered and evidence-informed approach in working with community organisations on issues relating to cybersafety, aggression and bullying. • Schools identify and seek assistance when required from relevant contacts in community organisations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – government departments responsible for human services, health and education, and Offices for Youth – local and Federal Police (including school or community liaison police) – community support organisations (e.g. Anglicare and CatholicCare). • Schools establish protocols in working with community agencies that recognise school community members' right to privacy and confidentiality.
<p>9.4 Working with the justice system in relation to child maltreatment, aggression, violence and cybersafety issues at both a preventative and legal level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are aware of the roles and responsibilities of justice system staff and how they can be of assistance with child abuse issues. • Schools establish key relationships with relevant justice system staff to ensure prompt access for students when necessary.

4 COMMON TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

This section of the resources for the National Safe Schools Framework provides definitions for the common terms used in the area of student wellbeing and safe schools.

Term	Definition
Aggression	Words or actions (both overt and covert) that are directed towards another and intended to harm, distress, coerce or cause fear.
Anti-social behaviour pattern	An anti-social behaviour pattern is one of repeated behaviour that violates, and shows disregard for the social values, norms and legal rules established by a community. Typical behaviours in an anti-social behaviour pattern include: getting into fights, harassment, bullying, physical assault, running away from home, stealing, vandalism, persistently lying, using illegal drugs and misusing alcohol.
Bullying	<p>Definition for Teachers, Parents and Carers</p> <p>Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.</p> <p>Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.</p> <p>Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.</p>

Term	Definition
Bullying	<p>For use with younger students</p> <p>Bullying is when someone keeps picking on another child again and again and tries to make them feel bad. They say or do many mean and hurtful things, make fun of them a lot, try to stop them from joining in or make others not like them.</p> <p>Although it isn't nice if someone says or does something mean to someone else, we don't necessarily call that bullying. It also isn't bullying if children have a one-off argument.</p> <p>For use with older students</p> <p>Bullying is when one student (or a group) keeps picking on another student again and again to upset or hurt them. They might hurt them physically, try to socially isolate them or say and do many mean or humiliating things to them.</p> <p>Although it's neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it isn't bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status isn't bullying.</p>
Bystander behaviour	<p>A bystander is someone who sees or knows about child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence or bullying that is happening to someone else. Supportive bystander behaviours are actions and/or words that are intended to support someone who is being attacked, abused or bullied. The actions of a supportive bystander can stop or diminish a specific bullying incident or help another student to recover from it.</p>
Child in need of protection	<p>A child or young person who is being (or has been) or is at risk of abuse or neglect and who has no-one with parental responsibility who is willing and able to protect them. There are variations to this definition in different states, territories and jurisdictions and to the threshold at which statutory services can intervene.</p> <p>(Holzer & Bromfield, 2009)</p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse or maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse).</p> <p>Child abuse is commonly divided into five main subtypes: physical abuse; emotional maltreatment; neglect; sexual abuse; and the witnessing of family violence.</p> <p>(Price-Robertson & Bromfield, 2009)</p>

Term	Definition
Child neglect	<p>Child neglect refers to the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing. This can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical neglect i.e. lack of safety, cleanliness, adequate clothing, housing, food and health care, • emotional neglect i.e. a lack of caregiver warmth, nurturance, encouragement and support, • educational neglect i.e. failure to provide appropriate educational opportunities for the child, and • environmental neglect i.e. failure to ensure environmental safety, opportunities and resources. <p>(Price-Robertson & Bromfield, 2009)</p>
Child physical abuse	<p>Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour.</p> <p>(Price-Robertson & Bromfield, 2009)</p>
Child protection	<p>Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.</p> <p>(Bromfield and Holzer, 2008)</p>
Child sexual abuse	<p>Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16 in most Australian states) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse can also be:</p> <p>Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g. a teacher). The age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated.</p>

Term	Definition
Child sexual abuse	<p>Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member is always sexual abuse regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion.</p> <p>Sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion.</p> <p>Non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who—due to their age or stage of development—is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse.</p> <p>(Price-Robertson & Bromfield, 2009)</p>
Conflict	<p>Conflict is a mutual disagreement, argument or dispute between people where no-one has a significant power advantage and both feel equally aggrieved.</p> <p>Conflict is different to bullying because there is always an imbalance of power in bullying. However, poorly-resolved conflict situations, especially those involving friendship break-ups or romantic break-ups sometimes lead to either aggression or bullying.</p>
Covert bullying	<p>Covert bullying is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which usually isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight of, and often unacknowledged by adults. Covert bullying behaviours mostly inflict harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem. Covert bullying can be carried out in a range of ways (e.g. spreading rumours, conducting a malicious social exclusion campaign and/or through the use of internet or mobile phone technologies).</p> <p>(Adapted from Cross <i>et al</i>, 2009)</p>
Cyberbullying	<p>Cyberbullying is a term used to describe bullying that is carried out through internet or mobile phone technologies. It is often combined with off-line bullying. It may include a combination of behaviours such as pranking (i.e. hang-up calls), sending insulting text messages, publishing someone's private information, creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns in social networking sites. It is also cyberbullying when a student(s) uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student, e.g. setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others.</p>
Cybersafe behaviours	<p>The safe, respectful and responsible use of internet and mobile phone technology.</p>

Term	Definition
Cyberexploitation	The use of internet or mobile phone technologies to take advantage of another. Examples include: asking others to send sexually explicit photographs of themselves; stealing someone's identity and impersonating them (e.g. to subscribe to services or purchase goods and services in their name); using unscrupulous sales tactics (e.g. pop-ups).
Cyberfight	Conflict that is carried out through the use of mobile phone or internet technologies.
Cyberharassment	A single episode of aggression (e.g. an insult, threat, nasty denigrating comment) against a specific student carried out through internet or mobile phone technologies.
Cyber-risks	Potential risks that students are exposed to when using internet or mobile phone technologies. These include: the temptation to misuse technology, cyberexploitation, self-exposure and cyberbullying.
Discrimination	Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.
Evaluation	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 informed approach to school safety.
Evidence-informed	An evidence-informed approach considers research that demonstrates effective or promising directions and practices that have been carried out in different countries, cultures, school systems and student populations in terms of its relevance for one's own school.
E-Crimes	Illegal actions that are carried out through the use of internet or mobile phone technology. They include: child pornography, fraud, impersonation, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten. Most of these are crimes under Australian federal law but some are also (or only) crimes under some Australian state laws.

Term	Definition
Harassment	<p>Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.</p> <p>Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person(s). It may be intentional or unintentional, i.e. words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless.</p> <p>Harassment is unacceptable and needs to be addressed as part of creating a safe school but it would not be considered bullying if any one or more of the following three features were present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern • it (genuinely) was not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse • it was not directed towards the same person(s) each time.
Homophobia	<p>An irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals or students who are perceived to be homosexual. Homophobic attitudes underpin many bullying situations.</p>
Mandatory reporting	<p>The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. All states and territories possess mandatory reporting requirements of some description. However, the people mandated to report and the abuse types for which it is mandatory to report vary across Australian states and territories.</p> <p>(Higgins, Bromfield, Richardson, Holzer and Berlyn, 2009)</p>
Method of Shared Concern	<p>The Method of Shared Concern (developed by Anatol Pikas in Sweden) has the following steps. The students who are suspected of bullying another student are interviewed individually in a non-blaming manner and asked to indicate how they can improve the situation. The targeted student is then interviewed and the overall situation is carefully monitored. When progress in the reduction of the bullying behaviour has been confirmed, a meeting of all those who took part in the bullying is convened. A plan is then made to involve the student who was bullied in a concluding meeting (with those who were involved in the bullying) at which a negotiated solution is achieved.</p> <p>(Adapted from Rigby, 2005)</p>

Term	Definition
National Strategy for Young Australians	<p>The National Strategy for Young Australians provides the Australian Government’s vision for all young people to grow up safe, healthy, happy and resilient and to have the opportunities and skills they need to learn, work and engage in community life and influence decisions that affect them.</p> <p>The Strategy focuses on 8 key priority areas to support young people to succeed and build lives of their own choosing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the health and wellbeing of all young people. 2. Equipping young Australians to shape their own futures through education. 3. Supporting young Australians within their families. 4. Empowering young Australians to take part and be active in their communities. 5. Equipping young Australians with the skills and personal networks they need to gain, and be successful in, employment. 6. Enabling young Australians to participate confidently and safely online. 7. Strengthening early intervention with young Australians to help prevent any problems getting worse and to help young people get their lives back on track. 8. Establishing clear-cut legal consequences for behaviours that endanger the safety of others.
Online grooming	<p>Online grooming describes a series of actions undertaken by an adult that are designed to establish what appears to be a friendly and caring relationship with a child. This is the first step towards slowly leading them to participate in sexual activity for the personal gratification of the adult. Their grooming behaviours are aimed at slowly reducing the child’s inhibitions in relation to talking about and viewing sexual behaviour and arousing their sexual curiosity. They may send them sexually explicit material or talk about different types of sexual activity. Some adults pretend to be younger than they really are. After a while the child is encouraged to engage in ever more personal communication (e.g. phone calls and text messages), then perhaps to send explicit photos and then to meet them face-to-face. Some do not successfully move to these last stages but still obtain sexual gratification from their sexually-based communication with the child.</p>
Online hate websites	<p>Websites (or other online sites) that have been established for the purpose of bullying another. They contain insulting and contemptuous remarks or images and encourage others to sign on and indicate their hatred of a nominated person and add more disparaging comments.</p>

Term	Definition
Positive behaviour management approaches	Positive behaviour management approaches are those that stress prevention, support and the avoidance of confrontation and which focus more on the development of positive student behaviour than on punishment for student misbehaviour.
Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)	Positive Behaviour Support is an approach to behaviour management that aims to prevent and reduce anti-social and challenging behaviours by: rearranging the student's learning environment so that factors that have been identified as maintaining inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours are removed; teaching pro-social skills; providing positive consequences for pro-social behaviour, and minimising the use of negative strategies such as punishment.
Power imbalance	A situation where one person or group has a significant advantage over another that enables them to coerce or mistreat another for their own ends. In a bullying situation this power advantage may arise from the context (e.g. having others to back you up), from assets (e.g. access to a weapon) or from personal characteristics (e.g. being stronger, more articulate or more able to socially manipulate others).
Prosocial values	Prosocial values emphasise the importance of harmony and concern for others. They include: respect, acceptance of diversity, honesty, fairness, friendliness and inclusion, compassion (kindness), cooperation and responsibility. These values assist students to develop a moral map to guide their behaviour and choices.
Punitive approach	The application of negative consequences such as detention, suspension and expulsion for aggressive, violent or bullying behaviour.
Racism and racial harassment	Racism is the assumption that members of one race are intrinsically superior to members of another race or races. This assumption of superiority is often used to justify discrimination and mistreatment. Racial harassment involves unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards a person (or persons) of a specific race that offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse. If these words or actions are repeatedly directed towards the same person it is called racial bullying.
Resilience	Resilience is the ability to cope and bounce back after encountering negative events, difficult situations, challenges or adversity and to return to almost the same level of emotional wellbeing. It is also the capacity to respond adaptively to difficult circumstances and still thrive. (Noble, McGrath, Roffey & Rowling, 2008)

Term	Definition
Respectful Relationships	<p>This primary prevention strategy seeks to prevent domestic and family violence through education. The strategy focuses on preventing violent behaviour by educating and facilitating young people to develop skills and knowledge on how to behave in positive and respectful ways in intimate relationships.</p> <p>(Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) 2010)</p>
Restorative practices	<p>In this approach to behaviour management, the term 'restorative' is used to stress that when a student misbehaves, restoring relationships, repairing harm and learning perspective-taking and social responsibility is more important and effective than simply delivering punishment for their misbehaviour. Restorative practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circle time (and conference circles) in which students sit in a circle and, using a structured format, discuss and problem solve an issue that has affected the whole class or specific members of the class • the 'restorative interview' where the teacher uses an incident of misbehaviour as an educative opportunity for teaching empathy, consequential thinking and the importance of making amends in order to repair harm and relationships • the more formal Restorative Conference that is used with more serious or ongoing misbehaviour and usually involves senior staff, parents and carers.
School community	<p>The school community is considered to comprise students, school staff (for example, teachers and other professionals, administrators, other support staff and volunteers), parents, guardians, carers and others with an interest in the school.</p>
School connectedness	<p>School connectedness is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals. The critical requirements for feeling connected include students' experiencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high academic expectations and rigour coupled with support for learning • positive peer and teacher-student relationships • physical and emotional safety • parent involvement with the school. • Increasing the number of students who feel connected to their school is likely to impact on critical accountability measures, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing academic performance and school completion rates • decreasing incidents of fighting, bullying, or vandalism • decreasing absenteeism. <p>(Adapted from the Wingspread Declaration on School Connections 2004)</p>

Term	Definition
Sexism	<p>The assumption that one gender is intrinsically superior to the other gender. This assumption often underpins discrimination, harassment, and exclusion.</p> <p>Sexism can involve discrimination against a gender as a whole or involve the application of stereotypes to individuals, according to their perceived masculinity or femininity, which disrespects or limits their autonomy.</p>
Sexting	<p>Sending sexually explicit photographs of oneself or others using mobile phone technology either by request or spontaneously. Requests are often made by a student's current (or potential) romantic partner. Sometimes such photos are sent (without permission) to many other people, or used to coerce or blackmail after a relationship break-up.</p>
Sexual harassment	<p>Sexual harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, the display of offensive material or other behaviour that creates a hostile environment.</p> <p>(Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010)</p>
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	<p>Social and emotional learning involves students having opportunities to learn and practise social skills such as: cooperation, managing conflict, making friends, coping and being resilient, recognising and managing their own feelings and being empathic.</p>
Student voice	<p>Encouragement of young people's active participation in shared decision making and consequent actions.</p> <p>(Student Voice - A historical perspective and new directions, Department of Education, Victoria, April 2007)</p>
Student wellbeing	<p>Student wellbeing is a student's level of satisfaction about the quality of their life at school. Optimal (or desirable) wellbeing is characterised by positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships with other students and teachers, resilience, and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school.</p> <p>(Noble, McGrath, Roffey & Rowling, 2008)</p>

Term	Definition
Support Group Approach	<p>The Support Group Approach is a revision by Robinson & Maines (2008) of their earlier No-Blame Approach. In this procedure the teacher starts by interviewing the student who is being bullied and getting agreement from them to put together a support group. This group consists of students who have been identified as being involved in the bullying (but who are not confronted or blamed) as well as students who tend to be kind and empathic.</p> <p>The support group meets weekly (without the bullied student) to plan ways to support the student who is being bullied and assist in improving their quality of life at school. The teacher also checks weekly with the bullied student to see if things have improved. This is an approach that may be more suitable for less severe bullying situations.</p>
Violence	<p>Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.</p>
Whole school approach	<p>A whole school approach focuses on positive partnerships and assumes that all members of the school community (i.e. teachers, support staff, students and parents) have a significant role to play in addressing aggression, harassment and bullying and promoting a supportive school culture. A whole school approach also involves all areas of the school: policy and procedures, teaching practices, curriculum, and the organisation and supervision of the physical and social environment of the school. All teachers accept responsibility for preventing and managing aggression, harassment and bullying and respond consistently and sensitively according to the agreed procedures. Safe school messages and practices are not just 'added on' but are embedded in many areas of the curriculum and in the daily life of the school.</p>
Witnessing of family violence	<p>The witnessing of family violence has been broadly defined as "a child being present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour" (Higgins, 1998:104). Research has shown that children who witness domestic violence tend to experience significant disruptions in their psychosocial wellbeing, often exhibiting a similar pattern of symptoms to other abused or neglected children.</p> <p>(Price-Robertson & Bromfield, 2009)</p>

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5 RESOURCES

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

A wide range of resources in relation to aspects of school safety and student wellbeing are available, online and in print. This resources section gives an overview of resources such as legislations, policies, codes, guidelines and fact sheets. The list is not exhaustive, and is up to date at the time of publication. The majority of resources listed are available online, and most are either published by, or endorsed by, Commonwealth, State or Territory governments.

- The first section of resources lists the Nationally Applicable Resources.
- The second section of resources lists the State and Territory Resources.
- The third section of resources lists Additional Resource linked to Government and
- Non-Government Organisations, Charities and Foundations.

Nationally Applicable Resources

Legislation (www.comlaw.gov.au)

The following includes some of the Acts at a Commonwealth level that are relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework.

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (www.deewr.gov.au)

Under the 'Schooling' section of the website, programs and initiatives are listed. Some of the more relevant initiatives in regards to student wellbeing include:

Safe Schools www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/overview.aspx

- National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)
- What should I do if my child is being bullied?
- States' and Territories' Anti-Bullying Policies
- Keeping Safe (e.g. tips for buying mobile phones for young people)
- Research (e.g. Covert Bullying Research Projects)

Department of Health and Ageing (www.health.gov.au)

MindMatters www.mindmatters.edu.au

KidsMatter www.kidsmatter.edu.au

Australian Federal Police (www.afp.gov.au)

Under the 'National Activities' tab of the website, some relevant information may include:

Drug Awareness www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/drug-awareness/about-drugs.aspx

Child Protection Operations www.afp.gov.au/national/child_protection_operations.html

ThinkUKnow cybersafety educational campaign managed by the Australian Federal Police and Microsoft Australia (www.thinkuknow.org.au)

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (www.hreoc.gov.au)

Education Resources (resources for teachers)
www.hreoc.gov.au/education/resources/index.html

This includes information on Child Rights, Disability Rights, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, Multiculturalism, Race Relations, and Sexual Harassment.

Information for Students www.hreoc.gov.au/info_for_students

Information for Employers www.humanrights.gov.au/info_for_employers/index.html

National Child Protection Clearinghouse (www.aifs.gov.au/nch)

The National Child Protection Clearing House (www.aifs.gov.au/nch) is an information, advisory and research unit focused on child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care.

Australian Communications and Media Authority (www.cybersmart.gov.au)

CyberSmart Kids www.cybersmart.gov.au/Kids.aspx

For information for parents see www.cybersmart.gov.au/Parents.aspx

For information for schools see www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools.aspx

For teacher resources see: www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Teacher%20resources.aspx

For teacher professional development (Cybersafety Outreach inservice and preservice teachers and Internet Safety Awareness) see:

www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Book%20teacher%20professional%20development.aspx

**Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
(www.fahcsia.gov.au)**

Visit the FAHCSIA website for access to the following resources:

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

Council of Australian Government (www.coag.gov.au)

Protecting Children is Everybody's Business—Implementing the first three-year action plan, 2009-2012

Attorney Generals Department (www.ag.gov.au)

Secure Schools Program, see
http://152.91.15.58/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Crimeprevention_SecureSchoolsProgram

National Strategy for Young Australians (www.youth.gov.au)

The *National Strategy for Young Australians* provides information on what the Australian Government's priorities for young people government is doing in priority areas including health and wellbeing, online safety and early intervention.

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
(www.dbcde.gov.au)**

Stay Smart Online provides information for Australian internet users on the simple steps they can take to protect their personal and financial information online.

www.staysmartonline.gov.au

Budd:e E-Security Education Package is a series of learning activities for primary and secondary students designed to help raise cyber security awareness. It is available as a CD ROM or online at www.staysmartonline.gov.au.

Australian Capital Territory

Legislation (www.legislation.act.gov.au)

The primary source of law in the ACT is the Acts made by the Legislative Assembly.

ACT legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- Children and Young People Act 2008
- Education Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 2004
- Education Regulation 2005
- Discrimination Act 1991
- Freedom of Information Act 1989
- Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997
- Work Safety Act 2008

Department of Education and Training (www.det.act.gov.au)

The ACT DET has a number of policies that can be found online and that relate to the National Safe Schools Framework:

- Providing Safe Schools P-12
- Suspensions, Exclusions or Transfer of Students in ACT Public Schools
- Countering Bullying, Harassment and Violence in ACT Public Schools
- Countering Racism in ACT Public Schools
- Countering Sexual Harassment in ACT Public Schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Cyberspace
- Our School: A happy and safe place for everyone (Code of Conduct)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
- Acceptable Use of Internet, E-mail, Computer Facilities and External Networks Policy
- Appropriate Use of Portable Digital Storage Devices Policy
- Teachers Code of Professional Practice
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

The complete list of publications and policies can be viewed on the ACT DET web page.

ACT Health (www.health.act.gov.au)

Under the 'Health Services' tab, the website contains links to useful resources, including:

- Child and youth health services A–Z
- Alcohol and other drugs services
- Mental Health ACT
- Canberra Sexual Health Centre.

Resources can be accessed online on the 'Policies and Plans' section of the website: e.g. Building A Strong Foundation: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT 2009–2014

Office of the Work Safety Commissioner (www.worksafety.act.gov.au)

The *ActSAFE* initiative contains information and education models on safety in the workplace. The modules are web-based and designed to help participants improve their knowledge and understanding of occupational health and safety hazards and laws in the ACT while providing practical approaches to common health and safety problems.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in the ACT include:

ACT Independent Schools (www.ais.act.edu.au)

Each ACT independent school is autonomous and governed by its own school board. For policies, procedures and general information regarding a particular independent school please contact the school directly.

Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Education Office (www.ceo.cg.catholic.edu.au)

See the 'Policies and Administrative Procedures' section, www.ceo.cg.catholic.edu.au/policies/index.htm.

New South Wales

Legislation (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)

NSW legislation that is relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

- **Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998**
- **Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998**
- **Education Act 1990**
- **Education (School Administrative and Support Staff) Act 1987**
- **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000**
- **The Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Services) Act 1998.**

Department of Education and Training (www.det.nsw.edu.au)

The database *School's Policies and Procedures* can be accessed through this website. It contains policies and procedures covering the following issues: access and equity, computers and the internet, curriculum and schoolwork, facilities and assets, performance appraisal, personnel, school activities, school administration and management, student administration, and wellbeing.

Some key policies relevant to safety and wellbeing at school include:

- Student Discipline in Government Schools
- Student Welfare Policy
- Drugs in Schools Policy
- Excursions Policy
- Sport and Physical Activity in Schools – Safe Conduct Guidelines.
- Policy for Protecting Children and Young People
- Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation of policy
- Online Communication Services: Acceptable Usage for School Students
- Values in NSW public schools
- Professional Learning Policy for Schools
- Attendance Policy and Procedures/Guidelines
- Incident Reporting Policy and Notification Procedures
- Emergency Planning and Management Policy and Procedures.

NSW Public Schools (www.schools.nsw.edu.au)

Under the *Supporting Students* section of the website information and resources under the following headings is available:

- Disability Programs
- Behaviour Programs, such as: anti-bullying, student mentoring, and support for students with disruptive behaviour
- Student Leadership and Student Representative Councils
- Student Health, such as: individual student support, First Aid, Immunisation, Protection from the Sun: Guidelines, School Canteens, Drug Education
- Student Wellbeing, such as: anti-bullying, equal opportunity, student mentoring and values education.

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/index.php

Pages also of relevance include:

Anti-bullying Taking Action, Keeping Safe: a resource for student leaders to counter bullying

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/anti-bullyingpolicy.php

Values education Values in NSW public schools www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/values

Information for parents and carers also accessible through the website include: *Bullying Among Young Children: A guide for parents, and Cyberbullying*—Information for parents.

NSW Health (www.health.nsw.gov.au)

The *Health Behaviours of Secondary School Students Report* in NSW 2002 is an overview of the main health behaviours of NSW secondary school students. It provides information on lifestyle behaviours including: substance use, such as smoking and drinking alcohol, sun protection, eating habits, involvement in physical activity, and the areas of mental wellbeing and injuries.

The *Public Health* section of the website contains information on a wide range of issues relevant to the health of school-aged children.

The *Druginfo* initiative (www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au) outlines Government policies on drugs including factsheets on illicit drugs, information on legal issues, plus information on the role of parents/carers, families, and the broader community in reducing drug abuse. There is a section dedicated to 'School Education' www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au/research_and_resources/education/school_education.

Department of Premier and Cabinet – Keep Them Safe (www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au)

This website includes information for teachers, childcare workers and other about key changes to **NSW's mandatory reporting and child protection system**. For new Child Protection Procedures, see www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/information_exchange.

WorkCover NSW (www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

The *WorkCover* website (www.workcover.nsw.gov.au) contains information for employers and employees on workplace safety, including managing workplace risks, and occupational health and safety. In particular, see information on

- Managing safety risks
- Workplace training
- Work experience placements (including for school students).

Resources specific to the non-government sector in NSW include:

The Association of Independent Schools NSW (www.aisnsw.edu.au)

AISNSW is the peak body for the independent schools sector in NSW and works to support schools in promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. AISNSW offers a range of services to schools to address issues around health, safety and wellbeing through professional development and the provision of professional advice and support.

Health, safety and wellbeing is supported by AISNSW through offering courses and conferences, the administration of grants that support professional learning and practice and the availability of individual school-based consultancy services.

Examples of related areas in which the AIS provides support to independent schools include, but are not limited to, curriculum support for PDHPE and Pastoral Care, students with disabilities, child protection, bullying and harassment, anaphylaxis, immunisation, road safety education, drug education, values education, risk management, occupational health and safety, employment relations and the use and misuse of technology.

Catholic Education Commission of NSW (www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au)

Online resources include:

- **Guidelines for the Development of School-Based Drug Education Policies and Practices**
- **Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity**
- **Guidelines for Using Contracted External Providers for Physical Education and School Sport**
- **Your Choice – A Drug Education Teacher Resource for Year 11 and 12 Students.**

Each Catholic Education Office in NSW has their own website with information pertinent to student safety and wellbeing and creating schools as safe and supportive learning and teaching environments.

Northern Territory

Legislation database (<http://dcm.nt.gov.au>)

NT legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- **Anti-Discrimination Act 2002**
- **Community Welfare Act 2002**
- **Criminal Code Act 2002**
- **Education Act 2007**
- **Work Health Act 2001**
- **Behaviour Management Framework for NT Government Schools 2002.**

Department of Education and Training (www.det.nt.gov.au)

The DET website contains information for parents, carers and the community, teachers and educators, students, apprentices and trainees, and employers.

Examples of these policies accessible online through NT DET www.det.nt.gov.au/about-us/policies/schools include:

- Management of student behaviour: **Policy and Guidelines**
- Middle Years of Schooling Principles and Policies Framework
- Code of conduct for schools
- Canteen nutrition and healthy eating
- Drug taking by students
- Exemption authority to exempt students
- Infectious diseases - exclusions from school policy
- Mobile phones and electronic devices in the school environment
- Police in schools: **Policy and Guidelines**
- Safety in school sport - appropriate teaching of body contact sports policy.

Safe Schools NT Framework, the Safe Schools NT Code of Behaviour, is available online www.det.nt.gov.au/students/support-assistance/safety-wellbeing/ssnt.

The Code, and accompanying brochures aims to help parents and carers, students and teachers deal with some of the issues in schools such as bullying and harassment, safe play and cyber bullying.

The Safe Schools NT Framework also includes:

- Professional learning modules
- School Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy guide and template
- Information on relevant legislation and policies.

The *Safety and Wellbeing* page contains links to the following:

- Wellbeing and behaviour management, Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy Guide
- Health promotion in schools: Health (Nutrition and Sexuality) Education; Physical Education; Drug Education; School Sport Coordinators
- School counselor.

Department of Health and Families (www.health.nt.gov.au)

Under the **Northern Territory Families website** there is a 'tip-sheets library' with resources on the following issues:

- Child Protection
- Child Abuse
- Children and Teenagers – Social and emotional development
- Parenting Tip Sheets.

See: www.families.nt.gov.au.

Worksafe NT (www.worksafe.nt.gov.au)

Some resource available through the **WorkSafe NT** website that maybe useful in regards to school safety include:

- A guide to first aid in the workplace
- Health and safety in the office
- Managing stress in the workplace.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in the NT include:

Association of Independent Schools NT (www.aisnt.asn.au)

See the 'Student wellbeing and special education' section under the NT Education tab for relevant information and links. For policies, procedures and general information regarding a particular independent school please contact the school directly.

Catholic Education Office NT (www.ceo.nt.catholic.edu.au)

Information on policies, curriculum and religious education, and professional development is available online here.

Victoria

Legislation database (www.legislation.vic.gov.au)

Victorian legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**
- **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005**
- **Children and Young Persons Act 1989**
- **Children Youth and Families Act 2005**
- **Community Services Act 1970**
- **Education and Training Reform Act 2006**
- **Equal Opportunity Act 2010**
- **Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001.**

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (www.education.vic.gov.au)

Student Wellbeing: policies and guidelines include the following:

- **Building Respectful and Safe Schools**
- *Student Engagement Policy Guidelines—Effective Schools are Engaging Schools*. These guidelines promote student engagement, attendance and positive behaviours in Victorian government school.
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools
- Student Attendance – It's Not OK To Be Away.

Resources on support for school communities, students with disabilities, and alternative education programs are also accessible here www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing.

Student Safety: policies and guidelines include the following:

- Bullying—Strategies for Safe Schools are Effective School
- Policy and Code of Conduct
- bullying
- homophobic bullying
- cyber bullying
- drug education

Work experience and OH&S, Safe@work www.education.vic.gov.au/safe@work/index.asp

Critical incidents (e.g allegations of student sexual assault)

Child protection (e.g. protecting children protocol, learning modules and mandatory reporting).

Human resources – for information about health and safety at work in the education sector: see www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw.

Victoria Police (www.police.vic.gov.au)

See '**Your schools and neighbourhood**' tab for information on safety when:

- Walking to school
- At school (on bullying and harassment).

The **KIDS site** contains information for safety under the following headings

- Surfing the net
- Mobile phones
- Street smart
- In the water.

WorkSafe (www.workcover.vic.gov.au)

The **WorkCover website** contains information for employers and employees on workplace safety, including managing workplace risks, and occupational health and safety.

Information on legal duties and compliance in the educational sector can be found by clicking on the 'Your Industry' tab and then scrolling down to 'Education sector'.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in Victoria include:

Independent Schools Victoria (www.independentschools.vic.edu.au)

Click '**Advisory Services**' under the '**For Schools**' tab, and then search the Compliance Framework. Some examples of relevant guidelines include:

- Anti-bullying: Guidelines for the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies
- Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying and tagging: Employer obligations under a variety of Acts
- Resiliency Targeted Programs Guidelines 2010
- Duty of Care.

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (www.cecv.catholic.edu.au)

Information on leadership, employment, religious education, and policies are available online.

The Policy for the Prevention of Bullying Behaviour (workplace bullying) can be accessed at <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/vcsa/ohands/bullying.htm>

Protecting safety and wellbeing of young people: <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/frameset.htm?page=search>

Guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child First.

Each Catholic Education Office in Victoria has their own website with information pertinent to student safety and wellbeing and creating schools as safe and supportive learning and teaching environments.

Queensland

Legislation database (www.legislation.qld.gov.au)

QLD legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- Anti-Discrimination Regulation 2005
- Child Protection Act 1999
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (Qld)
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions Act) 2006 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006 (Qld)
- Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act, 2005 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001 (Qld)
- Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996 (Qld)
- Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland).

QLD Department of Education and Training (<http://education.qld.gov.au>)

The QLD Code of School Behaviour can be accessed online through Act Smart, Be Safe! or at <http://education.qld.gov.au/studentsservices/behaviour/index.html>. Information on behaviour support personnel and responsible behaviour plans can also be accessed here.

Act Smart, Be Safe! This initiative promotes the school community working together to address violence in school communities.

- Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment Policy
- Essential Skills for Classroom Management (ESCM)
- Student Protection Policy
- Drug Education.

See: <http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe>.

The following can also be accessed through the QLD DET website:

Information for parents/carers: Communication Technologies; Celebrations; Bullying; Supply of alcohol to minors.

Information for students: Staying Safe; Communication technologies; Support People at School; Information for teachers: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL); Health and Physical Education Key Learning Area; Professional Development; Responding to Violent Incidents between Students; The Importance of a Positive Classroom Environment; Case Studies.

QLD Police (www.police.qld.gov.au)

For information on school-based policing: www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/youth/school

Department of Communities (www.communities.qld.gov.au)

This website provides information on child safety services. The 'Youth' section of the website contains information about youth initiatives, support services, and youth engagement opportunities. See www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/youth/.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

Information on occupational health and safety, employer and employee responsibilities, work place safety, risk management and so on can be found on this website. Under the Health and Safety Tips by industry or occupation, see '**Key health and safety tips for teachers**'.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in QUEENSLAND include:

Independent Schools Queensland (www.aisq.qld.edu.au)

The following information is available on the **members section** of the website

Policies:

- Child Protection
- Child Protection Compliance
- Anti-bullying (including cyber-bullying)
- Sexual Harassment
- Grievance Procedures
- Management of Allergies
- Anti-discrimination.

Guidelines:

- Duty of Care Handbook

Fact-sheets:

- Contagious Diseases
- Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence

Asthma Friendly Schools Program (<http://www.asthmaqld.org.au/>)

Blue Cards (<http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/index.html>).

Other: Student Health and Wellbeing

- Drug education
- Resources
- Leading Student Wellbeing
- Values Education.

Queensland Catholic Education Commission (www.qcec.catholic.edu.au)

Policy and Position Statements can be accessed here, for example:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Catholic Schools in Queensland
- Inclusive Practices in Catholic Schools in Queensland
- Maintenance of Facilities in Queensland Catholic Schools
- Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School.

Each Catholic Education Office in Queensland has their own website with information pertinent to student safety and wellbeing and creating schools as safe and supportive learning and teaching environments.

South Australia

Legislation database (www.legislation.sa.gov.au)

SA legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- **Children's Protection Act 1993**
- **Education Act 1972.**

Department of Education and Children's Services (www.decs.sa.gov.au)

The **Health and Wellbeing** section, under 'Information for Staff', includes information on child and student wellbeing such as:

- Attendance in schools
- Bullying and Harassment—including the DECS School Discipline Policy
- Behaviour Management

Child Protection—Mandatory Notification (**Responding to Abuse and Neglect Training program**), Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

Cyber-Safety: Keeping Children Safe in a Connected World; Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools

Health.

Under the '**Students Information**' tab, information is available on:

- Bullying and Harassment
- Counselling

Eat Well, 'Right Bite' strategy www.decs.sa.gov.au/eatwellsa

Road Safety www.roadsafety.sa.edu.au

Sport, Swimming and Aquatics www.decs.sa.gov.au/schoolsport

Crime Prevention www.schoolcare.sa.edu.au (partnership with SA Police)

Drug Strategy, **Principles for School Drug Education.**

Department of Health (www.health.sa.gov.au)

Click on 'Child Protection' on the left hand tab to view the *2009 Child Protection— Information Sharing Protocol*.

Also, visit the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service at www.cyh.com.au.

SafeWork SA (www.safework.sa.gov.au)

The **SafeWork** website contains information for employers and employees on workplace safety, including managing workplace risks and occupational health and safety.

For school resources, teacher resources and student lessons on OH&S, click on the 'Resources' tab and then go to 'Education and Training'.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in SOUTH AUSTRALIA include:

Association of Independent Schools of SA (www.ais.sa.edu.au)

Information includes the Compliance Framework, Current Issues, OH&S resources, as well as policies and professional development information. For policies, procedures and general information regarding a particular independent school please contact the school directly.

South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/CatholicEducationOfficesSA)

A range of resources are available online at the **South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools website**, including the following topics: Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Young People, Bullying, Pastoral Care and Learning and Student Wellbeing.

Western Australia

Legislation database (www.slp.wa.gov.au)

WA legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (under sexual discrimination or harassment)
- Industrial Relations Act 1979
- Workplace Agreements Act 1993
- Workers' Compensation and Assistance Act 1981
- Criminal Code (assault)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Disability Standards in Education (2005).

Department of Education (www.det.wa.gov.au)

Some of the policies relevant to **school safety and student wellbeing** cover the following issues:

- Behaviour Management in Schools
- Inclusive Education
- Duty of care for students
- Health
- Occupational safety and health
- School safety and security.

A full list of **Department of Education policies** are available at: <http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/portal>.

At the '**Resourcing the Curriculum**' section of the DET website, information is available on curriculum areas relevant to school safety and student wellbeing under the key learning area, **Special Programs/Projects**. For example:

- Protective Behaviours
- Inclusivity
- Values Education.

See: www.det.wa.edu.au/education/cmisis/eval/curriculum/learningareas/index.htm.

Information on online safety, cyber bullying, student responsibilities and the acceptable use of technology, is available through **ICT in the Curriculum**

See: www.det.wa.edu.au/education/cmisis/eval/curriculum/ict/index.htm.

Information on healthy eating and the green/amber/red categories is available at **Healthy Food and Drink**, see: www.det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink.

Department for Child Protection (<http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>)

A full list of policies relevant to child protection are available at: <http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/ChildProtection.aspx>

Information on the Mandatory Reporting of child sexual abuse can be accessed at <http://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au>.

For information on the Working with Children Check, go to: www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au/checkwwc.

Department of Health (www.health.wa.gov.au)

An A-Z of health topics is available at www.health.wa.gov.au/health_index/index.cfm.

Under the following information is available under **School services**:

- Child Developmental Assessments
- School-based sexual health education
- School vaccination.

Western Australia Police (www.police.wa.gov.au)

Under the '**Young People**' tab, information is available on the following:

- Constable Care
- Blue Light – Activities for young people in an environment free from antisocial behaviour, drugs and alcohol
- Internet Safety
- Juvenile Justice.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in WESTERN AUSTRALIA include:

Association of Independent Schools WA (www.ais.wa.edu.au)

For policies, procedures and general information regarding a particular independent school please contact the school directly.

Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (www.ceo.wa.edu.au)

In relation to staff safety and wellbeing, the policy statements that can be downloaded from the 'Human Resources' section on the Policy Statements page include:

- Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying
- Dispute and Complaint Resolution.

In relation to students, policy statements that can be downloaded from the 'School and Community Operations' section of the Policy Statements page include:

- School camps and excursions
- Child abuse
- ICT (student use and staff use)
- Crisis management planning
- Exclusion of students for disciplinary reasons.

Schools are required to develop their own policies from the CECWA policies as stated in each document.

Memoranda:

Under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Child Protection (DCP), Principals employed in Catholic schools have been recognised as an approved class of persons able to take reports regarding child sexual abuse. Principals employed in Catholic schools have a legal obligation upon receiving reports regarding child sexual abuse to forward these unaltered to the approved agency (currently the Department for Child Protection) as soon as possible. As well as informing the Principal, teachers would continue to have the option in law to report directly to DCP.

Tasmania

Legislation database (www.legislation.tas.gov.au)

Tasmanian legislation relevant to the National Safe Schools Framework includes:

- **Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997**
- **Anti-discrimination Act 1998.**

Department of Education (www.education.tas.gov.au)

Information on student health care, safety and wellbeing is available through the 'Schools and Colleges' section of the website. This includes the following:

- Student health and medical care guidelines and procedures
- Child protection and children in care, including information on school's responsibility in relation to mandatory reporting of child abuse.
- Policies, guidelines and support materials to facilitate appropriate educational provision for students with disabilities
- Inclusive education programs and policies, such as: supportive school communities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy support materials, gender education, and rural and remote education
- Wellbeing programs, policies and guidelines, such as: promoting positive behaviour, Move Well Eat Well for Schools Project, Swimming and water safety, National drug education, Tasmania, and school canteen handbook
- Outdoor education guidelines
- Head lice in schools
- Web Safety a guide, recommendations and resources to support schools, teachers and students with the responsible use of IT resources. This include the 'Web Safety Kit for School's, and the 'Web Safety in Schools Policy'
- Retaining and Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students.

See: www.education.tas.gov.au/school/health for Student health care, safety and wellbeing.

Under the 'Attending School' section of the website, information is available on unacceptable behaviour and discipline, including:

- Unacceptable behaviour
- Discipline and behaviour management
- Bullying.

See: www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/attending/behaviour.

Department of Health and Human Services (www.dhhs.tas.gov.au)

Information relevant to the health and wellbeing of young people is available through the website. Issues covered include:

- Children and Families
- Disability
- Mental Health
- Young People (including Youth Health Service, drugs and alcohol, and sexual health).

Tasmania Police (www.police.tas.gov.au)

Information and links to the following are accessible through the Tasmania Police website

- **Police and Community Youth Clubs (PCYC)** www.pcyctas.org
- **Police in Schools Program** www.police.tas.gov.au/community/police-in-schools
- **Child Protection Strategy** www.police.tas.gov.au/security_and_safety/child-protection.

Also available on the website is the **2009 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Tasmania Police and Tasmanian Schools and Colleges**. It outlines the process to be undertaken if an illicit drug is detected, or if a drug-related incident occurs, or is suspected on school premises. It includes government, Independent and Catholic schools.

WorkCover Tasmania (www.workcover.tas.gov.au)

The **WorkCover** website contains information on safety and prevention, injury management, insurance, and other resources to promote safe and healthy workplaces.

Resources specific to the non-government sector in Tasmania include:

Association of Independent Schools of Tasmania (www.aist.tas.edu.au)

Each Tasmanian independent school is autonomous and governed by its own school board. For policies, procedures and general information regarding a particular independent school please contact the school directly.

Catholic Education Office Tasmania (www.catholic.tas.edu.au)

Information on issues such as Leadership and School Development, Faith Education, and Policies (including the Anti-discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy) can be accessed online.

Additional Resources

GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT Organisations, Charities and Foundations

Alannah and Madeline Foundation	www.amf.org.au
Cybersafety and Wellbeing (eSmart)	www.esmart.org.au
Australian Communication and Media Authority	www.cybersmart.gov.au/ www.cybersmartkids.com.au www.cybersmart.gov.au/.../Cybersmart%20Libraries/ACMA_CybersmartFamiliesGuide_A5.ashx
Australian Council of State School Organisations	www.acsso.org.au
Australian Federal Police and Microsoft Australia ThinkUKnow	www.thinkuknow.org.au
Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association	www.amta.org.au/pages/Cybersafety
Beyondblue	www.beyondblue.org.au Ph: 1300 22 4636
Bullying. No way!	www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Child Safety Australia	www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au
CyberSmart Kids Online	www.cybersmartkids.com.au
Kids Help Line	www.kidshelp.com.au Ph: 1800 55 1800
KidsMatter	www.kidsmatter.edu.au
LawStuff	www.lawstuff.org.au
Lifeline	www.lifeline.org.au Ph: 13 11 14
Method of Shared Concern	www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/research.aspx
MindMatters	www.mindmatters.edu.au
NAPCAN. Preventing Child Abuse	www.napcan.org.au
National Centre Against Bullying	www.ncab.org.au
Raising Children Network	www.raisingchildren.net.au
Reach Out!	www.reachout.com.au
Smart Online Safe Offline	www.soso.org.au
Solid Kids Solid Schools	www.solidkids.net.au
Stay Smart Online	www.staysmartonline.gov.au
The Australian Psychological Society	www.psychology.org.au

6 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section provides a comprehensive referenced review of the research on student wellbeing and safety (with a specific focus on bullying). For a summary of this review see section 2: FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions about Student Safety and Wellbeing in Schools.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing awareness over the last two decades, both within Australia and in other parts of the world, of the harmful impact of school bullying, which has been described as the most common form of aggressive behaviour that occurs in primary and secondary schools (Greene, 2000 & 2003; Nansel *et al.*, 2003). Bullying in schools is now correctly recognised as a societal problem and anti-bullying initiatives are seen as part of the Human Rights movement. Many educators and researchers (e.g. Smith, 2004) have convincingly argued that it is a moral imperative for schools to continue to address the complex problem of bullying and to keep children and young people safe. Professor Dan Olweus, one of the earliest researchers into school bullying, has summed it up in this way:

It is a fundamental democratic right for a child to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation implied in bullying. (Olweus, 1999:21)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) reinforces the importance of protecting children's quality of life and their rights to be educated in a safe environment, free from all forms of violence, victimisation, harassment and neglect. In September 2005 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the measures taken to combat bullying in Australian schools, such as the National Safe School Framework. The Committee indicated ongoing concern in regard to the impact that bullying has on the psychological wellbeing, educational achievements and social development of victimised children and recommended that appropriate measures continue to be taken to counter bullying in Australian schools (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child).

Large-scale proactive initiatives such as the National Safe Schools Framework also reflect a broader global focus on the rights of all people to be safe from harassment, aggression, violence, bullying and abuse. There is a strong connection between being victimised at school and being a member of a group that is forced to defend its rights in other societal circumstances. For example, gay and bisexual students are disproportionately victimised relative to their heterosexual peers (Bontempo & D'Augeli, 2002)

Schools that do not address the problem of bullying can become breeding grounds for a process whereby the more aggressive/powerful dominate the less powerful, a process that underpins various types of violent criminal activity as well as domestic violence and child abuse.

Bullying causes great suffering and can adversely affect development and learning and anti-bullying initiatives in schools are also consistent with the current drive both within schools and in the general community to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in young people (Stevens *et al.*, 2001)

The following section addresses eight important and commonly asked questions about school bullying. These are:

1. What is bullying?
2. What is the prevalence of bullying in schools?
3. Why do some students bully others and why are some students more likely to be bullied?
4. What are some of the negative consequences of persistently or frequently bullying others?
What are the negative consequences of being bullied?
5. What school factors, social dynamics and interactive processes help to explain bullying?
6. What are the links between bullying and student wellbeing
7. What legal issues are related to bullying?
8. What evidence-informed directions can schools take to reduce bullying?

The responses to these questions should be read in conjunction with the review by McGrath (2009) along with the following Commonwealth Government reports: Cross *et al.* (2009), Spears *et al.* (2008), Rigby & Griffiths (2007) and McGrath (2006).

Question 1: What is bullying?

There is no perfect definition of bullying that covers every possible set of circumstances (Smith, 2005a). However the following criteria are accepted as part of a good working definition of bullying by most researchers (e.g. Olweus, 1999; Ross, 2002; Smith & Brain, 2000; Smith, 2005a):

- Repeated negative actions towards a specific person or group that are intended to distress.
- Distress/harm or fear on the part of the student who is targeted.
- An imbalance of power in favour of the person(s) taking the aggressive actions.

The definition of bullying used in this framework is:

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies. Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

The power advantage in a bullying situation may derive from a range of factors such as greater size, older age, superior verbal or manipulation skills, social status, knowledge of another student's vulnerability (e.g. family issues or illness) and/or the level of support from other students. It may also derive from being a member of a dominant group in the community and using that power against members of a less dominant group e.g. through racism, sexism or homophobia (Prevnet, 2010).

The differences between bullying and similar concepts: harassment, aggression, violence and conflict

Harassment, aggression, violence, bullying and conflict are all interpersonal behaviours that can create or contribute to negative social environments. There are no universally accepted definitions of these terms, with different definitions sharing some features but not others. The following definitions represent the most commonly accepted characteristics associated with each type of behaviour.

Harassment

Harassment involves unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards another person (or persons) that offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse. It may be directed towards an individual or to one or more people who belong to a specific group (e.g. based on race, religion, gender, gender-orientation). It may involve a single incident or be part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person(s). It may be intentional or unintentional. Occasionally, the person using words or actions that offend and distress another person may genuinely regard their offensive words as minor or harmless. Harassment is unacceptable and needs to be addressed as part of creating a safe school. If harassment is repeatedly directed towards the same person, and especially if it continues after the targeted person has asked them to stop, it would be considered to be bullying. However it would not be considered bullying if it:

- Occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern.
- Was (genuinely) not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse.
- Was not directed towards the same person(s) each time.

Aggression

Aggression can be defined as words or actions that are intended to harm another. Aggression may be physical or verbal or may be based on humiliation and other types of harm. It can be directed towards the same person each time or random (i.e. a different target each time). Most researchers view bullying as a sub-type of aggression. However aggression differs from bullying in that it is not necessarily repeated, nor directed to the same person each time and there isn't always an imbalance of power (Dooley *et al.*, 2009). If aggressive actions towards a specific person are repeated and incorporate a power imbalance, then it would be considered to be bullying.

Violence

Violence is usually described as severe aggression, often involving a weapon or other extreme features (e.g. multiple protagonists) that increase both the intended and actual harm (Smith, 2005b). Sometimes it is defined in terms of the severity of the effects on the targeted person, with an emphasis on physical damage or threat to life. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002) has defined violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.

Conflict

Conflict involves a mutual disagreement, argument or dispute about something important between people of equal physical or psychological strength (Olweus, 1993) where there is no significant power advantage to one party. It often occurs when one person's actions in trying to achieve their goals prevent, block or interfere with another person's attempt to achieve their goals (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000; Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Although different to bullying, poorly-resolved conflict situations may lead to either aggressive or bullying behaviour. It is important for students to learn effective skills for the resolution of conflict as this is a normal and predictable aspect of healthy relationships, even although it may not be a pleasant experience. Some students intentionally frame their aggressive action towards another student as conflict (e.g. by calling it a 'fight') in order to avoid the consequences for their actions. Many so-called 'fights' are really aggressive one-way attacks or part of a bullying situation.

Social dislike or social rejection is not necessarily bullying

Social rejection or dislike is not automatically a type of bullying. However social rejection/dislike sometimes becomes bullying when one or more of the following features are usually present:

- One or more students repeatedly point out to the targeted student that they are being excluded and why (e.g. saying 'no one likes you' at every opportunity).
- One or more students repeatedly exclude the targeted student (e.g. by refusing to work with the student on a group task, getting up and moving if they are sitting near them in class or ignoring them during a group discussion).
- One or more students repeatedly make non-verbal gestures of exclusion and unacceptability (e.g. gestures which imply that the targeted is a 'loser', 'has germs'). They may also play a series of nasty tricks or practical jokes on them to highlight their social exclusion (e.g. by not turning up to an agreed meeting point).
- Many other students are encouraged to exclude the targeted student and not 'hang round with them'. There is often an implied threat that their own social life might be adversely affected if they associate with the targeted student.

The different types of bullying

Bullying can be divided into face-to-face bullying or covert bullying (including cyberbullying).

Face-to-face bullying

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) is overt and easier for adults to detect and respond to. It may involve physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a type of bullying that adults usually do not know about or do not acknowledge because it is hidden from them (Cross *et al.*, 2009). Covert bullying can be as subtle as repeatedly frightening someone with a constant contemptuous stare (Rivers, 2001), but it more often involves 'relational bullying' which is the intentional manipulation and damage of peer relationships leading to social exclusion (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The tactics used may include, for example, making false allegations (e.g. that the targeted student has violated significant friendship 'rules'), spreading rumours about them or their family or conducting a malicious social exclusion campaign through the use of internet or mobile phone technologies (Cross *et al.*, 2009; Bjorkqvist *et al.*, 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

Covert bullying was perceived in previous years to be a less harmful type of bullying or as not really bullying at all (Boulton & Flemington, 1996; Rivers and Soutter, 1996; Bauman & del Rio, 2006; Birkinshaw & Eslea, 1998). However it is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm, especially those forms that involve anonymity (i.e. the targeted student does not know who is doing it to them) and/or public humiliation (e.g. by texting or posting online embarrassing images or malicious text) (Cross *et al.*, 2009; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Sourander *et al.*, 2010).

Rivers (2001a) argues that covert bullying appears to be linked more strongly than other forms of bullying to both absenteeism and poor school performance, and that teachers need to be aware that students who start to perform poorly or not turn up for school may be on the receiving end of this more insidious type of bullying that can be very difficult for students to explain and substantiate.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a specific type of covert bullying which has been defined as:

An aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself (Smith et al., 2008:376)

The use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm another. (Belsey, 2008)

Cyberbullying has been described by many researchers (e.g. Cross *et al.*, 2009; Shariff, 2005; Smith *et al.* 2008) as a challenging new kind of bullying that has both similar and different characteristics from 'traditional' bullying. It is more difficult for adults to detect or track, and almost half of those victimised do not know the identity of the student(s) who are attempting to harm them. Cyberbullying frequently involves 'relational bullying' but can also involve covert verbal attacks that insult, threaten or humiliate.

In Australia, cyberbullying appears to most commonly involve the malicious, targeted and repeated use of instant messaging and text messages (Cross *et al.*, 2009) with a trend towards the use of social networking sites (e.g. MSN, Facebook, MySpace and Bebo) by older students. This form of bullying can be very difficult for adults to detect or track, and students who are the target of this type of bullying often do not know the identity of the perpetrator. Slonje and Smith (2008) found that cyberbullying using transmitted or posted picture/video clips was perceived by students as being more severe than other forms of cyberbullying primarily due to the large potential audience for the resulting humiliation.

Cross *et al.* (2009), Rivers & Noret (2010) and Sourander *et al.* (2010) have identified that most students who cyberbully also bully off-line and most students who are cyberbullied are also bullied offline. There are many similarities and differences between bullying and cyberbullying (e.g. refer to McGrath, 2009)

The concept of 'repetition' is a core component of any type of bullying as it implies both intention and persecution. Repetition is more clear-cut in situations of cyberbullying in which aggressive actions using one or more types of technology are directed towards a specific student more than once (e.g. sending many insulting text messages over a week, posting insulting comments about them on a social networking site, making prank calls to their mobile phone or sending offensive emails). However it has also been argued (Slonje & Smith, 2008) that a complex multi-faceted and multi-step online campaign, which involves, for example, setting a student up to be involved in a 'fight', using a mobile phone to record it, posting the video clip on a website and then sending the web-link to a number of people also involves 'repetition' for several reasons. Firstly the campaign

involves many steps which are planned and carried out over time (McGrath, 2009). Secondly, a single transmission of a humiliating photo or piece of personal information may bring about multiple responses from others that act like repeated acts of bullying (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Stacey, 2009).

School bullying of any type does not refer to a single event, but rather to a relational pattern repeated over time in which some students gain social dominance over others through the use of anti-social power (Crothers & Levinson, 2004; Smith, 2004; Smorti *et al.*, 2003). A pattern of victimisation in a school, once developed, can quickly become entrenched because students continue to be in contact with each other over time and it is not easy for the targeted student to leave the situation (McGrath & Noble, 2006). Morrison (2001) notes that the repetitive and non-random nature of bullying means that students who are bullied not only have to survive the humiliation and distress of the attacks but also live in constant fear of their happening again.

Avoidance of labelling

Several researchers have cautioned against labelling some students as 'bullies' and others as 'victims' (e.g. Espelage & Swearer, 2003) arguing that labelling students further contributes to a negative school climate and over-emphasises the personal characteristics of individual children while minimising school risk factors within the school context (Brown, 2008). Soutter and McKenzie (2000) highlight the risk that the terms 'bully' and 'victim' may label the student permanently and Rigby (1997a) has emphasised the benefits of describing the bullying behaviours rather than using emotive labels that may demonise specific students.

Question 2: What is the prevalence of bullying in schools?

Most data about the frequency of bullying is obtained through student self-reports on written surveys and it can be difficult to get reliable estimates and comparisons because of the different instruments and survey questions that are used by different researchers and the variety in the age of the students who complete the surveys.

Rigby (2006) has estimated that 19 per cent of students between the ages of 7 and 17 are bullied on a weekly basis. In their more recent Australian study of bullying, Cross *et al.* (2009) identified that an average of 27 per cent of students in years 4-9 (approximately one in four) reported being bullied every few weeks or more often during the previous term, an average of 16% reported being covertly bullied and between 7 and 10 per cent reported being specifically cyberbullied. According to the 2008 Indicators of School Crime and Safety report from the USA, 24 per cent of primary and secondary schools report daily or weekly bullying incidents (Dinkes *et al.*, 2009).

Cross *et al.* (2009) have argued that cyberbullying may be increasing because schools are now more likely to have policies and procedures in place that make it more difficult for students to engage in face-to-face bullying. Additionally, they argue, the continuing development of new forms of information and communication technology may make cyberbullying easier to engage in.

Research evidence suggests that direct verbal bullying (e.g. name-calling, taunting, mocking and insulting) and covert bullying (e.g. trying to encourage others to socially reject the targeted student) occur much more often than physical bullying (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig & Pepler, 1997; Rivers & Soutter, 1996).

Age patterns in bullying

Bullying appears to peak during 'transition' i.e. the year in which students move from primary school to high school (e.g. Nansel *et al.*, 2001; Pellegrini, 2002). This peak has been ascribed to changes that occur in social hierarchies at the time of transition and regrouping (Pellegrini & Long 2002). Bullying then decreases to relatively low levels at the end of the high school years (e.g.

Baldry & Farrington, 2005; Nansel *et al.*, 2001; Pellegrini, 2002) with two apparent exceptions: cyberbullying in Australian schools continues to increase after the transition year (Cross *et al.* 2009); and relational bullying amongst girls also increased as they get older (Wolke *et al.*, 2009).

The development of an adolescent student's sexual identity can become the focus of bullying when they enter secondary school (Craig & Pepler, 2003) as mixed-sex socialising becomes increasingly important (McMaster *et al.*, 2002). Romantic relationships can also become a context for the use of power and aggression. Connolly *et al.* (2000) found both boys and girls aged twelve to fifteen who reported bullying others were also more sexually advanced, more likely to be involved in romantic relationships at an earlier age, and also more likely to report that they either used or received verbal and physical aggression within romantic relationships.

Empathy for students who are bullied appears to decline with age, especially when the student being bullied is male (Olweus & Endresen, 1998; Rigby, 1997b; Smith *et al.*, 2004). Boys' levels of responsive empathy may be influenced by the social context in a bullying situation (Cowie, 2000; Naylor & Cowie, 1999; Smith *et al.*, 2004). For example, they may be more inclined to express contempt for vulnerable boys when there are girls nearby or when they are in the presence of more aggressive male classmates.

It is becoming apparent that many students who persistently bully others don't just 'grow out of it'. Several longitudinal studies have shown that for a great many students there is a continuity of aggressive and dominating behaviours over time (Huesmann *et al.*, 1984; McCord, 1991; Moffitt, 1993; Pepler & Rubin, 1991; Tremblay *et al.*, 1992). What starts as mild anti-social or aggressive tendencies during early childhood, evolves into bullying and then moves to youth and adult violence and anti-social behaviour (Dupper & Myer-Adams, 2002; Pepler *et al.*, 2008; Schaeffer *et al.*, 2003; Tremblay *et al.*, 2006)

Gender patterns in bullying

Boys bully more than girls do (Natvig *et al.* 2001; Olweus 1997; Rigby, 2006) and (especially younger boys) use more physical aggression in bullying others than do girls (Arora & Thompson; 1987; Craig & Pepler, 1997; Kalliotis, 2000; Rivers *et al.*, 2007), possibly because of their greater physical strength (Rivers & Smith, 1994).

Girls use more covert relational bullying than boys (e.g. Crick *et al.*, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004) and, according to Rivers & Noret (2010) bully more through the use of emails and text messages. Both genders appear to use direct verbal aggression at similar levels (Bjorkqvist *et al.*, 1992; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993).

Where school bullying occurs

Primary students are more likely to be bullied face-to-face in the playground (Blatchford & Sharp, 1994; Boulton, 1994; Charach *et al.*, 1995; Craig *et al.*, 2000; Olweus, 1991, Pepler *et al.*, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). This trend may be partially due to the lower likelihood of being detected in the playground since the ratio of students to teachers in the playground is lower than that in the classroom (Olweus, 1991; Andrews & Hinton, 1991; Craig *et al.*, 2000; Soutter & McKenzie, 2000).

Secondary students are more likely to be bullied in the corridor and in class (Ahmad & Smith, 1994; Olweus, 1991; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Bullying is also more likely to occur during competitive or aggressive activities (Murphy *et al.*, 1983). There appears to be increasing use of information and communication technologies by both primary and secondary students to bully others students but secondary students use them more for this purpose (Cross *et al.*, 2009)

Question 3: Why do some students bully others and why are some students more likely to be bullied?

Bullying occurs at some level in all primary and secondary schools (Elias & Zins, 2003; Whitney & Smith, 1993; Zubrick *et al.*, 1997) and all students can potentially become involved in bullying others or being bullied. Many students report occasionally taking part in some form of bullying and most students are teased or experience some form of peer harassment during their years at school (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Pepler *et al.*, 2008). For most students it occurs as part of their moral development or their temporary involvement with peer group dynamics. However longitudinal studies indicate that a small group of students will have frequent, long-lasting, serious, and persistent involvement in bullying (Craig & Pepler, 2003; Pepler *et al.*, 2008; Sourander *et al.*, 2000; Sourander *et al.*, 2010).

Characteristics of students who are more likely to frequently or persistently bully others

Students who persistently or frequently bully others far more likely to:

- **Feel disconnected from school and dislike school** (Adair *et al.*, 2000; Forero *et al.*, 1999; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998).
- **Demonstrate low levels of moral reasoning and high levels of egocentric reasoning** (Hymmel *et al.* 2005; Menesini *et al.* 2003).
- **Believe that the use of aggression is an acceptable way to achieve their own goals.** (Lowenstein, 1994; O'Brennan *et al.*, 2009; Slee & Rigby, 1993a).
- **Be preoccupied with their own goals and not concerned about the rights of others** (Tani *et al.*, 2003).
- **Show more emotional instability**, as do those students who support them (Tani *et al.*, 2003).
- **Be less friendly and cooperative than other students** (Nabuzoka, 2003; Tani *et al.*, 2003).
- **Have reasonable levels of peer acceptance and social status but are more disliked than non-bullying peers.** In a large-scale survey of young people in the USA, Thomas & Smith (2004) found that a substantial percentages of young people who reported being violent and bullying others did not perceive themselves to be liked by classmates and reported loneliness and a lack of enjoyment of life at school. Classmates often acknowledge the social dominance of students who bully but avoid their company when possible (Juvonen *et al.*, 2003). Most students appear to perceive them as both disliked and feared but also, to some extent, popular (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2007).
- **Associate with other aggressive and anti-social peers** (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Espelage *et al.*, 2001; Salmivalli, 2001).
- **Be less anxious than peers** (O'Moore, 1997 & 2000; Craig, 1998; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998; Salmon *et al.*, 1998).
- **Have high self esteem and an inflated view of themselves**, especially about their social behaviour and influence (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Bjorkqvist *et al.* 1982; Johnson, and Lewis, 1999; Natvig *et al.*, 2001; O'Moore, 2000; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Slee & Rigby, 1993b; Stuart & McCullaugh, 1996).

Their peers tend to describe them as tough and confident and inclined to show off in front of others (Stuart & McCullaugh, 1996). Salmivalli et al. (1999) found that these students not only think highly of themselves but are very sensitive to any criticism that might deflate their self-perception. They described this as 'defensive egoism' or a tendency to be grandiose and psychologically defensive.

- **Have lower levels of empathy than other students** (e.g. Espelage *et al.* 2004; Gini *et al.*, 2007; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Menesini *et al.* 1997, Olweus 1991; Rigby 1996). Endresen & Olweus (2001) have argued that observing the distress of others and responding to it with empathy is what inhibits most students from taking part in bullying. Students who frequently bully others tend to have trouble managing anger and to strike out aggressively. Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999) found that children who are the angriest are the most likely to bully others. Students who bully report that the need to relieve stress and 'having a bad day' are the primary reasons for their actions (Swearer & Cary, 2007).
- **Have poor impulse control and poor anger management skills** (Lowenstein, 1994).
- **Feel less confident about using non-violent strategies to resolve conflict** (Bosworth *et al.*, 1999; Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998) and tend to experience a lot of conflict in their relationships with friends and family members (Society for Research in Child Development, 2008).
- **Be less likely to consider the negative consequences of their actions** on others or on their own relationships over time (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001).
- **Often feel angry and inclined to attribute hostile intentions to other people**, especially when they are having a 'bad day' (Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998; Orobio de Castro *et al.*, 2003).
- **Be skilled at finding student to bully who will pose little threat to them**, either physically or in terms of their social status (Perry *et al.*, 1990).

Students who frequently bully others are more likely to come from family backgrounds with a combination of some of the following characteristics.

- **Their parents are not supportive** (Baldry & Farrington, 2000) and tend to use an authoritarian and harsh, punitive style of parenting (Loeber & Hay, 1997; Olweus, 1978; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998).
- **Their parents have a history of having bullied others** when they were at school (Farrington, 1993), a history of criminal activity (e.g. Farrington & Baldry, 2005).
- **The child has witnessed domestic partner abuse** on the part of a parent (Baldry, 2003; Bauer *et al.* 2006).
- **The child spends less time than similar-aged children under the supervision** of their parents (Baldry, 2003; Espelage *et al.*, 2000; Farrington, 1993; Loeber & Hay, 1997; Olweus, 1993).
- **The child has been maltreated by family members**, been bullied by their siblings (Duncan, 1999) or has bullied their siblings (Wolke & Samara (2004).
- **The child has high levels of disagreement with his/her parents** (Baldry & Farrington, 2005; Stevens *et al.* 2002) and their parents are relatively uninvolved with them (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2004a; Spriggs *et al.*, 2007).
- **Their parents are permissive towards aggressive behaviour** (Olweus, 1980; Espelage *et al.*, 2000)
- **The child is part of a large family** (Ma, 2001).

However many students who frequently or persistently bully others do not come from families with these characteristics and their parents are surprised, disappointed and angry when they find out that their child has been involved in bullying others.

The kind of family circumstances which make it less likely that children will bully others are those that are characterised by family harmony, non-authoritarian parenting, a reasonable level of parental supervision, parental disapproval for aggression and bullying behaviour (Rigby, 1997a), and a high level of positive involvement between parents and their children (Roland & Galloway, 2002; Stevens *et al.*, 2002).

Emerging evidence suggests that there are different sub-types of students who frequently or persistently bully (Vaillancourt *et al.*, 2003), and there may be at least two (and possibly more) distinct types. The first type has been described as students who bully proactively and instrumentally, that is, to achieve a goal. The second type has been described as impulsive students who bully reactively. These are described below.

Students who bully proactively and instrumentally

Students who bully proactively see their aggressive mistreatment of other students as 'instrumental' in achieving their goal of social dominance. They show low levels of remorse and moral reasoning (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001; Sutton *et al.*, 1999; Vaillancourt *et al.*, 2003) and have been described as cold and callous schemers (Sourander *et al.* 2007a).

These students are more likely to use covert forms of bullying such as relational bullying based on humiliation, social exclusion and/or reputation damage (Kaukiainen *et al.*, 1999). They hold a 'Machiavellian' view of relationships that endorses aggression and bullying as an acceptable way to achieve personal power and status in the peer group (Andreou, 2000). They feel little empathy for the students that they persecute and believe that it is okay to use someone else for your own ends (Sutton *et al.* 1999, 2000).

Research by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) suggests that, although these students are low on emotional empathy (i.e. 'feeling' the distress of another), some of them have high levels of cognitive empathy (i.e. 'reading' how others are feeling and predicting and explaining their reactions). This ability to 'read' others plus a reasonable level of social competence enables them to socially manipulate other students to take part in the bullying they initiate (Craig & Pepler, 2003; Kaukiainen *et al.*, 1999; Sutton *et al.*, 1999). Although they are often socially dominant and have some status in the peer group, students who bully proactively and instrumentally are not typically liked by other students (Bukowski, 2003; Veenstra, 2005) and not sought as friends, although they would like to be (Veenstra *et al.* 2010).

Students who bully reactively

Students who bully reactively are more likely to be quick to anger and lash out impulsively and usually with physical aggression. They have low levels of social competence and poor emotional control (Roland & Idsoe, 2001; Vaillancourt *et al.*, 2003). They have difficulties in particular with controlling frequent angry feelings especially when they are having a 'bad day' and feel stressed (Bosworth *et al.*, 1999; Orobio de Castro *et al.*, 2003; Swearer & Cary, 2007).

These students tend to be poorly accepted and sometimes move between bullying others and being bullied. These are often the students who have been described as 'bully-victims' (e.g. Baldry & Farrington, 1998) and tend to have the worst short-term and long-term outcomes (Lodge, 2010; Sourander *et al.*, 2010).

Some students may start to bully others reactively out of poorly controlled anger and frustration. Others may use aggression as a form of countering their own victimisation but then adopt bullying behaviour as an ongoing anticipatory/preventative strategy. Students who are 'bully-victims' may be at the greatest risk for adjustment difficulties (Craig & Pepler, 1995). Students with Attention Deficit Disorder, characterised by poor impulse control, are also more likely to both bully and be bullied (Bacchini *et al.*, 2008; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004; Unnever & Cornell, 2003; Wolke *et al.*, 2000).

Behaviour disorders

Phillips (2007) has argued that society's view of children as 'innocents' over the last few decades has made it difficult to acknowledge that many children are quite capable of bullying, aggression, and even violence (Nansel *et al.*, 2001). Patterns of aggressive and anti-social behaviour in many adolescents can be traced back to similar, but milder, behaviour patterns in their early childhood years (Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2007; Dupper & Myer-Adams, 2002).

Ttofi & Farrington (2010) have argued that it is not unreasonable to predict that many students who persistently bully would meet the criteria for being diagnosed with childhood psychopathy and several researchers (e.g. Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004; Sourander *et al.*, 2010; Vitaro *et al.*, 2002; Wolke *et al.*, 2000) have argued that many would also meet the criteria for common clinical childhood behavioural disorders, especially 'conduct disorder'. Sourander *et al.*, (2007b) found that 80 per cent of the 8-year old boys in their study who persistently bullied others met the criteria for either Conduct Disorder or Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

Characteristics of students who are more likely to be bullied

Any student can become the target of bullying. A student may be bullied, for example, simply because he or she is different in some way (e.g. they do not conform to gender stereotypes or have different preferences or opinions), or they may be new to a school or lose social support because a friend moves interstate. It can also occur when a friendship or school-based romantic relationship breaks up and the ensuing conflict is not managed well and evolves into bullying. Some students may be targeted because they pose a threat (e.g. by being likable or successful in some way) to the social status of a student who has a pattern of bullying others.

It can be difficult to separate cause and effect in much of the research into the characteristics of students who are more likely to be bullied. For example, Fox and Boulton (2006c) identified a bi-directional relationship between being relationally bullied, through social exclusion, and behaving non-assertively. In other words, using non-assertive social behaviour makes it more likely that a student will be bullied, but being relationally bullied through social exclusion also leads to a student becoming more non-assertive over time. Similarly, they found that a student's anxious behaviour and social withdrawal can increase the likelihood of being bullied but being bullied can also lead to an increase in their anxious behaviours and social withdrawal.

In summary, research suggests that students who are more likely to be bullied are also more likely to:

- **Feel disconnected from school and not like school** (Adair *et al.*, 2000; Cross *et al.*, 2009; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Nansel *et al.*, 2001; Rigby, 1997b).
- **Lack quality friendships with peers and teachers at school** (but not necessarily outside school) (e.g. Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Smith *et al.*, 2004).
- **Display high levels of emotionality that indicate vulnerability** (e.g. look sad or anxious and cry, or become sad or angry easily) **and low levels of resilience** (Analitis *et al.*, 2009; Patterson *et al.*, 1967; Perry *et al.*, 1990; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). This results in some students responding to being bullied in an angry, retaliatory, or distressed manner that may escalate the bullying (Goldbaum *et al.*, 2006; Salmivalli, 1999; Wilton *et al.*, 2000).
- **Be less well accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn** (Eslea *et al.*, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Nansel *et al.*, 2001; Nansel *et al.*, 2004; Pellegrini, 2002; Salmivalli, 1999). Buhs *et al.*, (2006) found that early peer rejection in the first two years of schooling was related to being chronically socially excluded and bullied by peers.
- **Have low self-esteem** (Rigby, 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1991).
- **Be relatively non-assertive** (Fox & Boulton, 2006c; Schwartz, *et al.*, 1993).

- **Lack confidence and skills in effectively interacting with peers** (Fox & Boulton, 2006b; Pellegrini, 2002; Salmivalli, 1999).
- **Be less likely to have other children come to their defence when they are bullied** (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003; Slaby, 2005).
- **Be different in some way.** They may be different in a simple way e.g. they have an unusual physical characteristic or choose to dress differently or like a less usual sport. Students with learning disabilities are more likely to be bullied (Mishna, 2003; Nabuzoka *et al.*, 1993) as are students with Autism Spectrum disorder (Bottroff *et al.*, 2005; Little, 2002). Gay, bisexual and 'questioning' students are also more likely to be bullied (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002; Pilkington & D'Augelli, 1995; Rivers, 2000; Williams *et al.*, 2003)

Students who are bullied are also more likely to come from family backgrounds in which there is parental conflict and disharmony (Rigby, 1994) and the parents tend to be restrictive, over-protective, controlling, and over-involved with their children (Bowers *et al.*, 1994; Georgiou, 2008; Georgiou, 2008a).

However, many students who are bullied do not come from families with these characteristics and their parents are puzzled, shocked and angry when they find out that their child is being bullied. The kind of family circumstances that make it less likely that children will be bullied are those that are characterised by significant parental involvement (especially by the father) with their children (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003) and good communication between the child and his/her parent(s) (Spriggs *et al.*, 2007)

Question 4: What are the negative consequences of frequently or persistently bullying others? what are the negative consequences of being bullied?

School bullying is a complex and pervasive social problem (Martin & Huebner, 2007). Bullying others has been shown to be a relatively stable pattern of behaviour. In a longitudinal study, Sourander *et al.* (2000) identified that students who were bullying their peers at age 8 were highly likely to still be doing so when they were followed up at age 16. They also found that a large number of students who were being bullied at age 8 were likely to still be bullied at age 16. Being bullied can even be repeated in new surroundings (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Salmivalli, 1998) most likely because the bullied student has become increasingly apprehensive and wary about any sign of potential threat from other students and this reaction is picked up as vulnerability by any student(s) looking for someone to target.

Bullying has serious short-term and long-term psycho-social consequences (e.g. Ttofi & Farrington 2008) for both those who are bullied and those who bully others (Bond *et al.*, 2001; Rigby & Slee, 1999).

Negative consequences that both students who bully and students who are bullied experience in common

The following negative consequences have been identified for both students who frequently bully as well as for students who are bullied.

- **Both feel unsafe at school** (e.g. Cross *et al.*, 2009; Nansel *et al.*, 2001). However O'Brennan *et al.* (2009) have suggested that students who persistently bully others may feel unsafe because they are defensive and hypersensitive to any perceived threats to their 'status' and are inclined towards the attribution hostile intentions to other people (Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1998).

- **Both have an increased likelihood of being depressed and/or having suicidal thoughts** (Crick, 1996; Cross *et al.*, 2009; Kaltiala-Heino *et al.* 1999; Roland, 2002; Rigby & Slee, 1999). Although research consistently identifies this as an outcome for students who have been chronically bullied (Mills *et al.*, 2005), several researchers have found this to be either not true, or less true, for students who bully (e.g. Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Juvonen *et al.*, 2003; Nansel *et al.*, 2004; Sourander *et al.*, 2010).
- **Both have lower levels of academic achievement than might otherwise be expected** (Andreou & Metallidou 2004; Glew *et al.*, 2005; Nansel *et al.*, 2001; Kaukiainen *et al.* 2002; Nansel *et al.*, 2004; Srabstein & Piazza 2008; Woods & Wolke, 2004).
- **Both have negative attitudes towards school and relatively high levels of school absenteeism over time** (Rigby, 2003; Tremblay, 1999).

Long term consequences associated only with frequently or persistently bullying others

Longer-term negative consequences that are likely for students who frequently or persistently bully include:

- **Continuing to bully and have children who bully:** students who persistently bully peers at age fourteen tend to also bully others at age eighteen and, at age thirty-two, are likely to have children who also engage in bullying (Farrington, 1993).
- **Excessive drinking and other kinds of substance use** (e.g. Berthold & Hoover, 2000; Kaltiala-Heino *et al.* 1999; Pepler *et al.*, 2002; Sourander *et al.*, 2010).
- **Juvenile anti-social behaviour** e.g. graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting (Lodge, 2010; Paul & Cillessen, 2007; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Sourander *et al.*, 2010; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Kumpulainen and Rasanen (2000) found that children who bullied their peers at 8 or 12 years of age had a higher risk of being deviant at age 15 than those not involved in bullying.
- **Carrying weapons and being violent outside the school context:** in their study of 2,915 students aged 14-15 years, Andershed *et al.*, (2001) found that bullying others at school was strongly linked to engaging in violent behaviour and weapon-carrying out of school, for both boys and girls. Other researchers have found similar outcomes (e.g. Lodge, 2010; Sourander *et al.*, 2010). Berthold and Hoover (2000) found that bringing weapons to school was also associated with bullying others at school. This suggests that school bullying is often part of a more general violent and aggressive behaviour pattern, and that preventive anti-bullying programs in schools may also contribute to decreasing the level of violence by young people when they are in the broader community.
- **Engaging in criminal activity as young adults** (Aluede *et al.*, 2008; Bollmer *et al.*, 2006; Heydenberk *et al.*, 2006; Lodge, 2010; Nansel *et al.*, 2003; Nansel *et al.*, 2001; Sourander *et al.*, 2006; Sourander *et al.*, 2007a; Sourander *et al.*, 2010; White & Loeber, 2008). In a Norwegian study by Olweus (1997) 70 per cent of students who had persistently bullied others were convicted of at least one crime by the age of 24. Being regularly involved in bullying others might allow young people to achieve immediate gratification of their goals by using aggression and they may therefore rarely have the opportunity to learn socially acceptable ways to negotiate and work cooperatively with others to achieve their goals (Feder, 2007; Haynie *et al.* 2001).
- **Involvement in other forms of aggressive or abusive behaviour as adults** (Lodge, 2010; Moffitt, 1993, Pepler & Craig, 1997; Rigby *et al.*, 1994; Williams *et al.*, 2008). Pepler and Craig (2010) have identified that the form that bullying takes changes with life stages:

The nature of bullying changes as children mature. From early adolescence, new forms of aggression, carried out from a position of power, emerge. With developing thinking and social

skills, children become aware of others' vulnerabilities and of their own power relative to others. Bullying then diversifies into more sophisticated forms of verbal, social, homophobic, and sexually- and racially-based aggression. Over time, these new forms of aggression are carried forward into different relationships and environments. The destructive lessons learned in childhood about the use of power may translate into sexual harassment in the workplace, dating violence, marital abuse, child abuse, and elder abuse. (Prevnet, 2010)

Several researchers (e.g. McIsaac *et al.*, 2008; Pepler *et al.*, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2008; Connolly *et al.*, 2000) have found an association between bullying others at school and dating violence.

Additional negative consequences associated only with being bullied at school over time

Apart from the negative consequences listed above, that appear to be common to both students who bully and students who are bullied, the following additional shorter-term consequences are associated with being frequently bullied at school

Students who are frequently bullied:

- **Are more likely to have physical symptoms**, such as headaches and stomach aches than non-bullied students (Due *et al.*, 2005; Williams *et al.*, 1996).
- **Have ongoing low self esteem** (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).
- **Experience high levels of anxiety and are more likely to be referred for psychiatric services** (Brain, 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rigby, 2005a; Salmon *et al.*, 2000).
- **Fear for their safety and their life**, especially if they are being cyberbullied (Sourander *et al.*, 2010), as cyberbullying can occur 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- **May attempt or successfully commit suicide** (Kaltiala-Heino *et al.*, 1999; Mills *et al.*, 2005). Between January 2004 and May 2005, 36 teenagers committed suicide in Victoria and 14 (or 40%) of these students had been bullied at school (Gough, 2007).
- **May resort to violent retaliation**. Borg (1998) found that many bullied students reported feelings of anger and vengefulness and Brockenbrough *et al.*, (2002) found that there is an increased risk of their bringing weapons to school to defend themselves.

In many cases the negative effects of being frequently bullied at school are long-term and have been shown to often persist into adult life (Smith, *et al.*, 2003). These include:

- **Physical and mental health problems**, especially anxiety and depression and increased susceptibility to illness (Dempsey & Storch, 2008; Kumpulainen & Rasanen, 2000; Sourander *et al.*, 2010; Williams *et al.*, 1996). In a retrospective study conducted in South Australia (Alison *et al.*, 2009) nearly one-fifth of adults who were surveyed reported having been bullied when they were at school. These adults also reported significantly poorer mental and physical health compared to those who had not been bullied. Rivers (2000) identified that 72 per cent of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults reported a regular history of absenteeism at school due to homophobic bullying or harassment. Of those that had been bullied in this way, 50 per cent reported having contemplated self-harm or suicide when at school and 40 per cent had made at least one attempt to self harm since then.
- **High levels of loneliness and impaired relationships** (Forero *et al.*, 1999; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996b; Woods *et al.*, 2009) which are probably linked to difficulties with trust and reluctance to become involved in intimate relationships (Bond *et al.*, 2001).

Negative effects of bullying on bystanders, school climate and achievement

Bullying also has an impact on the climate of a school (Skiba *et al.*, 2006; Stockdale *et al.*, 2002) and all students within the school—including those who are not directly involved in bullying or being bullied.

Felson *et al.* (1994) found that tacit approval for the use of aggression in a school (e.g. through bullying) was associated with students' not valuing academic achievement. Overall levels of achievement in both reading and maths were found to be lower in schools with higher levels of bullying (Konishi *et al.*, 2010).

Witnessing peers being bullied can produce feelings of anger, fear, guilt, and sadness in student observers (Batsche & Porter, 2006). Bystanders who witness or know about repeated bullying of peers can experience negative effects similar to those experienced by the students being bullied (Kyriakides *et al.*, 2006; Pepler & Craig, 2000). Rivers *et al.*, (2009) surveyed 2,002 students ages 12 to 16 and found that 63 percent reported that they had witnessed peers being bullied. Those who had witnessed acts of bullying were more likely to report even greater psychological distress than those students who had been involved in bullying or had been bullied. Many reported that they felt unsafe because they knew it could also happen to them, and felt guilty about their inaction and lack of support for the student being bullied. Research by Janson *et al.*, (2009) and Janson & Hazler (2004) has also identified that witnessing low-level repetitive bullying of another student at school is quite traumatic for most bystanders. In a study by Boulton *et al.*, (2008) a significant number of students (aged 10-11) reported high levels of fear about the possibility of their being bullied too (and especially of being bullied through social exclusion) and this ongoing fear disrupted their concentration on class work.

Bullying can also create a school culture where bullying is accepted and students feel powerless to stop it from happening (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; Salmivall & Voeten 2004; Stevens *et al.*, 2000). In a New Zealand study, Adair *et al.*, (2000) found that nearly half of the students in their study (aged 13-18) believed that bullying could not be stopped at school.

It seems that the wellbeing of many students within the school is adversely affected by bullying, not just those who are directly involved, and that the overall school climate becomes tainted.

Question 5: What school factors, social dynamics and interactive processes help to explain bullying?

Although the definition of bullying focuses on the repeated aggressive behaviour of one or more individual students, bullying is most often a group phenomenon, played out in a social context (Salmivalli, 1999). Swearer and Doll (2001) have stressed the importance of an 'ecological framework' for explaining the initiation and maintenance of bullying. They state that:

[A] bullying interaction occurs not only because of individual characteristics of the child who is bullying, but also because of actions of peers, actions of teachers and other adult caretakers at school, physical characteristics of the school grounds, family factors, cultural characteristics and even community factors. (Swearer & Doll, 2001:10).

School culture

A school's culture plays a significant role in influencing how students treat each other. A school's culture manifests itself in many different ways: the values the school most strongly endorses; the nature of the physical environment of the school; the way in which teachers and students treat each other; the way in which teachers treat each other and parents; the school's motto, customs, ceremonies, reward systems, celebrations and events; the rituals associated with the entry and exit of students, families and staff; and how time and money are used (Stewart, 2000).

When teachers act in accordance with the expectations and values that are being formally communicated to students, they are more effective positive role models for respectful, inclusive and accepting behaviour (Prosser & Deakin, 1997). When teachers, for example, refrain from making homophobic, sexist or racist remarks or comments that vilify or ridicule particular students, other students are less likely to perceive there is tacit approval for engaging in these unpleasant behaviours

Conversely, teachers who use behaviour management strategies that are based on dominance and submission as part of their more powerful position (e.g. by being sarcastic or unfair, making fun of or ridiculing a student, regularly threatening a student with punishment or forcing a student into a submissive posture or response) model this type of behaviour for students. Students who are already prone to bullying classmates may feel that not only are they justified in their own bullying behaviour but that these behaviours are tacitly sanctioned.

The dynamic of social positioning

A number of studies have demonstrated that one of the most common dynamics in bullying situations is that of 'social positioning' (Thornberg, 2010). This most frequent dynamic involves one student deciding to bully another more vulnerable student in order to enhance or maintain their own social status with peers and attain social dominance/power (Gini, 2006a; Karatzias *et al.*, 2002; Pellegrini, 2004; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001; Pellegrini & Long 2002; Thornberg, 2010). Other students are more likely to consider bullying to be an acceptable behaviour if a socially dominant individual or group adopts it (Gini 2006a).

A student's friendship network, especially in early adolescence, can exert a significant influence in enticing him/her to assist with or support bullying despite never having been involved in such behaviour before (Salmivalli *et al.*, 1998). To not do so could threaten their social standing and inclusion (Gini, 2006a). The targeted student becomes trapped in a dynamic in which they become increasingly powerless to escape the destructive relationship they find themselves in (Pepler *et al.*, 1999). They become even more disempowered if their friends abandon them, join in with bullying them, or take no action when they are bullied in order to enhance their own sense of 'belonging' and protect their own social wellbeing. Many young people who are bullied then attempt to 'maintain face' by putting on a 'mask' of seeing indifference, assuring any adult who asks about their wellbeing that 'everything is okay'.

The dynamic of rejecting difference and imposing conformity

O'Brien has described bullying as a 'demonstration of the norms of young people's social groups, outlawing and punishing those who do not conform' (2007:297).

The most common explanation given by students to explain why some peers bully a classmate is that the classmate is different or 'deviant' in some way (Bosacki *et al.*, 2006; Buchanan & Winzer, 2001; DeRoiser & Mercer, 2009; Frisén *et al.*, 2008; Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; Hazler & Hoover, 1993; Hoover *et al.*, 1992; Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003; Thornberg, 2010; Varjas *et al.*, 2008).

Such 'differences' may relate to their appearance, their speech, their preferences, with whom they spend time, their family and their circumstances, their sexual orientation, their interests and achievements, or a disability of some kind (Thornberg, 2010). The process of rejecting and isolating those who are different is part of an attempt to affirm the 'correct' way to be and highlight supposed superiority. This conformity process creates apprehension in students that their own social inclusion might be threatened if they dress, speak or act in the 'wrong' way (Thornberg, 2010), and some steps to reduce this apprehension can include taking part in bullying the 'stigmatised' student in order to disassociate themselves from him/her.

The dynamic of 'blaming the victim'

The 'Belief in a Just World' theory (Montada & Lerner, 1998) refers to the tendency of most people to want to believe that the world they live in is 'just' and not unfair. Therefore, when students, teachers and parents witness (or know about) a student who is being unfairly treated, they can find this injustice difficult to explain to themselves. To make themselves feel better and safer, people may search for things that the other has done to deserve the mistreatment they are experiencing.

This 'blame the victim' dynamic can be detected in how many students or teachers respond to bullying situations. For example: a student who talks to a teacher about being bullied might be asked, 'what did you do to deserve it?'; or a teacher, when talking to parents about their complaint that their daughter being bullied, might comment several times on their daughter's poor social skills, implying that she is the 'cause' of her own mistreatment.

Several researchers (e.g. Gini, 2008; Hara, 2002; Teräsahjo & Salmilvalli, 2003) have demonstrated that children (especially boys) tend to blame the student whom they are bullying for their own plight. They underestimate their bullying behaviour by constructing it as a harmless 'game' and claim that is justifiable behaviour because the real problem is the 'deviance' of the student. Teräsahjo & Salmilvalli (2003) also showed that many bullied students accept this construction of what is happening and in turn blame themselves for being bullied. Students who blame themselves are less likely to seek support and more likely to 'suffer in silence' (Graham *et al.*, 2006).

The dynamic of misleading teachers by claiming 'provocation'

Some students can become quite adept at misleading teachers about their role in bullying (and aggressive assaults) by claiming 'provocation' by things that the bullied student has (supposedly) said about them or their family, or by actions they have (supposedly) taken. This common dynamic serves a dual purpose:

1. It shifts the blame onto the student who is being bullied and helps the bullying student feel less discomfort over behaving in a socially unacceptable way (Burns *et al.*, 2008)
2. It encourages adults to see their behaviour as justified, to not take it as seriously and so not apply consequences.

In some cases this claimed provocation from things said or done might be true, but more often it is exaggerated or fabricated. In some cases 'provocation' simply represents annoyance with, or intolerance of, the bullied student's 'different' social behaviour or physical characteristics (Phillips, 2003; Teräsahjo & Salmilvalli, 2003; Akiba, 2004).

The dynamic of bullying that occurs within a 'friendship'

Several researchers have identified the dynamic of bullying that takes place within the context of a friendship or friendship group (e.g. Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Dane, 2001; Mishima, 2003; Mishna *et al.*, 2008).

This interpersonal dynamic is more likely to occur amongst girls (Mishima, 2003; Crick & Celson, 2002) and where the friend, or one member of the friendship group, is relationally aggressive and creates a power imbalance (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Dane, 2001). When bullying occurs within boys' friendships there may also be physical aspects to the bullying, such as punching and overly-aggressive wrestling (Mishna *et al.*, 2008). The intimacy that characterises friendship may be used by aggressive students to control and bully specific friends e.g. they may threaten to tell secrets if a friend does not go along with what they want (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996; James & Owens, 2005).

This dynamic can result not only in emotional pain, but also in confusion for the student being bullied, their family and the school (Mishna *et al.*, 2008). It can take some time to identify that a student is being bullied by someone they consider to be a friend and who claims to be a friend.

Friends are motivated to sort out any conflict without endangering the relationship and this can make it more difficult for students who are being bullied by friends (e.g. by being called names or being made fun of often, by being excluded for periods of time or by being meanly and repeatedly told to 'go away') to either recognize what is happening or ask for support in dealing with it (Mishna *et al.*, 2008). Many students feel they are invested in the friendship and really 'need' it and may therefore be reluctant to deal with the ongoing mistreatment they are receiving (Mishna *et al.*, 2008).

Some students in this situation report that, if it was someone other than a friend behaving towards them in such a way, they would tell a teacher what was happening or angrily retaliate (Mishna *et al.*, 2008). A friend who is bullying them is more easily able than a non-friend to successfully deflect the anger of the targeted student and create further confusion by saying 'can't you take a joke'. Teachers are less likely to recognise bullying within a friendship and are more likely to perceive what is happening as 'a friendship problem' (Mishna *et al.*, 2008).

The dynamics of bystander behaviour

Bystanders (i.e. those students who witness bullying) are now recognised as a critical part of the group dynamics of bullying (Tremblow *et al.*, 2004; Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996; Salmivalli, 1999; Macklem, 2003; Oh & Hazler, 2009). Peers are present in 85 per cent of bullying episodes in school settings (Craig & Pepler, 1995; O'Connell *et al.*, 1999). In their observational study of the playground behaviour of primary-aged students, O'Connell *et al.* (1999) found that, on average, there were four peers present in bullying incidents. When bystanders intervene to defend the student being bullied, the bullying stops in 57 per cent of cases (Hawkins *et al.*, 2001).

Research (e.g. Craig and Pepler, 2000; Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996; Salmivalli, 1999) suggests that student bystanders can be divided into several categories:

- Those who assist the students who are bullying and actively join in.
- Those who reinforce and give silent approval to the students who are bullying.
- Those who watch but are passive and do nothing.
- Those who defend or support the student who is being bullied by intervening, seeking teacher support or comforting them.

In a study of 685 South Australian school children aged 6 to 16 years a large majority of respondents agreed that they liked it when someone stood up for someone being bullied and that it made them angry when a student is picked on without reason (Slee & Rigby, 1993a). In other studies students have reported that they think students should defend and support classmates who are bullied, that they feel safer when other students do defend a student who is being bullied (Kanetsuna *et al.*, 2006). Rigby & Johnson (2006) found that 43 per cent of students aged 12 to 15 indicated, in hypothetical scenarios, that they would be likely to help a student being bullied. However in practice it appears that most students don't intervene or support students who are being bullied (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Craig *et al.*, 2000). Most bystanders are passive and do nothing (Craig and Pepler, 2000; O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Salmivalli, 1999; Slaby, 2005) or behave in ways that support or reinforce the bullying (O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Salmivalli, 1999; Whitney & Smith, 1993). In an observational study of 5-12 year-old children by O'Connell, *et al.*, (1999):

- 54 per cent passively watched bullying incidents.
- 21 per cent joined in with the bullying.
- 25 per cent tried to defend the student being bullied.

Several reasons have been identified for the inaction of most student bystanders:

- **They fear for their own safety and social inclusion:** they are fearful of becoming a target themselves or being socially excluded because of their actions (Burns *et al.*, 2007; Hazler, 1996; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Older students prefer not letting a teacher know about bullying

due to concerns that it would threaten relationships among peers (Tisak *et al.*, 1996).

- **There is a diffusion of responsibility** i.e. they are hoping that someone else will do something to help (Olweus, 1993; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).
- **They are concerned that they could make things worse** (Hazler, 1996).
- **They feel powerless:** they do not know what to do, are concerned that they may make things worse and/or feel their actions will make no difference (Carney, 2000; Hazler, 1996; Oh & Hazler, 2009).
- **They believe that it is none of their business** (Randall, 1995; Rigby & Johnson, 2006).
- **They believe that the student being bullied must deserve it** (Rigby & Johnson, 2006).
- **They find it fun and enjoyable to watch** (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; Rigby & Johnson, 2006).

Thornberg (2007) observed primary-aged students in a real-life classroom setting over time and recorded their reactions to a child who was distressed and crying. He interviewed the children afterwards about why they had (or had not) supported the distressed classmate. Some of the explanatory categories used by the children who did not support the distressed classmate were:

- Trivialisation e.g. it didn't seem serious or unusual.
- Disassociation from responsibility e.g. I'm not their friend OR that's the teacher's job.
- Avoidance of embarrassment: e.g. it might make me or them the centre of attention.
- Modelling e.g. no-one else did anything to help so I didn't either.
- Ineptitude e.g. I didn't know how to help them.

Some key factors that predict which students will defend or support a student who is being bullied (and under what circumstances) are listed below.

- **Girls defend and support more than do boys** (Burlison & Gilstrap, 2002; Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Salmivalli, 1999; Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996). Boys are more often in the role of assisting or reinforcing those who are bullying (O'Connell *et al.*, 1999; Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996).
- **Primary-aged students** are more likely to defend and support than are students in secondary schools (Menesini *et al.*, 1997; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). There may be greater risks to wellbeing associated with being bullied within a secondary context (Rigby & Johnson, 2006) and correspondingly greater risks associated with bystander intervention and support. There also appears to be a decline in empathy for bullied classmates as students get older, and possibly a related decline in preparedness to help victimised students (Henderson & Hymel, 2002; Menesini *et al.*, 2003; Olweus & Endresen, 1998; Rigby, 1997b).

Students are more likely to defend and support someone who is being bullied when:

- **They are not in the same friendship network** as the student(s) doing the bullying (Chaux, 2005; Oh & Hazler, 2009).
- **They have a strong sense of empathy and are well-liked** (Caravita *et al.*, 2009; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996).
- **There is only one type of bullying occurring** as opposed to two or more types (Oh & Hazler, 2009).
- **They feel connected to their school** and have strong school-based peer relationships (Ahmed, 2008; Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005).
- **They have a reasonable level of moral development** (Menesini *et al.*, 2002) and a general concern for the wellbeing of others (Rigby & Johnson, 2006).
- **They have positive feelings and attitudes toward the student being bullied** (Rigby & Johnson, 2006).

- They are in a school where there is a positive sense of community (Gini, 2008).
- They have no history of bullying other students (Rigby & Johnson, 2006).
- They believe that their parents and friends would expect them to defend and support peers who are being bullied, and are part of a prosocial friendship network (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Friends strongly influence students' values (Astill *et al.*, 2002).

Since students report feeling safer when other students defend a student being bullied, it would seem that the way in which bystanders react to bullying has a direct impact not only on the safety of the bullied student but also on the school climate and all students' sense of safety (Gini, 2008).

The cycle of inaction

Cross *et al.* (2009) have described a 'cycle of inaction' that can occur in response to covert bullying:

- The cycle begins when a teacher receives a report about covert bullying and they do not respond to it seriously or effectively. This may occur as a result of their inexperience and lack of knowledge about covert bullying and/or a belief that what is happening to a student either is not really bullying or is not as harmful as other types of bullying.
- The student who is being covertly bullied reacts to the teacher's inaction by feeling disempowered and hence becomes less willing to ask for teacher support if it happens again.
- The students who are doing the covert bullying interpret the teacher's inaction by forming a belief that covert bullying is tolerated in the school.
- All students who are bullied are less likely to seek help because they perceive that there is a culture of acceptance of (covert) bullying.

The cycle of over-reaction

Mishna & Alaggia (2005) argue that students weigh up the benefits and the risks of asking a teacher for support when they are being bullied. The benefits are that they may be effectively supported and the bullying will stop. The risks are many: they may not be believed or taken seriously; they may be blamed by the teacher for their own victimisation and feel ashamed; there may be retaliation from the student complained about or their friends; the teacher may handle the situation insensitively or ineffectively, and it will either make no difference or even make the situation worse; it may make them feel like they cannot handle their problems by themselves (Bijttebier & Vertommen, 1998; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Miller *et al.*, 1998; Mishna *et al.*, 2005; Naylor *et al.*, 2001; Newman *et al.*, 2001; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Smith, 1991; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998).

The cycle of over-reaction can start when a student decides to seek support from a teacher because they are being bullied.

1. The teacher responds to this request for support by quickly punishing the students who are bullying.
2. The student who is being bullied receives either 'payback' or condemnation from the students who have been punished (or their friends) for bullying, and may then be socially marginalised.
3. The bullying goes underground for a while and sometimes other students bully on behalf of the students who were punished.
4. The next time the student is bullied they decide to remain silent about it and assure the teacher that the bullying has stopped.

Other students who are bullied are less likely to ask a teacher for support when they become aware of this dynamic. Secrecy empowers students who bully. When no one talks about bullying, students who bully feel they can carry on without consequences.

A punitive response by the school may ultimately be necessary in some circumstances. However, an approach which initially engages students who are bullying and attempts to enhance their feelings of empathy and understanding for the student they are harming is more likely to bring about a change in behaviour (Cross *et al.*, 2004; Tyler, 1998).

Fear of retaliation and social exclusion as a result of peers being punished often prevents students from letting teachers know that they are being bullied (Rigby & Barnes, 2002). Students perceive that the best way for a school to respond to a bullying situation is to find a way for students who are being bullied to rationally work through the problem with the aggressor (Gamliel *et al.*, 2003). However, more than simple mediation is required because it is inappropriate for mediation to be used in situations where one student is clearly the aggressor. The Support Group Method (Robinson & Maines, 2008), the Method of Shared Concern (Rigby & Griffiths, 2007) or Restorative Practices (Armstrong & Thorsborne, 2006) can be used as a first step in responding to many bullying situations.

Question 6: What are the links between bullying and student wellbeing?

Student wellbeing

Student wellbeing is a student's level of satisfaction about the quality of their life at school. Optimal (or desirable) student wellbeing is characterised by positive feelings and attitudes about school, positive relationships with peers and teachers, resilience, and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school (Noble *et al.*, 2008). It is clear from research that both students who bully and those who are bullied experience reduced wellbeing, and perceive that they receive low levels of support from peers and teachers (e.g. Espelage & Holt, 2001; Flaspohler *et al.*, 2009; Frisén & Bjarnelin, 2010; Stockdale *et al.*, 2002; Valois *et al.*, 2001; Wilkins-Shurmer *et al.*, 2003; You *et al.*, 2008).

There is also some evidence that the wellbeing of many students who are not involved in bullying within their school is also negatively affected by their awareness of bullying in their school (e.g. Boulton *et al.*, 2008; Janson *et al.*, 2009). However in a study by Flaspohler *et al.* (2009) students who were not being bullied nor engaging in bullying reported higher levels of student wellbeing and felt supported by their teachers and peers. The authors suggest that being satisfied with one's quality of life at school life is protective against both bullying others and being bullied.

The pathways to student wellbeing are very similar to the pathways that lead to safe schools and many of them are bi-directional (i.e. one affects the other but is also affected by the other).

Key risk factors

The key risk factors for bullying others and for being bullied, as outlined in Question 4, are summarized below. They are similar to many of the key risk factors for low levels of student wellbeing (Noble *et al.*, 2008).

The major risk factors over which schools have some influence that predict a high likelihood of a student bullying others, are:

1. Low levels of connectedness to school.
2. Low levels of social and emotional skills (especially skills for impulse control, empathy, making and maintaining friendships, conflict management and anger management).
3. A lack of prosocial values.
4. A lack of quality relationships with prosocial peers.
5. Association with peers who endorse antisocial values and especially the use of aggression.

The major risk factors over which schools have some influence that predict a high likelihood of a student being bullied are:

1. Low levels of connectedness to school.
2. Low levels of social and emotional skills (especially skills for resilience, assertiveness, making and maintaining friendships, managing anxiety and conflict).
3. A lack of high quality friendships.
4. Low levels of peer acceptance.

Factors that contribute to both low levels of bullying and high levels of student wellbeing

Research studies suggest that lower levels of bullying, lower levels of violence and school crime and/or higher levels of student wellbeing are highly likely when the following circumstances are in place in a school:

- **Most students feel connected to their school** (e.g. Brookmeyer *et al.*, 2006; Eisenberg *et al.*, 2003; Idsoe *et al.*, 2008; Imori, 2003; Lonczak, *et al.*, 2002; Nickerson *et al.*, 2006; Resnick *et al.*, 1997; Schaps, 2003; Urbanski, 2008; Wilson & Elliott, 2003; Young, 2004).

Student connectedness is the positive sense of belonging, attachment and commitment a student feels in relation to their school as a result of perceived caring from, and closeness to, teachers and peers (Resnick et al., 1997). When students feel connected to their school they are more likely to adopt the standards and norms of the school and act in pro-social ways (Ahmed, 2008). Students who have more support from teachers, are more resilient, have a stronger sense of school connectedness and higher self esteem, are more likely to defend and support other students who are being bullied (Ahmed, 2008; Flaspohler et al., 2009; Lodge & Fredenberg, 2005). Students who feel connected to their school are also more likely to:

- Have higher levels of academic achievement (Finn & Rock, 1997).
 - Engage less in health-compromising behaviour (Blum *et al.*, 2002; Bond *et al.*, 2001; Dornbusch *et al.*, 2001; Wang *et al.*, 2005).
 - Complete secondary school (Miltich *et al.*, 2004).
- **Students have sound levels of social and emotional skills.** Increases in social and emotional competency have been shown to lead to reductions in school bullying (Bear *et al.*, 2003) and increases in school connectedness (e.g. Whitlock, 2003).
 - Prevention programs that focus on teaching social skills have shown considerable promise in promoting student wellbeing and reducing bullying and aggression (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, n.d.; Greenberg *et al.*, 2003; Tolan & Guerra, 1998). They can also contribute to higher levels of achievement and resilience (Caprara *et al.*, 2000; Catalano *et al.*, 2003; Hawkins *et al.*, 2001; Schonert-Reichl *et al.*, 2003; Wentzel, 2003; Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997; Wentzel & Watkins, 2002). However Fox & Boulton (2003) found that teaching social skills in small groups to students who were being bullied at the time did not result in the bullying decreasing or stopping (although students reported feeling more confident). It appears to be an effective prevention strategy, but not an effective intervention strategy.
 - **There are strong school norms against bullying and aggression.** In a review of 25 studies that had focused on strategies for reducing bullying and other forms of anti-social behaviour Johnson (2009) identified, that in schools with lower levels of bullying and violence, students are aware of school rules about aggression and bullying and believe that the rules are fair.
 - **Students perceive that the school has clear support and disciplinary structures in place** (e.g. Gottfredson *et al.*, 1993; Gregory *et al.*, 2010; Mayer & Leone, 1999).

- **Students perceive that teachers in the school actively care about and promote student wellbeing and student welfare**, and that the environment of their school is positive, welcoming, cooperative and fair (Barboza *et al.*, 2009).
- **The classroom teacher uses effective behaviour management** (Idsoe *et al.*, 2008; Roland & Galloway, 2002)
- **Teachers promote cooperation** (e.g. Barboza *et al.*, 2009), and use cooperative learning and cooperative group work. Some research-based outcomes from the use of cooperative learning (e.g. Johnson, *et al.* 2001; Ortega & Lera, 2000; Roseth *et al.*, 2008) include:
 - Students increased ability to tolerate different perspectives on the same issue.
 - Increased levels of assertive problem-solving skills.
 - Improved peer relationships.
- **The culture of the school is positive, caring, respectful, and supportive** (e.g. Barboza *et al.*, 2009; Reis *et al.*, 2007; Stewart, 2003). A caring positive, respectful and supportive school culture is linked to both student wellbeing and school connectedness and is characterised by:
 - Students feeling connected to their school and perceiving that they are in a classroom and school environment that is safe, positive and focused on learning.
 - Students having meaningful involvement and feeling that they have some ownership of what happens in their school (e.g. Johnson, 2009).
 - Positive classroom management and participation in extracurricular activities (McNeely *et al.*, 2002).
 - Students feel that they are in a classroom and school environment that is positive and focused on learning and is 'orderly' i.e. not in a state of disrepair or damaged by graffiti and vandalism (Johnson, 2009; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Van Dorn, 2004; Wilcox *et al.*, 2006).
 - Positive relationships between students and between students and their teachers (Johnson, 2009).

Positive relationships

Students who experience positive relationships with peers and teachers are less likely to engage in misbehaviour such as aggression and bullying, and less likely to use weapons (Jessor *et al.*, 2003; Henrich *et al.*, 2005). The systematic promotion and facilitation of positive relationships at school has been identified by many researchers as a core component for improving student wellbeing, enhancing school culture, preventing school violence and bullying, successfully engaging students' intrinsic motivation to learn and improving student academic outcomes (Battisch, 2001; Battisch *et al.*, 1995; Benard, 2004; Resnick *et al.*, 1997). When a school works to facilitate positive school-based relationships bullying is less likely to thrive, student wellbeing is enhanced and there is a greater likelihood of higher student engagement with school (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Galloway & Roland 2004; Schaps & Lewis, 1999; McGrath & Noble, 2003).

(a) Peer relationships

Research suggests that having high-quality friendships, or at least one best friend, can help prevent children from bullying and being bullied (Bollmer, *et al.*, 2005; Boulton *et al.*, 1999; Fox, 2006a; Goldbaum *et al.*, 2006; Hodges *et al.*, 1999). High quality friendships are characterised by loyalty and support and a willingness to stand up for one's friend. Children with poor social skills who have supportive friendships are less likely to be bullied than similar children without such relationships. A positive peer relationship can provide some students with an opportunity to learn the skills needed for healthy peer relationships (Bollmer *et al.*, 2005).

(b) Students' relationships with their teachers

Gregory *et al.*, (2010) have suggested that students in schools with highly supportive cultures and relationships with teachers may be more open and responsive to directives from teachers and leadership as they perceive them to be fair, caring and respectful.

Many students feel they 'owe' something in return to a teacher who shows genuine interest in and care for them (Davidson, 1999; Stipek 2006) and may be less likely to disappoint them by failing to complete assignments or by engaging in antisocial behaviour such as bullying

Positive teacher-student relationships can contribute significantly, not only to students' wellbeing and prosocial behaviour but also to their learning outcomes.

Raskauskas *et al.* (2010) have also noted that positive and supportive relationships between students and their teachers is also a resilience factor

Moderating effects

Many of the factors that contribute to both wellbeing and a lower likelihood of bullying and being bullied have also been shown to moderate harm if bullying does occur:

A high level of school connectedness has been shown to minimise the effect of being bullied on academic outcomes (Eisenberg *et al.*, 2003).

Students who are in a school which has a positive caring, respectful and supportive learning culture and who are being bullied, are less likely to be disliked by other students, more likely to be socially included and less likely to be blamed for their own plight (e.g. Gini, 2008)

Question 7: What legal issues are related to bullying?

A range of criminal legislation is relevant in regards to bullying and cyberbullying behaviour. These include: stalking, making threats to kill or harm, malicious damage (e.g. by sending a computer virus), 'acting in concert' in the above intentions and racial vilification (Adams, 2007; Nicholson, 2006). E-crime is a new term that covers criminal offences when a computer or other electronic communication devices (e.g. mobile phones) are used in committing an offence, are the target of an offence or are used as a storage device in committing an offence. E-crime offences include: making or distribution of child pornography (e.g. taking and sending nude photograph of young people under 16, even if the subject is oneself); impersonating someone else; menacing, harassing or causing offence using a mobile phone or internet carrier.

The rights and responsibilities of school leaders in relation to cyberbullying that occurs out of school hours and off school grounds

There is a growing trend for senior staff in schools both in Australia and internationally to have discretionary rights to take action to manage and respond to cyberbullying that involves students (or staff) from the school, occurs outside school hours and is enacted through the use of a student's personal mobile phone and/or computer. The underlying assumption is that school leadership has the right to respond to this behaviour when it could result in a substantial disruption of the school environment or adversely affect learning or wellbeing of students (or staff) at the school (Aftab, 2007b; Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Willard, 2007). Being cyberbullied outside school has the potential to create strong negative emotions in students who are targeted. Feelings of anxiety and embarrassment may negatively affect schoolwork and classroom climate and lead some students to stay away from school (Diamanduros *et al.* 2008). Feelings of humiliation, shame and anger can lead to potentially dangerous situations for both the bullied student him/herself (who may self-harm), those who are suspected of involvement in the cyberbullying (who may be attacked) and other classmates (Willard, 2007c). Thus what happens between students outside school grounds and hours may have a very strong impact on what happens at school when it

resumes. It makes sense for schools to be informed about what has happened and to have the right to intervene and/or follow up in a timely and effective manner. This may only involve activating the school's behaviour management and welfare procedures when school resumes or may involve more serious responses.

Students and parents need to be clearly informed of the school's rights to take action in situations involving behaviours that can have a negative effect on the safety of students, staff, and/or the educational environment. Asking parents and students to sign a contract about this ensures that they understand the consequences of cyberbullying behaviour that results in placing student and staff safety at risk and has a negative impact on the educational environment (Diamanduros *et al.*, 2008)

Question 8: What can schools do to reduce bullying?

In their global meta-analytic review, Molcho *et al.*, (2009) found that there has been a significant decrease in the frequency of bullying in Northern European, Western European and most Eastern European countries between 1994 and 2006. These countries have had ongoing focused national efforts to address bullying over the last decade. This is encouraging news for countries all around the world as they continue their efforts to prevent and reduce bullying in schools.

In their search for 'what works' schools have faced a confusing collection of possible interventions, many of which have not been evaluated or have been shown to produce only very small reductions in actual bullying behaviour (Merrell *et al.*, 2008). It can be difficult to identify an approach that works in all types of schools with students of varying ages in a variety of contexts. One of the major limitations involved in evaluating the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs is not always being able to identify how consistently and accurately the teachers implemented the same program (Ferguson, 2007). Another difficulty is the variation in the length of time over which a program is implemented

In 2004 Professor Peter Smith (2004) described the big picture of research into bullying interventions as one of limited successes. He optimistically noted that the small successes up to that point should encourage schools and the failures and more limited successes could provide useful information to build on. Since that time, however, evidence has slowly started to emerge about effective approaches and useful directions. Additionally many anti-bullying strategies link logically both to research about the nature, dynamics and theories of bullying.

Smith *et al.*, (2004) reviewed fourteen studies of whole-school anti-bullying interventions. A whole-school approach involves prevention as well as intervention. It assumes that bullying is a systemic problem and targets the whole school community (i.e. students, teachers, parents and the local community) rather than just the individual students involved in a bullying situation. The researchers concluded that, when they confined their review to the seven studies that employed a comparison control group, there was a small positive effect of the intervention in reducing bullying. These occurred predominantly from primary schools (Years K-5) and middle schools (Years 6-8) rather than secondary schools.

Cross *et al.*, (2004) developed guidelines for preventing and managing school bullying based on a combination of published research evidence, expert opinion, practitioner advice and their own research in Australian primary schools using the Friendly Schools and Families program. Their findings suggested that the following broad features and guidelines contribute to the effective reduction of bullying:

- A whole-school approach (i.e., an approach that targets the school, community (especially parents), classes, the peer group and individual students).
- An increased awareness of bullying in the school community

- A whole-school policy that addresses bullying.
- The promotion of a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and student wellbeing.
- Effective methods of behaviour management that are consistently used, non-hostile, non-punitive and that arouse empathetic concern for the person bullied, encourage problem-solving and positive action and that involve monitoring future developments.
- Mobilisation of all students (and especially bystanders) to respond negatively to bullying behaviour and to support students who are bullied.
- Social skill development within teaching and learning activities.
- Enhancing the school physical environment and its supervision.

Vreeman and Carroll (2007) carried out a similar review of school-based interventions designed to prevent bullying and also found that the reductions in bullying were very small and that the identical program hadn't necessarily worked when delivered to a different school population. They concluded that the most effective interventions were those that adopted a whole-school approach consisting of some combination of rules and sanctions, teacher professional development, classroom curriculum units, training in skills for conflict management and counseling for individual students. They also concluded that programs that only focused on the individual students involved in bullying situations are less likely to be effective.

A statistical meta-analysis carried out by Ferguson *et al.*, (2007) with research studies that had evaluated the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs found that the small reduction in bullying overall was insignificant. Merrell *et al.* (2008) also conducted a meta-analytic study of 16 studies into the effectiveness of anti-bullying intervention programs and concluded there were improvements in students' knowledge and attitudes about bullying but the reductions in self-reported bullying was only modest.

Farrington & Ttofi (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 30 well-designed evaluations of anti-bullying interventions in an attempt to identify the specific components that had the greatest impact on decreasing bullying behaviour. They concluded the anti-bullying programs in the meta-analysis were effective in reducing bullying by an average of 20–23 percent. The specific components that made the most impact were:

- Classroom rules against bullying.
- Intensive professional learning for teachers.
- Effective classroom management.
- Improved playground supervision.
- School conferences or assemblies that raised awareness of the problem.
- Effective behaviour management strategies.
- Student-owned approaches to address bullying.
- The use of video educational material for students.
- Parent training.

They also found that the most effective interventions were multi-faceted, of longer duration and involved school collaboration with other appropriate professionals in working with individual student. They also concluded that those programs that were based on the work of Dan Olweus (1999) were more effective.

Taken together, these reviews confirm that the following features are likely to be the most effective in preventing and reducing bullying:

- A universal whole-school approach of long duration that takes a multi-faceted approach rather than focusing on one single component.
- An increased awareness of bullying in the school community through assemblies, school forums and student-owned plans and activities.
- A whole-school detailed policy that addresses bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Effective classroom management and classroom rules against bullying.
- The promotion of a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and student wellbeing.
- Effective methods of behaviour management that are consistently used, non-hostile and non-punitive; they should arouse empathetic concern for the person bullied, encourage problem-solving and positive action and that involve monitoring future developments.
- Mobilisation of all students (and especially bystanders) to respond negatively to bullying behaviour and to support students who are bullied.
- Social skill development within teaching and learning activities (e.g. through the use of cooperative learning).
- Enhancement of the school physical environment and its supervision.
- Teacher professional development.
- Classroom curriculum units that address bullying and related issues (e.g. values education) and include the use of video materials.
- Counselling for individual students and collaboration with other appropriate professionals to provide support.
- Parent partnerships and education.

The following additional or more detailed directions either follow logically from the research (described in earlier sections of this literature review) into the nature and dynamics of bullying or from related research studies. These are:

- Addressing boredom and disengagement both in class (e.g. by the use of engaging and stimulating approaches to teaching and learning) and in the playground (e.g. by the provision of an adequate supply of stimulating equipment or the organisation of clubs (Cross *et al.*,2004; Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008; Thornberg, 2010)).
- The Use of Values education with a focus on respect for the rights and feelings of others, acceptance of diversity, compassion, fairness, cooperation and inclusion (Hawkins *et al.*,2000; Lovat & Toomey,2007).
- The use of the Method of Shared Concern (Burns *et al.*, 2008; Rigby,2005b; Rigby & Griffiths, 2007) or the Support Group Approach (McGrath & Stanley, 2006).
- The use of Restorative Practices (Armstrong & Thorsborne, 2006; Morrison, 2001; Shaw, 2007).
- The use of Positive Behaviour Supports (Lewis *et al.*, 1998; Ross *et al.*,2009; Sprague & Horner, 2006; Sugai *et al.*, 2000; Walker *et al.*,1996) which has been recommended by a number of researchers into bullying (e.g. Bradshaw *et al.*, 2008; Bradshaw *et al.*, 2009a; Bradshaw *et al.*,2009b;O'Brennan *et al.*,2009).
- The use of Social Architecture. This involves redesigning situations to facilitate students' pro-social interactions and social opportunities within a class or year-level context (Pepler & Craig, 2009). Students who bully need to be mixed with pro-social students where possible (Vitaro *et al.*1999). It is more difficult to escape from being bullied in classrooms and year levels in which the social hierarchies are clear and relatively inflexible (Wolke *et al.*, 2009).

These hierarchies are often more 'fixed' amongst girls (Cairns *et al.*, 1985; Murray-Close *et al.*, 2007) and access to new friendships is limited. Girls who are covertly and relationally bullied and are in classes or year levels where there are inflexible and fixed social hierarchies are very prone to changing schools (Wolke *et al.*, 2009).

- Early intervention: It is essential to identify those children who may be at risk for bullying others or being bullied and to provide them with early developmental support (Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Farrington & Coide, 2003; McGrath, 2005; Moffitt & Caspi, 2003; Sutton *et al.*, 2005; Webster-Stratton *et al.*, 2001).

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