



# Bullies and teases others

Behaviour support and student management are key aspects of teaching. Teachers and other school professionals are constantly required to respond to challenging, difficult or emotionally 'needy' students on a day-to-day basis. The following strategies can be used as part of general teacher practice or more formally through the establishment of individual learning plans, behaviour support plans, student management plans or whole school management plans.

For guidelines, templates and more information on writing behavioural support plans, created by the Victorian State Government, Department of Education and Training, [click here](#).

Serious cases of bullying and crimes such as cyberbullying, assault or the use of weapons should be referred to the principal. The principal must take action in accordance with Federal and State laws, education department or governing authorities state wide procedures and the school's code of conduct.

<p><b>Teacher strategy</b></p> <p><b>1. Implement values based curriculum within the classroom and beyond.</b></p>
<p><b>Purpose.</b> To promote values such as tolerance, acceptance and appreciation. Model classroom values such as love of learning, respect, harmony, honesty and responsibility to help instil in students a clear set of guiding principles.</p>
<p><b>Action.</b> Explicitly incorporate classroom activities around values based curriculum. See <a href="http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values">http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values</a> for lesson plans, and interactive web-based programs.</p>

<p><b>Teacher strategy</b></p> <p><b>2. Implement a kindness program.</b></p>
<p><b>Purpose.</b> To promote values of kindness, acceptance and appreciation by promoting 'connectedness' with others and pro social behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Action.</b> Students initiate at least one act of kindness towards a person at school and home each day (or week). Consider rotating kindness recipients to ensure all students are treated positively. For kindness activity ideas and free lesson plans at the <a href="#">Random acts of kindness foundation</a>. Acts of kindness at home could be established from the beginning of the school year or beginning of term as a weekly 'homework' task.</p>



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<b>Teacher strategy</b>
<b>3. Challenge aggression, intolerance, and harassment.</b>
<b>Purpose.</b> To assist the student to recognise and clearly understand that some attitudes and associated behaviours are not acceptable at school and in the community.
<b>Note:</b> A student may be influenced by attitudes of family and friends that are not in line with the school and the community.  <b>Action.</b> Remind the student that 'put downs', unwanted verbal remarks, name-calling, and insults are bullying behavior that will not be tolerated. Indicate the consequences for continued bullying such as a warning, reflection sheet, restrictions on play area, detention or suspension.  Implement a consequence that fits the circumstances and monitor the student.  Ask the student if people in their family use bullying as a means to get their own way, or solve problems? If not, where have they learnt this unacceptable behaviour? (e.g. older siblings and their friends? family friends? media? other sources?) Have the student identify the school values that are not being reflected by their words and actions. A good metaphor for these discussions is rules of games. For example the school rules may differ from those at home, just like the rules for football are different to those for tennis.

<b>Teacher strategy</b>
<b>4. Organise workshops or publish articles in newsletters for parents.</b>
<b>Purpose.</b> To educate parents on issues associated with bullying, the impact bullying can have on students, families and the community, and to explain how parents can assist.
<b>Action.</b> Organise a late afternoon or evening parent seminar conducted by an experienced teacher and school psychologist, or external expert on bullying. The presentation might include segments from TV series or films such as <i>Worst Best Friends</i> , <i>Bully</i> , <i>Mean Girls</i> or other films that explore friendship issues and bullying.  Newsletter articles may also educate parents on topics such as <i>What to do if their child is being cyberbullied</i> .



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## Teacher strategy

5. Use the 'Method of shared concern', 'Restorative justice conferencing' or other effective non-punitive practices.

**Purpose.** Practises focusing on restoring harm and laying the ground rules for healthy relationships can be effective methods to stop bullying.

**Action.** Have one teacher from each grade or department level as well as a principal, school counsellor or psychologist trained to assist with the techniques outlined above.

**Caution:** Before implementing techniques such as restorative justice conferencing where parents may be included, it is important to carefully plan to ensure the bullied child and the bullied child's parents are not likely to be intimidated or threatened.

Before a conference, ensure the bully and the bully's parents understand the wrong that has been inflicted by the bully and that an appropriate level of remorse and empathy for the bullied student is evident.

These approaches can be time-consuming and each requires specific training and expertise to work effectively.

For further information, see the Psych4Schools ebooklet, *Working with children who are bullied* and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Bully Stoppers, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachinter.aspx>

## Teacher strategy

6. Involve parents in the implementation of consequences for bullying.

**Purpose.** To demonstrate that bullying will not be tolerated, an expectation for remorse and empathy for the bullied student and support of the school's policies.

**Action.** Indicate to the student (and parents) the consequences for bullying such as a warning, reflection sheet, restrictions on play area, detention or suspension. Thank parents who demonstrate empathy towards the bullied child, and highlight that the school will continue to monitor the situation and will discuss with them any further inappropriate bullying behavior.

Set a review date with the parents of the bully.

## Teacher strategy



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**7. Implement consequences and police action for serious cases of bullying and crimes such as cyber or online bullying or the use of weapons.**

**Purpose.** To demonstrate that bullying will not be tolerated.

**Action.** If the student is found with a weapon, safely confiscate the weapon from the student. Isolate the student from others if there is any perceived or real risk to others. Inform the principal who will take action in accordance with Federal and State laws, education department or governing authorities state wide procedures and the school's code of conduct.

Parents must be informed about what has occurred and reminded that bullying is unacceptable and can lead to suspension or expulsion.

Set limitations on play areas, subject choices and whom the student plays or associates with and when. Develop a behaviour contract, *behaviour support plan*, or a student management plan, as required.

For some students and their family aggression may be viewed 'acceptable' as a means to influence others or to resolve conflict. This may make it difficult to form a partnership with the student and/or the family to deal with the unacceptable behaviour.

Where parents are unwilling to form a partnership with the school, seek agency or other professional support to assist the family to establish alternative behaviour.

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