

Submission  
No 43

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially Confidential

Submission to Bullying of children and young people (Inquiry)

15<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Material in boxes such as this may be made public.

1. Some amount of bullying in schools and child care centres is unavoidable. However, parents and caregivers (referred to simply as parents for the remainder of this submission) have a right to expect that the relevant authorities will deal appropriately with any situation which occurs.



2. As a society, what should we do with violent children? The current situation seems to be one of essentially ignoring them until they are old enough for the law to intervene (age 10 for an avo, age 12 for assault charges). There seems to be a systemic unwillingness to address this extremely serious issue. I have been told by the police to simply never allow my children out of my sight. Should we not be trying to prevent the downward slide from childhood inappropriate behaviour to criminal and often violent behaviour as adolescents and adults?

3. There is a great inconsistency in the approach different police officers (youth liaison officers in particular) take when dealing with a problem involving under 10-year olds. For example, in one instance based on the same background information, one officer offered to mediate a meeting between the two sets of parents. It then turned out that they couldn't as the school involved was not in their jurisdiction. The same information was given to the officer in the appropriate area command (one suburb away), who responded by stating "I will not intervene." It is essential that the service offered by police to parents and the community is not subject to such variation in quality.

4. Parents should know what to expect in terms of disciplinary procedures to be implemented at schools and out-of-official-school-hours care (OOSCH). What steps are taken to manage appropriate behaviour, and what disciplines are implemented? An example of an inappropriate discipline is 5 minutes of scrubbing tables for attempting to strangle a younger child.

5. What should the DET do with staff who are acting improperly? Individual incidents which have been incorrectly dealt with can be expected to occur, but what about staff with ongoing inappropriate behaviour? In particular, how is it that the recommendations of EPAC (the Employee Performance and Conduct Unit) can be overridden after they have carried out an investigation into a staff member?

6. If a staff member at a particular school is "in" with a group of parents, it is possible that the children of the "not in" parents get a raw deal. Why does the DET not move staff on to other schools in this situation? Often a situation like this can continue for years.

7. It is one thing for a family in a metropolitan area to move schools – often this means simply driving 3 km instead of 1. However, in country areas this option is simply not available. A parent cannot drive a child more than 40 km to the next school – or send them to boarding school. All students must not only be safe, but feel safe within a school AND the associated after-hours care. It is not right to expect the family of the victim to bear the cost – give up their job or give up their studies, because the institution is unwilling or unable to deal with a single or a small group of troublesome students.