# Overview

The *Ideas for a safe and supportive school community* lesson plans have been developed for the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA). They use a community of inquiry approach to support students to collaboratively discuss their ideas for a safe and supportive school, and to create their own positive solutions to bullying.

Bullying is complex and multifaceted and manifests in different ways for each school and year level. Each instance is unique. Rather than focus on instances of bullying, the *Ideas for a safe and supportive school community* lessons focus on the importance of involving students in the school's approach to countering bullying and creating a safe and supportive school environment for all.

## Aim

Lesson plans and accompanying materials have been developed for Years 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10. Page 6 shows the scope and content at a glance.

The aim of the lesson plans is for students to:
- generate and evaluate ideas for creating a safe and supportive environment and counter bullying in their school and community
- share their ideas for action with the wider school.

Each *Ideas for a safe and supportive school community* lesson plan is approximately 60 minutes long, but the duration will be determined by students' engagement.

Teachers are encouraged to consider the individual learning needs of their students and adapt and differentiate the activities to suit the circumstances of each classroom and school setting.

## Community of inquiry

**A community of inquiry** is a group of people who construct personal meaning by collaboratively engaging in purposeful discussion and reflection (Cam, 1995, 2006). Members of a community of inquiry explore big questions about life. Understanding the phenomena of bullying requires deep thinking and questioning for all, and community of inquiry provides a foundation for school communities to approach this exploration.

In a community of inquiry all members of the group work together to reach a rich, shared understanding of significant concepts and issues. Participants are required to think deeply, reason effectively and reflect on their own thinking and that of others. They are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and work collaboratively to come up with solutions to problems that are central to their lives.

The community of inquiry has three key elements:
- concept under discussion (content)
- process – ways of working (protocols)
- use of inquiry tools (thinking, reasoning reflecting skills).

For deep inquiry to take place there needs to be a balance of all three elements during the inquiry.

### The teacher's role

The teacher's role is to facilitate the process rather than provide their own views or solutions. Teachers should model inquiry processes, ensure the discussion remains on track, and ask open, probing questions that will assist the group to reach a deeper understanding of the concepts under discussion.

### Community of inquiry discussion protocols

At the beginning of each lesson revisit the following discussion protocols:

- **Listen attentively:** this means listening carefully to what is being said or suggested by others.
- **Build on and connect to ideas:** adding to the ideas of others can stretch everyone's understanding further.
- **Respect others and their ideas:** thinking carefully about the ideas of others is one way of showing respect for that idea; listening and building on ideas also demonstrates respect.
- **Disagree reasonably and respectfully:** we disagree with the idea not the person; sometimes we may even change our mind after listening to another person give good reasons for their thinking.
- **There may be no single correct answer**: when we explore inquiry questions there may be many correct answers.

### Guidelines for conducting a community of inquiry in your classroom

During the community of inquiry, students and teacher sit in a circle so that all members of the community can see and respond to each other with ease.

- Ask a question to the group and use a Talking Tool to ensure that only one person speaks at a time. Students share their ideas by raising their hands when they wish to respond. Remind them to listen carefully and consider the speaker's ideas when any member of the group is speaking. (When ideas are being shared, students should not have their hand up as this would demonstrate that they are not respecting or considering the speaker's thoughts. It can also distract the speaker.)
- Remind students to give reasons for their responses. This will provide the listener with a deeper understanding of the ideas presented and enable them to connect their own thoughts and suggestions.
- If the students are finding it difficult to respond, it is the teacher's role to ask further probing questions that would elicit a deeper level of thinking. Some example questions could be:
  - Why do you think that?
  - Can anyone build on that idea?
  - In what ways are these ideas connected?
  - Does anyone disagree with that idea? Why?
  - Can you clarify your idea for the group?
  - Does anyone have another idea/different suggestion?
  - Can we look at this in another way?
  - What more do we need to understand?
  - Are we moving forward with our ideas?
  - How could this help us to understand the issue at a deeper level?
  - Are there any key ideas that we may have disregarded?

A range of inquiry and reflection questions has been included in the lessons. Teachers do not need to ask all of the questions provided. They have been included to support discussion. If the students are able to discuss a question at a deeper, sustained level or ask questions of their own that build on the idea under discussion, then

teachers will need to reduce the number of questions shared in the time allocated.

Each lesson concludes with time for reflection. If students are to reach deeper levels of understanding of the process and content and apply their learning in other contexts, it is important for them to be given the opportunity to think meta-cognitively, that is, to think about the thinking and reasoning that has taken place during the discussion.

## Student voice

The lessons provide an opportunity to extend students ideas using the concept of 'student voice'. **Student voice** is the active opportunity for students to express their opinions and make decisions regarding their learning experiences (Rogers, 2005). Through supporting students to voice their ideas about preventing bullying, teachers and schools hear new ideas and involve young people in the ownership of solutions.

Teachers need to be aware of their own perspective when students are coming up with ideas and be mindful of unintended constraints they may place on students.

Student voice requires genuine opportunities for students to put ideas into place and effect change in the school. The Stand Together lessons can be the first step in developing students' ideas into projects in the school. Long-term positive projects will require a whole of school commitment. Positive, student-led solutions are an important part of strategies to counter bullying.

## Personal disclosure

Teachers need to be sensitive to the class mood. Recent interpersonal incidents or problems may impact on class discussion. In some cases, it may be better to delay the lessons until problems are addressed.

Acknowledge to students that bullying may be a sensitive topic to discuss and therefore respectful listening is particularly important. Teachers should emphasise that this activity is not the place for students to share or resolve current personal issues related to bullying, and instead that students are encouraged to speak with the teacher or a school support person after the lesson.

**Protective interrupting** is a useful tool for teachers in these situations. Protective interrupting aims to protect students from the consequences of revealing inappropriate personal information in front of other students. It is possible a student will begin to disclose personal information or a teacher might sense that a student is about to make such a disclosure. In such a situation, the teacher should acknowledge they have heard the student using words like 'That sounds important,' but stop them divulging any further details. The teacher should suggest the student talks privately with them after the lesson or, if possible, ask the student if they would like to leave the classroom then to continue the conversation.

If a student should make a disclosure of bullying currently occurring, your role is to listen calmly, show support for the student, acknowledge what they have told you and, once the student has finished, discuss with them what you could both do next. Ensure you are aware of your school's policy for dealing with bullying.

## Links to key documents

### *Australian Curriculum*

These lessons relate to three of the [Australian Curriculum General capabilities](#):

- Personal and social capability
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Social-awareness
  - Social management
- Ethical understanding
  - Understanding ethical concepts and issues
  - Exploring values, rights and responsibilities
- Critical and creative thinking
  - Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas
  - Generating ideas, possibilities and actions
  - Reflecting on thinking and processes
  - Analysing, synthesising and evaluating reasoning and procedures

### *National Safe Schools Framework*

The [National Safe Schools Framework](#) provides a vision and set of guiding principles for safe, supportive and respectful school communities that promote student wellbeing. The *Ideas for a safe and supportive school community* lessons link with the following elements:

- Element 2: A supportive and connected school environment
- Element 6: Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- Element 7: A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
- Element 9: Partnerships with families and community (for some ideas and projects of the students)

## About the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence

The annual National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence occurs on the third Friday in March each year. The National Day of Action is an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and the whole community to take a stand together against bullying and violence and provides a focus for schools who want to say, 'Bullying. No Way!'.

The annual National Day of Action is organised by all Australian education authorities through the national [Safe And Supportive School Communities Working Group.](#)

## Feedback

A survey to evaluate the NDA campaign will be sent to all registered schools from the Bullying. No Way! team. Teachers will be invited to provide feedback on the *Ideas for a safe and supportive school community* lesson plans and project framework as part of this survey.

Alternatively, teachers can send feedback regarding how the lesson was implemented and the ideas generated by students to Bullying. No Way! at [bnw.website@det.qld.gov.au](mailto:bnw.website@det.qld.gov.au)

# References

Australian Curriculum - General capabilities
https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/
Bullying. No Way! https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/
National Safe Schools Framework
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/PreventingBullying/Planning/Pages/National-Safe-Schools-Framework.aspx

*Community of Inquiry*

Cam, P. (1995). *Thinking together: Philosophical inquiry for the classroom*. Alexandria, NSW: Hale and Iremonger Pty Limited.
Cam, P. (2006). *Twenty thinking tools*. Camberwell, Vic: ACER Press.
Cam, P. (2012). *Teaching ethics in schools: A new approach to moral education.* Camberwell, Vic: ACER Press.
Cam, P., Fynes-Clinton, L., Harrison, K., Hinton, L., Scholl, R. & Vaseo, S. (2007). *Philosophy with young children: A classroom handbook*. Deakin West, ACT: ACSA Inc.
Davey Chesters, S., Fynes-Clinton, L., Hinton, L. & Scholl, R. (2013) *Philosophical and ethical inquiry for students in the middle years and beyond.* Deakin West, ACT: ACSA Inc.
Lipman - P4C (Seven videos on YouTube)
    www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp5lB3YVnlE&feature=related
Phil Cam on YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk_B32HtnWg
The Centre for Philosophy for Children, University of Washington.
    www.philosophyforchildren.org
Wartenberg, T. *Teaching children philosophy*. Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts.
    www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/wiki/Main_Page

*Student Voice*

Fielding, M. (2004). Transformative approaches to student voice: Theoretical underpinnings, recalcitrant realities. *British Educational Research Journal, 30,* 2, 295-311.
MindMatters empowering students module (login required – free)
    http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/explore-modules/empowering-students
Mitra, D., Serriere, S. & Stoicovy, D. (2012). The role of leaders in enabling student voice. *Management in Education, 26,* 3, 104-112.
Rogers, A. (2005). *Student voice: Bridges to learning.* Seattle: University of Washington.
    depts.washington.edu/k12admin/l4l/capstone/docs/AndyExecSummry.DOC
SoundOut – a program promoting student voice and meaningful student involvement (USA) https://soundout.org/cycle-of-engagement/
Werder, C., & Otis, M. M., (Eds.) (2010). *Engaging student voices in the study of teaching and learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

## At a glance

| Activity | Duration | Activities | Focus questions | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lesson | 60 minutes for primary schools<br><br>80 minutes for high schools | **Exploring 'What makes a safe and supportive school?'**<br>• Exploring the attributes of a safe and supportive school community<br>• Examining the definition of bullying<br><br>**Ideas for our school**<br>• Generating ideas<br>• Evaluating ideas<br><br>**Reflection**<br>• Thinking about the process<br>• Planning for individual actions (optional) | • What does it mean to feel safe?<br>• What does it mean to feel safe at school?<br>• What could make you feel unsafe at school?<br>• What does it mean to be supported?<br>• What makes you feel supported at school?<br>• What would a school look like if it is safe and supportive?<br>• What would a school look like if it is not safe and supportive? | The National Day of Action poster can be downloaded from School materials for download.<br>*From the Ideas for a safe and supportive school community page*:<br>• What is bullying? handout for Yrs 3-4, 5-6<br>• What is bullying? handout for Yrs 7-8, 9-10<br>• Ideas for our school template<br>• Ideas that will make a positive impact handouts for Yrs 7-8; Yrs 9-10<br>*Other items needed*:<br>• Ball or beanbag<br>• Cards<br>• Student wristbands (registered schools can order from Bullying. No Way!) |

| Presenting their ideas | 30 minutes | Students share their ideas for a safe and supportive school community with the broader school community. | | Depending on presentation |
|---|---|---|---|---|

TAKE A STAND TOGETHER   BULLYING.NO WAY!   www.bullyingnoway.gov.au