Your school’s resources for talking and teaching about bullying
Introduction

Launchpad provides information about the wide range of quality teaching and learning resources from Bullying. No Way!

Teaching about bullying is ideally embedded within the curriculum. Learning about feelings, social interaction, diversity, social structures, discrimination, justice, power and conflict provides opportunities to explore the issue of bullying, why it happens and how to prevent it. Learning about bullying within everyday classroom activities reinforces school values related to respect and inclusion. It also communicates to everyone that bullying is never okay.

As well, talking about bullying in conversations at school provides opportunities for students to raise issues that adults may not have noticed. This is an important addition to formal reporting, and ensures bullying does not continue for a long time before staff become aware. Launchpad supports teachers to use opportunities as they arise throughout the school day to discuss how people get on with each other, how to deal with conflict, and how people act in various social situations.

Using the high-quality and evidence-informed educational resources from Bullying. No Way! in your classroom is an important part of your school's overall approach to preventing bullying.
What is bullying?

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools is the starting point for effectively preventing and responding to bullying in your school.

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

An understanding of bullying shared by everyone in the school community is important. https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying

Bullying occurs within interpersonal relationships, usually within a peer group. Like all relationships, students’ relationships are complex and variable. Schools need to ensure that their approach to bullying is respectful of students and does not inadvertently create other issues.

Your first response to someone who tells you they are involved in bullying can make a difference to the outcome.

Bullying should be taken seriously. Children and young people need to know that they are being heard and that their feelings matter, and that their issue will be investigated respectfully.

Young people often tell their friends or parents first, and only go to teachers for help as a last resort. This can mean that when a student does tell a teacher about bullying, it may already be serious and part of a bigger story continuing over some time.

Talking and teaching about bullying in the classroom may raise personal issues for some students. Bullying can be a sensitive topic to discuss in groups and classes, particularly if there are current unidentified bullying issues. Read the guidelines about protective interrupting at Bullying No Way! https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/TeachingAboutBullying/WorkingInTheClassroom/Pages/Pedagogy.aspx

When bullying is reported, school staff need to be ready to respond supportively and to follow the school’s policy and procedures.
What does the research tell us works in schools?

Researchers, both in Australia and overseas, have identified a combination of broad strategies most likely to be effective in preventing and reducing bullying.

The solution to bullying is not likely found in a specific ‘anti-bullying’ program, but through a committed, consistent, multifaceted and whole-school approach. Schools can be more effective in creating a safe and supportive school environment by considering bullying at the individual level, the social level (sometimes called social-ecological) and the whole-school system level. Each of these is relevant to preventing and responding effectively to bullying. Bullying. No Way! has information about how your school can work on all three levels to counter bullying. https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying/Pages/Perspectives-on-bullying.aspx

Read more on the latest research on bullying for Australian educators. https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/UnderstandingBullying/BullyingResearch/Pages/Research-for-schools.aspx

What works

- A universal whole-school approach over a long duration that takes a multi-faceted approach rather than focusing on one single component.
- A focus on building positive relationships and reducing bullying in the school community through a range of activities that engage students, families and staff (including professional development for teachers).
- A whole-school detailed policy that addresses the effective prevention of and response to bullying within the broader context of improving school culture and fostering student engagement.
- Effective classroom environments supported by statements of rights and responsibilities developed with student involvement.
- The promotion of a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes student wellbeing.
- Effective approaches and strategies to encourage positive student behaviour as well as approaches to discipline that are consistent, inclusive, solution-focused and non-punitive.
- Explicit teaching of values and skills to all students (and especially bystanders) including strategies for responding to bullying behaviour and supporting students who are bullied.
- Integration of social emotional learning within the curriculum.

What doesn’t work

- Zero tolerance and ‘get tough’ suspensions and exclusions in the absence of positive and preventive approaches.
- Rigid control of student behaviour.
- Labelling students as ‘bullies’ or ‘victims’.
- Belief that students must receive punitive and negative consequences in all cases.
- Increased security measures.
- Unfair and inconsistent use of discipline.
- Punishment without support.
Valuing diversity in schools

Each school community has its own unique population with diverse abilities and social, cultural, geographic and family backgrounds. Student bullying is strongly linked to school climate, including how openly difference and diversity are discussed and how much value is placed on respect for diversity and inclusion. A school that values and celebrates diversity creates a positive climate that feels welcoming to everyone in the community.

Valuing diversity is about recognising that everybody is unique and brings with them individual differences. A diverse learning community brings with it many challenges, but it also brings great benefits.

Celebrating diversity in schools contributes towards improving acceptance within society. Teaching children about difference and diversity builds a strong foundation of understanding and provides a set of values that children can take with them throughout life.

Research shows that students who are considered different from the local ‘norm’ are more likely to experience bullying. These differences can relate to ability, size, appearance, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation and identity, or family financial situation. Teaching an understanding of the diverse population, embedding a culture of inclusion, and openly discussing difference is a great way to improve acceptance and to prevent bullying.

Sometimes a lack of knowledge about another person’s background or attributes causes fear and a negative reaction toward that person. By fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding, these reactions can be removed.

Each school will have some students and parents who require some adjustments to ensure that they are able to access and participate in all aspects of school life.

Strategies and adjustments to cater for diverse needs may include:

- including a diverse range of students in examples or scenarios
- encouraging questions during lessons to provide an opportunity for students to seek clarity
- checking in with students and parents and carers to ensure they have understood the messages
- explicitly teaching about diversity within the local context
- considering the provision of easy English versions of resources
- considering the provision of resources in Braille (if required)
- presenting information visually, simply and clearly to support comprehension and minimise misunderstandings
- ensuring other language versions of resources are available
- making reasonable adjustments to the messages being delivered so they meet the needs of all children in the classroom and their families
- providing an opportunity for parents and carers to seek further information.

Catering for diversity when teaching and talking about bullying

All students, particularly those considered most vulnerable, need to be provided with the knowledge to understand what bullying is and the strategies to deal with bullying situations. By tailoring teaching strategies and resources to the unique needs of students and families, schools are more likely to be effective in positive engagement.

It is important that messaging is consistent; however, the delivery of that message can be flexible and may be different for different groups or individuals.

It is essential that the strategies used in the school and classroom match the needs of parents, carers and students, and that there is a genuine commitment to ensuring understanding and that all students, regardless of need, are involved and participating in relevant activities.

Teachers can adapt any of the Bullying. No Way! material to suit their school. By making small adjustments to the way staff talk and teach about bullying, schools can ensure everyone is working together towards preventing bullying at their school.
Professional learning

School staff play an important role in preventing and intervening in bullying, modelling appropriate relationships and developing a positive school climate.

Specific and regular training about bullying is a significant factor in teachers’ ability to effectively respond to bullying. In a whole-school approach, professional learning opportunities are provided to everyone in the school community to promote awareness of and provide effective responses to bullying.

Research has consistently identified that the provision of local professional development and training in responding to bullying for teachers is a key component of an effective whole-school approach to preventing bullying.

Students have told researchers that if they perceive that their teachers do not know how to effectively intervene, this prevents them from seeking help. Students are more likely to report bullying at school if they think:

- the teacher knows what to do
- the teacher will respond sensitively and effectively
- they will be treated with respect and provided support
- the teacher won’t make things worse.

Because teachers and other staff are often the first responders to bullying incidents, they should be prepared with knowledge and specific skills.

Suitable topics for professional development sessions include:

- identifying bullying
- managing reports of bullying
- ways of effectively dealing with and address different kinds of bullying
- teaching children effective strategies if they are bullied or see bullying happening
- teaching appropriate strategies for interaction with students who bully others
- understanding the impact of bullying
- ways to encourage appropriate help-seeking strategies
- developmental issues that impact bullying related to ages/stages of children and youth (i.e. when bullying is most likely to occur)
- how to emotionally support all students involved
- promoting resilience
- practices to restore relationships
- how to work with parents on bullying issues
- teaching and demonstrating school values and respect for diversity
- effective classroom management
- opportunities to practise intervention strategies (e.g., role playing) are helpful for increasing confidence and comfort
- opportunity to reflect on personal attitudes and experiences regarding bullying, as well as how adults can model appropriate and respectful social interaction
- being aware of providing positive social role models, and how to avoid engaging in bullying.
Building shared knowledge and skills through training is an opportunity to build shared values among the staff. Training provided through school sessions led by staff members provides opportunity to ensure that there is a shared understanding of school policy and processes related to bullying.  

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/Resources/Pages/Professional-learning-resources.aspx

**What is bullying?** is a series of four videos that unpacks the national definition of bullying and helps develop a shared understanding of bullying.  

**Signs of bullying** explains that each student who has been bullied or is bullying others will respond and act differently.  

**Talking about bullying classroom discussion guide** for teachers uses the community of inquiry approach to support students’ discussions about bullying.  

**Types of bullying** describes the types of behaviours involved, covering verbal, social and physical bullying.  
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatsBullying/Pages/Types-of-bullying.aspx

**Bystanders to student bullying** provides professional learning related to students' bystander behaviour.  

**Roles that kids play** highlights the different roles that individual students can take on, on different days, in different circumstances or with different peers.  
Impact of bullying explains how bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term negative impacts on everyone involved, including bystanders.

Online bullying describes the various types of behaviour involved, and explains the important ways that it differs from bullying in person.

Online safety and online bullying provides information and advice on where to source additional support for online safety.

Perspectives on bullying: Information for teachers provides teacher notes on how to lead this activity with senior students.

Your role provides information and tools for teachers and early childhood educators to explore their role in countering bullying in schools.
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/YourRole/Pages/For-Educators.aspx

Bullying prevention is everyone’s responsibility: a guide for engaging students and families provides practical ideas and activities for meaningful engagement in the process of developing a school policy or plan.

Starting in early childhood explores the critical role of early childhood educators in teaching children appropriate ways to behave, and alternatives to inappropriate behaviour.
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/TeachingAboutBullying/StartingInEarlyChildhood

The Allen Adventure: Introduction to the lesson plans details the key concepts for educators.

The Allen Adventure in the classroom video demonstrates how The Allen Adventure can be extended to a classroom setting.

Donna Cross’s presentation What if harm from bullying is hoax and we create a better world for nothing explores the research on ‘what works’ to prevent bullying and the practical ways schools can engage with students.

Misdirections in bullying prevention and response features Dr Catherine Bradshaw, a US expert in bullying prevention, discussing approaches to avoid in bullying prevention and response.

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides virtual classrooms, as well as a list of accredited training providers for each state and territory. Training can be tailored to audiences of students, parents and carers, and/or teachers.
Choosing effective resources and programs for your school

Discussing bullying in the classroom requires teaching and thinking strategies to support discussions.

There are opportunities within the curriculum and throughout the school day for learning about concepts related to bullying, and to foster positive, inclusive and proactive attitudes and practices. The classroom environment must be a safe and trusting place so that diverse student views can be presented and discussed.

A starting point for critical thinking and learning is quality and appropriate teaching resources.

The Bullying. No Way! teaching resources catalogue is a searchable catalogue of free evidence informed resources specifically related to bullying that are suitable for students across all schooling phases.

Resources can be filtered according to:
- teaching resource type
- phase of schooling or year level
- curriculum area
- bias or prejudice-based bullying topics
- diverse student needs.

All resources have been reviewed by educators to ensure appropriate and high-quality resources suitable for use in the classroom.

Local decisions determine your school’s success. Selecting programs and approaches that provide real results for your students contributes to accomplishing your school’s bullying prevention goals.

The decision-making process is multifaceted, and requires careful consideration to ensure appropriate and effective approaches or programs are used.

STEPS – Steps To Examine Programs and approaches for schools – is a decision-making tool to help schools select appropriate and evidence-based bullying prevention programs and approaches.

The STEPS decision-making framework organises the decision-making process under nine key concepts. It provides you with a transparent process for your selection.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/PreventingBullying/STEPS/
Engaging in bullying prevention all year

A strong school policy or strategy related to student wellbeing and safety is the foundation for effective practices to counter bullying. A collaborative approach to developing the school’s policy or strategy helps to ensure it is a ‘living’ document relevant to all members of the school community.

Schools can use the development and implementation of policy as a way to involve everyone in the school, and to take a whole-school approach to preventing and responding to bullying all year.

**Term 1**
- Early newsletter for the year – message from the principal about the importance of speaking up and out about bullying. Attach copy of bullying prevention strategy or plan for the school.
- School website spotlight on preventing and addressing bullying, including a contact at the school for parents to discuss concerns.
- Host a bullying awareness evening for students and families and invite specialists from community (e.g. police liaison, mental health, headspace).
- Establish a student-led committee to provide advice and ideas to school leadership on preventing and addressing bullying inside and outside of school.
- Cyber-safety focus – promote resources from the Office of eSafety in all classrooms, parent newsletter and promotion avenues used by the school (e.g. signage boards).
- Check your planning is on track for the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA) held on the third Friday of March.
  - Are you registered?
  - Have you ordered your materials (wristbands and pocket cards)?
  - Have you selected your resources to support your engagement activity?
- Have an assembly to focus on respectful relationships, language, and dealing with conflict or disagreement.
- Parent association (e.g. Parents and Friends, Parents and Citizens) host evening or weekend event with special guest speaker on cyberbullying or online safety.
- Prepare weekly safe school announcements and tips, including advertising the NDA activities.
- Write to parents in newsletter or other regular communication about what your school is doing to address bullying.
- Participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

**Term 2**
- Review school bullying prevention plan/policy with students using student-led committee or similar. What’s working? Where is more work needed?
- Review school climate with student led committee and check the progress of your school's bullying prevention activities to achieve goals.
- Update families about what the school is doing to prevent bullying though newsletters and other communication, including reviews or data available to indicate success of NDA or similar.
- Plan and hold a student led initiative for the whole school on positive relationships, bystander actions or mental wellbeing.
- Engage school leaders in whole-school activity to model and advocate for strong community relationships, positive communication and responsibility to support peers.
- Professional development for staff in responding to reports of student bullying, focusing on first responder strategies, parent engagement and resolution.

**Term 3**
- Reminder through various communication channels of the core features of the school bullying prevention plan/policy — focus on students and families.
- Review school climate with student-led committee and check the progress of your school’s bullying prevention activities to achieve goals.
- Engage with headspace or similar recommended agencies to share materials and resources with students and families.
- Environmental assessment of school based on reports of bullying — where are they happening? Engage with students to identify practical solutions.
- Update families about what school is doing to prevent bullying though newsletters and other communication.
- Debrief with school leaders and students about what is working, what did not work, and what the current needs are.
- Evaluate progress of bullying prevention plan in school.

**Term 4**
- Create and establish goals for your school’s bullying prevention plan for the following year.
- Register or update registration details and order materials for the NDA.
- End of year assembly to celebrate the milestones and goals achieved with families and school community.
Teaching about bullying and strategies students can use

Bullying is a word that can have a lot of different meanings for different people. Making sure everyone in your school shares the same definition of bullying is essential.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence are all interpersonal behaviours that can create or contribute to negative social situations and school environments. Identifying whether a situation is bullying or something else helps to determine the most appropriate response.

Classroom activities and lessons

**Talking about bullying** classroom discussion starters support students to explore their ideas about bullying. [https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay/ForSchools/LessonPlans/Pages/Talking-about-bullying.aspx](https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay/ForSchools/LessonPlans/Pages/Talking-about-bullying.aspx)

**Bullying is NEVER OK!** classroom discussion starter helps students learn what to do if they are bullied. [https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay/ForSchools/LessonPlans/Pages/Bullying-is-NEVER-Ok-discussion-starters.aspx](https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay/ForSchools/LessonPlans/Pages/Bullying-is-NEVER-Ok-discussion-starters.aspx)


**Take a Stand Together** is a free app for students 8–13 years. [https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/Resources/BullyingNoWayApps/Pages/default.aspx#Anchor1](https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/Resources/BullyingNoWayApps/Pages/default.aspx#Anchor1)

Information for parents

**What parents can do if their child is being bullied.** [https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/Parents/Pages/ChildBeingBullied.aspx](https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/Parents/Pages/ChildBeingBullied.aspx)

**What parents can do if their child is bullying others.** [https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/Parents/Pages/ChildBullyingOthers.aspx](https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/Parents/Pages/ChildBullyingOthers.aspx)
Teaching students how to be safe and supportive bystanders

Most of the time, bullying takes place with other students (and sometimes adults) present. People who witness bullying are called bystanders.

Bystanders can play a number of roles. Positively influencing bystander behaviour is a key part of bullying prevention.

The actions of a supportive bystander can stop an incident or help a student to recover from it. When bystanders defend or support a student who is being bullied, often the bullying stops quickly.

Bystanders who are passive (take no action) or behave in ways that give silent approval (watching, nodding, walking away) encourage the behaviour to continue.

When talking to students about ways to be supportive bystanders, parents and teachers need to be aware of (and respect) the reasons why students may not step in. They may:

- fear for their own safety (now and later) or position in the group
- think that someone else will help
- be worried about making things worse
- not know what to do
- think their actions won’t make a difference
- think it’s none of their business
- think the student being bullied deserved it
- think it’s fun to watch.

Classroom activities and lessons

Our special superpower resources help students to learn what to do if they see bullying happening. It provides activities exploring the role of bystanders and strategies to respond to bullying.


Our special superpower animated video helps students learn how to be safe and supportive bystanders.


Bystander behaviour classroom activities.


Bullying is NEVER OK! animated video also includes some strategies for bystanders.


I’ve seen someone bullied features students sharing real stories about seeing bullying happening.


Information for parents

What parents can do if their child has seen bullying happening to someone else.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/Parents/Pages/ChildSeenBullying.aspx
Teaching about online bullying and online safety

While online bullying involves similar behaviours to bullying in person, it also differs in the following ways:

- It can happen at all hours and while at home.
- It can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience. For example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once.
- It can provide the person doing the bullying with a sense of distance from the other person, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

These important differences should not distract schools and families from seeing that online bullying has the same essential features as bullying in person.

Classroom activities and lessons

**Being reasonable and ethical online** engages students and examines the qualities of respectful relationships when communicating with others online.

**I get bullied online** is an animated discussion starter.
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/ForKids/GamesAndApps/Pages/Videos.aspx#

**Friendship and acceptance questionnaire** asks students to reflect on how they influence their social communities, both online and in person.

Information for parents and educators

Bullying. No Way! recommends parents visit the website of the **Office of the eSafety Commissioner** for information about online safety and reporting of serious online bullying.
Classroom activities to involve students in bullying prevention

Preventing bullying involves the whole school community, and students have an important role to play.

Actively and authentically engaging with students about bullying prevention can provide schools with new insights.

Classroom activities and lessons

**Bullying. No Way! Take Action every day** provides 10 action areas and ideas to empower student-led action to help deliver a powerful message that bullying and violence are never okay.

**Ideas for a safe and supportive school community** lesson plans involve students in creating and evaluating their ideas to make the school a safe and supportive community for everyone.

**Perspectives on bullying** guides senior students to reflect and share what they have learned through their school experience.
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay/ForSchools/LessonPlans/Pages/Perspectives-on-bullying.aspx

**Empowering student leaders** provides ideas about how senior students can inspire and support younger students to prevent bullying.

**Tips and advice for students** helps guide students to undertake research projects.
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/Resources/FactSheets/Pages/For-students.aspx

**The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence** is the third Friday of March each year. It is an opportunity for the whole school community to focus on their bullying prevention work and to take a stand against bullying and violence.
For early childhood educators: starting early to prevent bullying

Bullying can be prevented by starting in early childhood. Helpful guidance from parents, carers and educators at this early age sets children up for positive interactions later in life.

Between the ages of 3 and 5, children are learning how to get along with each other, and to share and understand their feelings. Parents, carers and early childhood educators are children’s first teachers about positive and healthy relationships.

You don’t need to use the word ‘bullying’ to begin to teach young children a wide range of skills that will prevent bullying.

Classroom activities and lessons

The Allen Adventure free app is a fun interactive story about Allen, a young visitor from another planet who is new to school and learning how to get on with his Earthling classmates.


The Allen Adventure lesson plans are designed to help young children learn about how to get on with others, and how to solve their problems without physical or verbal aggression.


Allen learns about feelings helps foster emotional literacy in young children. It uses emojis in activities with lots of opportunities to identify and understand emotions.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/Resources/TeachingResources/Pages/Early-childhood-resources.aspx#Anchor9

The Allen Adventure is supported by downloadable resources, including posters, activities, postcards, and music for ‘Kinda Mean’.


Information for parents

The role of parents and educators explores how families can support children’s social and emotional development every day through their responses and their example of how to behave with other people.

Support and information for your state or territory

Links to information about bullying prevention in your state and territory can be found at Bullying. No Way!
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/Pages/Legislation-and-policy.aspx

Other useful resources for the classroom

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner is the Australian authority for online safety and online bullying. The eSafety website provides reporting services and information, along with classroom resources.

The Student Wellbeing Hub has information and teaching resources related to a wide range of topics on student wellbeing.
https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/

Be You promotes mental health and wellbeing, from the early years to 18 years, and offers educators and learning communities evidence-based online professional learning, complemented by a range of tools and resources to turn learning into action.
https://beyou.edu.au/

About us

All resources and information from Bullying. No Way! are developed by an expert group of educators, with representatives from the Commonwealth and all states and territories, as well as national Catholic and independent schooling representatives
https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/SiteInformation/Pages/About-us.aspx