

Submission
No 45

**INQUIRY INTO BULLYING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE**

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 23/03/2009

Partially Confidential

Bullying Enquiry

Infants Years K - 2

Observations:

The child no one wants to sit next to:-

“smells” could be one reason - Child might never have been shown to get the soap in the crevices - Child might not have clean clothes

- * Teacher can give class general hygiene lesson.
- * Teacher can speak with mother of child
- * Might need intervention of a health worker

“not in uniform or raggedy uniform” could be another reason

- * Teacher can acquire uniform - clothing pool, an older child in family known to teacher
- * Might need assistance from a social worker - how to wash and iron - family might not own washing machine, might live in a caravan and rely on communal park facilities

“knows all the answers” could be another reason

- * Teacher can give lesson on talents - respecting what each has
- * If teacher identifies the bullies in this aspect, perhaps give positive credit to the bully/ bullies for what he/she is good at and at the same time, give positive credit to the one being bullied for his/her talents.

“pushes and shoves” - Child might have been brought up at home in a household where this was always seen

- * Teacher can give lesson on appropriate touching
- * * Teacher can speak with child to explain pushing and shoving isn't appropriate.

Teacher can usually find another child who can be encouraged to include the child.

Playground duty

An occurrence on infants' duty: "No one will play with me." The problem is usually that the child is quiet and has been separated from familiar peers. Previously, the teacher could take the hand (but that's a no, no now!) and walk in the playground till you notice someone else from the same class. Teacher and child can join the game then the teacher edges away and the problem is solved.

If there are direct statements heard such as "Get away. We don't want you." that means perhaps speaking with the offenders or referring it to the classroom teacher.

Whatever the child tells, it's important that the teacher listens and responds in a positive way. Generally, at this level, children want to do what pleases the teacher.

If there is a social problem with the child, intervention by the school counsellor might be needed before the problem becomes a major one.

Primary Years 3 - 6

Same as at Infants level, can apply to primary students as well as infants. By Year 5, physical mistreatment can occur particularly in the playground.

Teachers on playground duty should be vigilant in watching - for many things - and it's not easy!!!

If a group is noticed, a teacher should walk towards the group. This will often result in boys running in different directions and one boy being left standing (or on the ground). A loud voice calling, "The boy in the blue shirt ... Stop!" can give the entire group of perpetrators.

There should be an immediate back-up system provided by non-teaching staff such as the Principal, as the teacher concerned does have a responsibility to continue watching many other students on the playground.

If some students return to class after a break looking dishevelled, the classroom teacher should "sniff out" what was done at lunch time.

Bullying by girls in primary school can be extremely petty and subtle. It can involve comments that hurt the bullied student.

An excellent Child Protection Program had at Kindergarten level, No! Go! Tell! which was to be done if you had butterflies in your tummy, didn't like something, felt uncomfortable That could be used with all students. If not happy, with words or actions - Go! Tell! At that juncture, you have to have teachers willing to listen and respond. Therein can lie the problem as teachers have 29 other students in the room in front of them and so you expect a co-operative Principal who can be called on to deal with situations if necessary or to come and chat with the class while the teacher deals with the matter.

Students need to have impressed the necessity to Tell! No trouble for them etc

High School

Years 7 - 12

A firm Principal, a co-operative teaching staff and a well-worded and strictly enforced code of conduct, can make all the difference.

Those running the standard of behaviour at a school and punishing misdemeanours, should be the paid staff, not the senior students. While seniors can set an example, their role should not be to meter out punishment.

If students report a problem, the teacher needs to take notice and act.

Perhaps the word "bullying" should disappear from the behaviour policy and be replaced by "**assault**". If an assault occurs, whether on the school grounds or en route either walking or on the school bus, it should result in the police being called and charges made.

I will list examples of what I believe to be inappropriate treatment. These examples are have occurred in NSW and come from various sources.

.... bastardisation to gain power over young boys

* brooming jaffles, j-brands, knicks, 18 wheelers, brews, sitting on the coathager, holding up the boot-locker, attacked, punched, kicked on the ground and humiliated

* junior students expected to obey the directions and commands of older students e.g. wash their dirty socks.

* hit across the knuckles with a steel ruler,

* to "broom" (that is force them to bend over a bed before being struck by a broom used to sweep the dormitory as hard as possible).

* were required to place their hands palm down on the dining table, while a senior student struck them across the knuckles with a knife, sometimes with the handle end and sometimes with the cutting edge.

* to bend over their beds in the dormitory, whilst they were struck across the buttocks with a riding crop.

..... was pulled out of his room at midnight, stripped naked and assaulted by a group of eight students.

.... was stripped naked in the middle of winter and thrown into the ice-covered pool.

..... at the dairy sheds and the boys rubbed manure all over him.

.... was admitted to hospital with a fractured cheek bone, black eye and concussion.

..... entire dormitory group woken, taken outside by prefect and had to stand in cold for 1 hour

has got a reputation for pretty awful bullying

has a shocking reputation for bullying

Schools such as # and # have a history of this stuff, exacerbated by ex students coming back as teachers and encouraging "old traditions" of beating the sh*t out of younger kids for the most minor of "indiscretion".

Teachers knew about it but ignored it.

.... but the most sickening thing was the old boy teachers telling me to get over it, it was good for me

..... part of a lengthy history at the place of systematic ignorance by teachers.

Teachers are allowed to speak and treat and embarrass, harass and humiliate students ..

I have contacted the school and the Department of Education, the Dept of Education never replies, and # (the school) just says it doesn't happen.

My son was bullied by an older student, physically injured and sent to matron, yet no-one at the school contacted me in relation to my son's injuries! When I contacted the school about the incident, it was suggested that I had over reacted to the situation. I have avoided supplementary discussions with the school targeting bullying per se, as I believe that there would be further reprisal against my son.

A former worker in the dining area reported: One evening this boy did not eat all his meal. Some senior students, took it upon themselves to virtually force feed this boy until he could take no more. This was in the dining area in full view of the teachers who were positioned on the "teachers stage" where they were supposedly to oversee the boys and ensure that correct behaviour occurred. Not only did these teachers fail to act, some actually encouraged this bastardisation.

... the then Principal simply replied and I quote, "Boys will be boys".