

# Anti-bullying – how to encourage your child to be an effective bystander

A guide for parents and carers



Research shows that school is one of the safest places for children and young people. Let's work together to keep students safe.

## What is bullying?

Young people often joke around with each other and name-call or push and shove. This type of behaviour is not necessarily bullying.

Bullying has some unique characteristics.

- There is a power difference between the person bullying and the person being bullied.
- There is an intent to cause distress or hurt.
- The behaviour is repeated over time.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- verbal eg name calling, teasing, putdowns, sarcasm, threats
- physical eg hitting, kicking, tripping
- social eg ignoring, excluding, making inappropriate gestures

- psychological eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of smart phones.

## What are schools doing to protect students?

The Department of Education and Communities strives to make schools a safe place for young people. As such, any instance of bullying is unacceptable. Schools and families need to work together to ensure that children and young people have the strategies to form positive relationships.

### Policies and guidelines

All New South Wales government schools are required to have a plan to counter

bullying and this is outlined in the *Anti-bullying Plan for Schools (2005)*.

This plan outlines strategies for parents, students and teachers to identify, report and deal with bullying behaviour. It can be accessed at [www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au) by going to 'our policies' and searching 'Anti-bullying Plan'.

### Programs

There is a range of programs available in schools that promote positive relationships and support students. These include buddy and peer support programs, mentoring and transition programs and conflict resolution programs.

Bullying behaviour is specifically addressed through curriculum areas such as Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. Child protection education and values education also promote strategies to counter bullying.

