



# SCHOOL SAFETY FRAMEWORK

# Addressing Bullying in Schools



**basic education**  
Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**WORKBOOK**

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# Introduction

Education policy in South Africa emphasises the importance of creating safe schools that encourage respect for human rights (see Book 1). The National Education Policy Act requires schools and school authorities to create an enabling education system that supports the full personal development of each learner, and contributes to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large. It emphasises the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes, and bans corporal punishment. Following its lead, a key goal of the Department's School Safety Framework is to develop and maintain a safe, welcoming, violence-free learning environment.

Bullying constitutes a significant challenge to school safety, and undermines directly the creation of an enabling school environment that supports personal growth and development. It is arguably one of the most underrated and enduring problems in schools today, and while adults are often unaware of bullying, research shows that it is a reality in the lives of most South African children, whether they are bullies, victims or witnesses.

Bullying is not something educators should or have to accept. Bullying is not just a normal part of growing up. It goes against every child and young persons' right to respect, safety and an education in a safe and nurturing environment, and given its possible consequences, must be addressed.

## The purpose of the workbook

This workbook aims to equip principals, educators, school governing bodies (SGBs) and other concerned actors with the information and tools to address bullying in schools. It forms part of the *School Safety Framework's* training modules on Bullying and Positive Discipline.

The overall goal of the workbook is to provide information and tools to help principals, educators, school governing bodies and education officials to create a school environment where everyone understands that bullying is unacceptable and harmful, knows what role they can play to address it and works to prevent and eradicate it. The specific objectives of the workbook are to:

- equip you with the information and skills to help you recognise bullying and the behaviours that can lead to bullying;
- provide tools and strategies to help you respond early and effectively to bullying and the behaviours that can lead to bullying;
- provide practical advice on how and when to intervene; and
- provide strategies to help educate learners about bullying and prepare them to recognise and respond effectively to bullying.

This workbook is designed to provide you with the guidance and tools to develop an integrated response to bullying in your school and incorporate bullying into existing curricula, policies and activities. The procedures and steps are not meant to constitute an additional burden, but to serve as management tools to help you to incorporate bullying issues into your school's management framework, processes and activities.

They are designed to work alongside other aspects of the *School Safety Framework*, as well as the *Addressing Bullying in Schools Course Reader*.

This workbook takes a whole-school approach to addressing bullying in schools.

As with the other *School Safety Framework* materials, it recognises that schools are embedded in larger communities; addressing bullying requires a multi-pronged, holistic approach that establishes an enabling policy environment, encourages respect for human rights and involves diverse actors within and outside of the school.

## The whole-school approach to safety

Creating safer schools requires a whole-school approach. The school is made up of several 'components', namely, learners, educators, principals, school management teams, school governing bodies (SGBs), and parents or caregivers. Together, these components interact and exist within the greater system of the home and community. Only by dealing with all aspects of the system will violence ultimately be reduced and eradicated. This calls for a carefully targeted, coherent system of programmes and interventions that complement rather than duplicate each other. This requires the continuous support and dedication of school administrators, principals, educators, support staff, learners and caregivers.

There are three main components to a whole school approach:

- **Establishing a positive ethos and environment:** Schools need to create an inclusive, respectful culture that promotes and protects respect for human rights. School management teams need to promote democratic management and decision-making at all levels. They also need to create a policy framework that is in line with South Africa's constitution and legislation, and protects and promotes safety and respect for human rights.
- **Involving caregivers and communities:** Schools need to work with caregivers to understand and address safety issues. Schools can also tap into and support activities within the broader community. Identifying and establishing linkages with relevant community stakeholders can help schools to provide specific and specialised interventions and support. It can also help to ensure that activities within schools and communities complement one another.
- **Curriculum development:** Schools need to develop and integrate teaching materials into existing curricula to support the achievement of a safe and respectful environment. Respect for human rights needs to be incorporated into all relevant curricula and equip children with the information and skills to help create a safer school.

Underlying all three of these components is evidence-based decision-making and monitoring and evaluation. It is important that strategies are informed by high-quality information to ensure responsive interventions. The collection and analysis of data on changes in the safety of educators and learners can also help schools to assess how well interventions are working and if and where changes need to be made. A well-functioning monitoring and evaluation system can help schools to feel confident about their progress in achieving a safer school environment.

The *School Safety Framework* takes a whole-school approach to assessing and improving school safety. The materials start from the premise that well-managed schools that have clear rules and consequences, fair procedures and involve all members of the school community (educators, caregivers, principals, administrators) and other actors experience lower levels of violence. They also create an environment that supports better teaching and learning. The four building blocks of the *School Safety Framework* – be prepared, be aware, take action and take care – all emphasise a clear policy framework, the creation of a human rights culture, building relationships between all members of the school community, and nurturing partnerships to support learners and build school safety (see *School Safety Framework*).



## Implementing a whole-school approach

The materials in this Manual are designed to dovetail with the broader approach to creating safer schools, and are designed to work alongside other tools and activities. Implementing the *School Safety Framework's* whole-school approach to school safety involves:

- **Assessing.** Developing a needs-based programme to combat bullying creates a sense of ownership and commitment. Use the *School Safety Framework* Educator and Learner Surveys to assess the situation extent and dynamics surrounding bullying in the school to assess what is happening in your school and how best to respond.
- **Planning.** Interventions must be carefully planned and developed to avoid exacerbating bullying behaviour. Use the information gathered in the assessment to develop an implementation plan, identify key issues, prospective strategies and responsibilities.
- **Involving multiple stakeholders.** Successful partnerships are built on a shared vision, commitment, values, resources and understanding of the need to work together. Engage and include the different actors in the school community, including school management teams, principals, educators, support staff, learners and caregivers. Include learners in the development and implementation of the programmes.



### Why do children bully?

Children bully for many different reasons. They sometimes bully because:

- They lack the skills to deal with problems or emotions without using violence
- They want to show they are strong, or to cover up insecurities and negative emotions
- They want to be popular or feel powerful
- They want attention

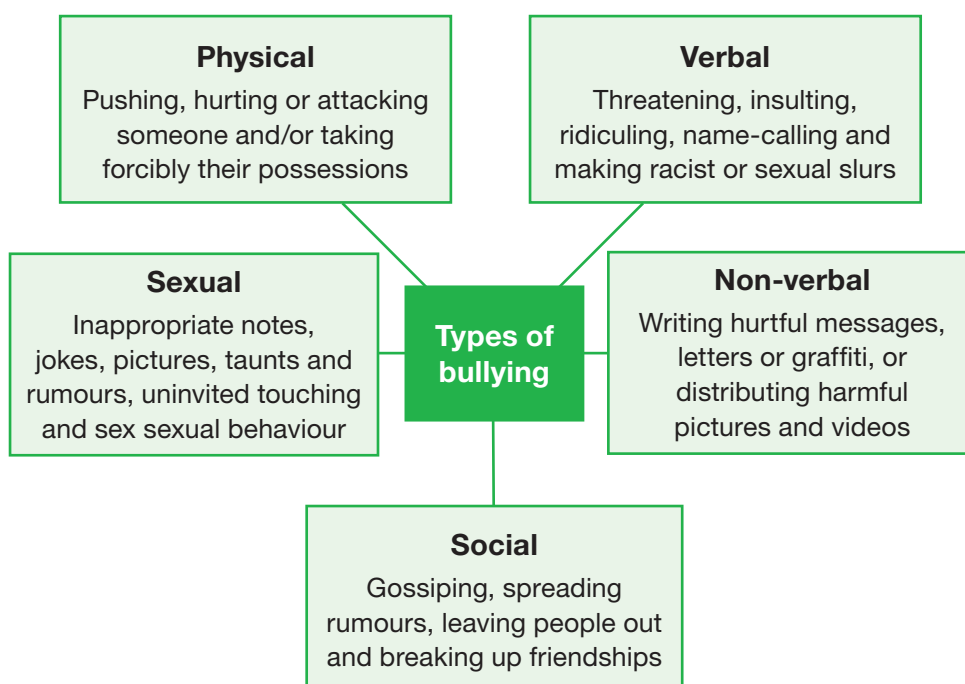
- **Looking at the big picture.** Aim to address as far as possible the multiple risk and protective factors that impact on school safety, including individual, school, family, community-level factors.
- **Being realistic and inclusive.** Provide children with age appropriate materials, discussions and time limits; adopt a **gender-sensitive** approach.
- **Action.** Link plans, policies and information to action. Intervene fairly, transparently, quickly and decisively where problems and problem-behaviour occur.
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** Establish an ongoing monitoring and evaluation framework. Use the Incident Assessment and Monitoring tools to assess the effectiveness of interventions and identify areas that need to be strengthened.

## What is bullying?

Bullying involves *repeatedly* picking on someone with the aim of *hurting or harming* them physically, emotionally or socially. Unlike teasing, which is usually mutual and occurs between equals, bullying usually *involves an imbalance of power*. The bully may be bigger, tougher, or physically stronger, for example, or be more popular or influential.

There are many different types of bullying. The different forms of bullying often overlap, and someone can experience several kinds of bullying at the same time.

Bullies are found in most schools and communities. Even in the most disciplined or positive schools there may be isolated incidents of bullying. Both girls and boys can be bullied and be bullies.



Bullies often have – and need – an audience. Bullying frequently takes place in the presence of bystanders, or people who witness or know about bullying. Bystanders can indirectly encourage bullying by ignoring it or directly by laughing, take photos or videos and egging on the bully. This not only increases the status of the bully, it also supports and prolongs the bullying.



## Spot-light on cyber bullying

With more and more South Africans having access to mobile telephones and the internet, cyber bullying is rapidly becoming a key concern for educators and parents. A study by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) amongst 1726 young people between the age of 12 and 24, for example, showed that almost half (46.8%) had experienced some kind of cyber bullying. In most of these cases, the victims did not know who was behind the attacks.

Cyber bullying has several features that make it a particularly serious and damaging form of bullying. In addition to the anonymity provided by the internet, in particular, these include:

- **Physical distance:**

Cyber bullies are often bolder as they do not have to face their victim. While those involved in physical bullying often need to be bigger and stronger than their victim, anyone with access to a telephone or the internet can bully someone.

- **A lack of supervision:**

It is difficult to monitor and censor hurtful or offensive e-mails, phone calls, messages on internet chats.

- **Accessibility:**

Because young people tend to keep their cell phones with them, cyber bullying can follow young people wherever they go and can occur at any time of the day or night.

- **The fear of punishment:**

While traditional bullying and violence often goes unreported, young people may be even more reluctant to report cyber bullying for fear that they will lose their access to the computer or that their cell phone might be taken away.

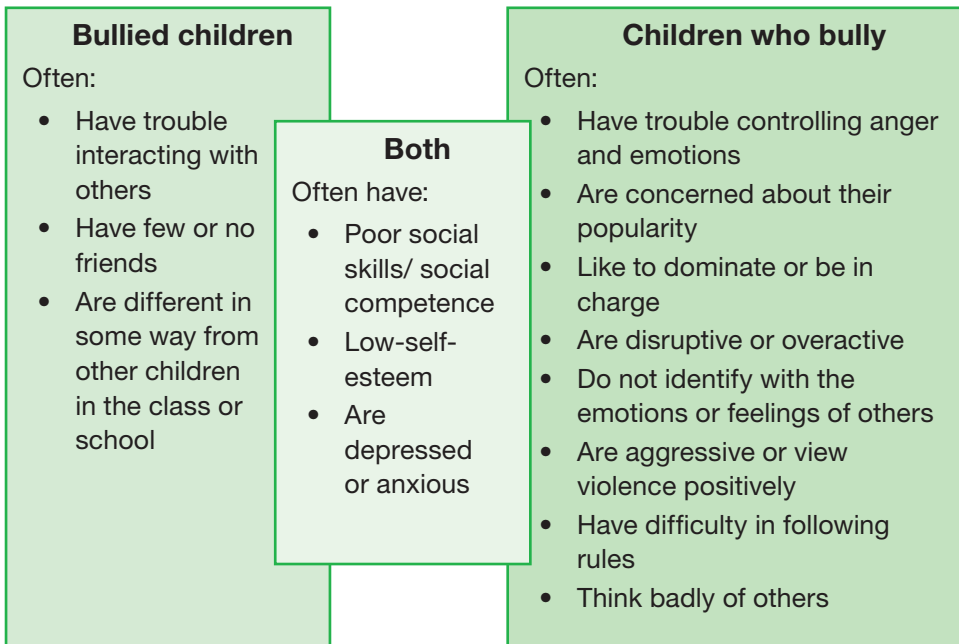
Cyber bullying can have serious consequences. Victims may experience significant psychological harm that can last a lifetime. Once images and videos are uploaded to the internet, they are almost impossible to remove and may affect a child's future academic and work prospects. Depending on the circumstances, those responsible could be prosecuted legally with crimes such as defamation or *crimen iniuria* (the serious violation of someone's dignity or privacy).



# Who is most at risk?

There is no one single cause of bullying. Individual, family, peer, school and community factors all influence the likelihood that someone will experience bullying or bully others. Not everyone sharing particular risk factors will be involved in bullying. Cyber bullying can also involve just about anyone with access to the necessary technology, making it increasingly difficult to identify risk factors.

Local and international experience nevertheless suggests some characteristics to look out for:



Bullying can cause serious physical, psychological and emotional harm that can last a lifetime. It can impact on children's performance at school and in the worst cases has led to children committing suicide or dropping out of school because of the stress of being bullied.

Some children who experience bullying go on to bully others. These children tend to show higher levels of problem behaviours, depressive symptoms, less self-control, poorer social skills, and do worse at school. In these cases, bullying may be a way of showing they are strong or dealing with negative feelings by hurting others.

## Possible warning signs of bullying

Young people at risk of **bullying** others are often:

- Are very concerned about their popularity
- Like to dominate or be in charge
- Do not identify with the emotions or feelings of others
- Are aggressive and view violence positively
- Have difficulty in following rules
- Are hot-headed and easily frustrated
- Think badly of others



Signs that someone is **bullying** others:

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions

Young people who are **bullied** often:

- Do not get along well with others
- Are less popular
- Have few or no friends
- Are different in some way
- Have low self-esteem
- Are depressed or anxious



Some signs that someone is being **bullied**:

- Unexplained injuries
- Torn or missing clothes
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewellery
- Acts differently than usual
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomach-aches, or feeling sick
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Self-harming
- Loses interest in friends; loses interest in school work or begins doing poorly
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Avoids certain places

# Addressing bullying in schools

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to create a respectful and tolerant school culture that promotes positive discipline and human rights</li> <li>• Encourage social and emotional development and learning</li> <li>• Actively include staff, learners and caregivers</li> <li>• Work with both the targets and perpetrators of bullying to address underlying behaviour</li> <li>• Hold bullies accountable for their actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not adopt simple, short-term interventions e.g. a once-off assembly or in-service training for staff</li> <li>• Do not focus on punishment or zero-tolerance policies</li> <li>• Do not scare learners with frightening videos, overly dramatic statistics or worst-case impacts such as suicide</li> <li>• Do not rely on simplistic slogans or stereotypes</li> </ul>

## Steps to prevent and address bullying

Best practice on bullying suggests several tried and tested steps in preventing and addressing bullying in schools. In keeping with the whole school approach, these include:

- Step 1:**  
**Define bullying.** Develop a comprehensive definition of bullying to guide measures to assess and address bullying. Make sure the definition recognises the many different forms of bullying.
- Step 2:**  
**Assess what is happening.** Use the Educator and Learner Surveys to assess the extent and nature of bullying in the school. The assessment should focus on the WHO, WHAT, WHEN and WHERE, WHY and HOW. You can also use other tools to supplement the School Safety Framework survey, including interviews, mapping of hotspots and teacher rating of learner’s behaviour, to create a comprehensive picture of what is happening.
- Step 3:**  
**Establish or strengthen institutions to coordinate activities.** Integrate bullying into the activities of the school safety committee. Forming a learner advisory group is also useful in spotlighting bullying prevention and members can provide valuable suggestions and feedback to adults. It can also provide student input into the design of anti-bullying policies and interventions and help to raise awareness of them amongst other learners.
- Step 4:**  
**Establish rules and policies.** Work with the School Safety Committee, SGB members, teachers, support staff, representative learner committees and learners to develop simple, clear rules about bullying. Ensure that the school’s Code of Conduct addresses bullying and/or develop specific anti-bullying policies. All policies should carry a clear anti-bullying message and clearly outline roles and responsibilities, procedures for staff and caregivers, how teachers and learners can report bullying, response protocols and consequences for bullies. Make it clear that learners are not only expected not to bully, but also to intervene to stop and/or report bullying. Incorporate bullying into School Safety Plans. Learners should never physically intervene in any altercations where their safety will be compromised – they should rather make it their task to report on incidences.



See Appendix 1 for an example of an anti-bullying policy



### TIP

Engage learners to come up with, design, and implement creative solutions and Interventions. These can include, for example, events and public awareness campaigns to address school climate problems such as cliques, judging, racism, homophobia etc.



### TIP

Encourage learners to report bullying. It is helpful to put up comment boxes where young people can anonymously alert staff to bullying. If your school already has a box, remind learners that they can use them to report bullying. It is important that boxes are in places in which young people can easily access them, but also offer enough privacy for learners to drop in comments without being identified by other learners.

- **Step 5:**  
**Publicise and enforce these rules and policies.** The approved policy should be formally introduced to all learners, teachers and parents to ensure universal awareness of its existence and its key components. Implementing the policy will require continued promotion, support and commitment from all staff, learners and parents.
- **Step 6:**  
**Provide ongoing training on bullying prevention.** Provide school administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff and other school role-players with training on bullying prevention and intervention. Provide ongoing training for new staff, as well as existing staff to ensure that bullying remains in the spotlight, and that interventions keep up with developments in anti-bullying practice.
- **Step 7:**  
**Increase supervision in hot spots where bullying occurs.** Bullying thrives in locations where adults are not present. Look for creative ways to increase adults' presence in identified bullying hot spots, such as hallways, bathrooms and isolated playground areas. Older learners can also be trained to monitor these areas.
- **Step 8:**  
**Deal appropriately with bullying.** Respond consistently and appropriately to bullying incidents. All staff should be able to intervene effectively on the spot to stop bullying. Appropriately trained staff should meet separately with both the target of bullying and the bully to establish what happened and determine the appropriate course of action. Both sets of parents should also be contacted and involved in the response.
- **Step 9:**  
**Focus class time on bullying prevention.** Set aside class time to discuss bullying. Anti-bullying themes and messages should be integrated throughout the school curriculum. The aim should be to change the social norms around bullying. It must become "uncool" to bully, "cool" to help out learners who are bullied, and normal for staff and learners to notice when a child is bullied or left out. Teaching and discussions should equip learners to address bullying problems.
- **Step 10:**  
**Monitor and evaluate.** Review and revise policies and interventions regularly to ensure that they are effective and that they stay relevant to the school and its learners. As with the design of policies and interventions, involve all members of the school community in the review processes. The assessments carried out in Step 1 will provide baseline information against which changes can be measured.



## Tips for caregivers

- **Tip 1:**  
**Familiarise yourself with the school's policies.** Read the school's code of conduct and its anti-bullying policy if there is one.
- **Tip 2:**  
**Talk about bullying with your child.** Help your child know what bullying looks like and feels like, and if they or classmates are being mistreated and bullied. Make sure they know they can talk to you about bullying.
- **Tip 3:**  
**Teach them to report bullying to a trusted adult.** Encourage your child to report bullying. Teach them to be a positive bystander. If they see someone being bullied, they should not watch, laugh or join in, but rather try to stop it and/or tell an adult what they saw or heard.
- **Tip 4:**  
**Model non-violent behaviour.** Model respectful behaviour at home and in your daily interactions with others. Learn about and apply positive as opposed to negative disciplinary methods (see module on Positive Discipline).



## TIP

It is important to provide age appropriate materials and discussions. The key goal of anti-bullying interventions is to teach appropriate social skills to help children develop healthier interpersonal relationships. A generic approach to address bullying for all age groups does not work. Cognitive development and bullying behaviour varies across age groups. Interventions should be developed and tailored to the age of learners and the type of bullying or aggressive behaviours seen in the school.

## Spot-light on E-Safety in schools

**Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)** have a key role to play in education, both within and outside of schools. ICTs such as the internet and cell phones are becoming more and more accessible and provide unprecedented scope to gather, share and manage knowledge. A focus on the negative aspects of ICTs, including cyber bullying, often overshadows the positive aspects, but the advantages of ICTs for education far outweigh the disadvantages. Rather than dismissing ICTs on the grounds of their risks, it is important to manage their use effectively to the benefit of educators and learners.

The Department of Basic Education has developed guidelines on e-Safety, or electronic safety, in schools. These identify the different ICTs used in school communities, suggest strategies to manage their use and identify the different role-players that need to be involved, as well as their responsibilities. The guidelines highlight the need for a whole-school approach, within which schools, educators, learners and parents all have roles to play. Key strategies include:

- Developing a policy to guide the acceptable and appropriate use of ICTs in schools
- Installing antivirus and monitoring software
- Improving document security and the appropriate backing-up of data

It is important to incorporate ICTs into bullying prevention. ICT educator should be involved in developing measures to prevent and address cyber bullying and should be included in the work of the School Safety Committee. Where there is no ICT teacher, the teams should include someone with a working knowledge of ICTs. Alternatively, the school safety officer **MUST** have a working knowledge of cell phones, computers and the internet.

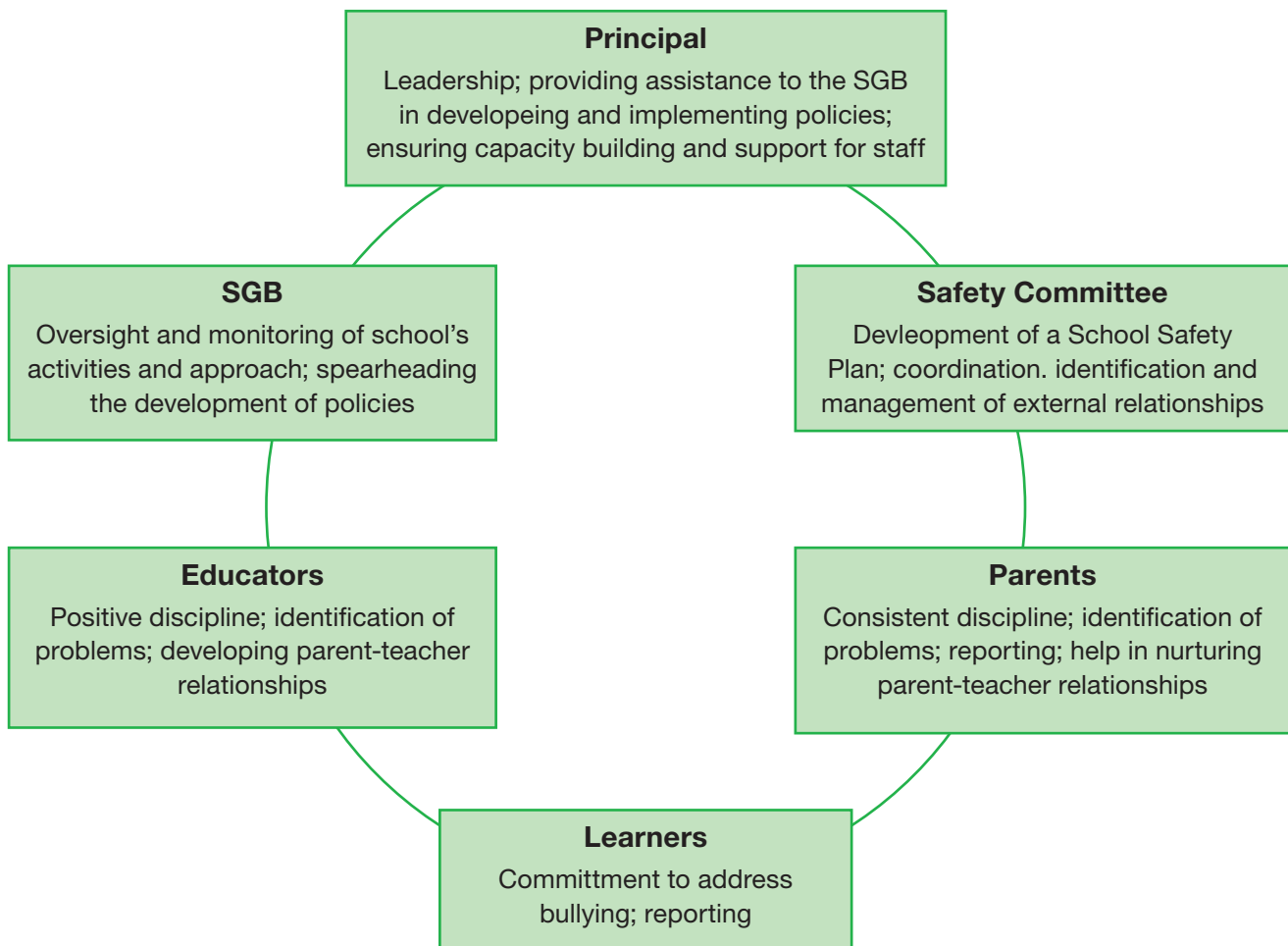
The Guidelines can be accessed at <http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/Default.aspx?alias=www.thutong.doe.gov.za/schoolsafety>



**See Appendix 2 for an example of an acceptable use policy**

# Roles and responsibilities in creating a bully-free environment

All school actors, including non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to watch out for bullying and intervene to address it. Principals, the SGB, teaching staff, the School Safety Committee, learners and parents also have specific responsibilities:

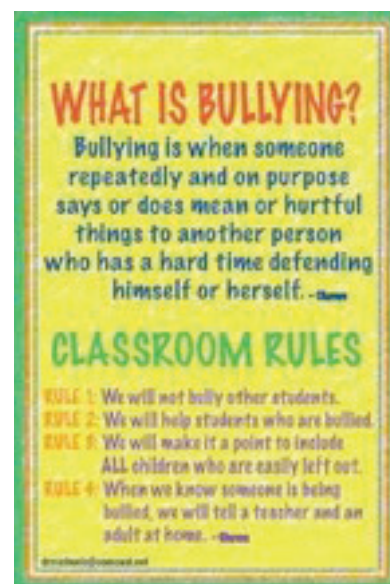




## Tips for teachers

The following strategies can help in both preventing bullying in the classroom and dealing with bullying outside of it.

- **Tip 1:**  
**Create a “Check It at the Door” Policy.** Some call it a “safe space” or “class rules”. Whatever the name, it is important for teachers to create a positive environment for the learners in their class. Post the policy on or outside the classroom door, in a place where learners see it every time they walk in the classroom. Re-printed, paint or recreate it from time to time so that it gets noticed.
- **Tip 2:**  
**Write Everything Down.** Writing things down can not only help to record details but can also help to see patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. Keeping a teacher’s journal can be helpful in preventing bullying in the classroom, both to monitor what is happening and to document incidents so that they can be addressed.
- **Tip 3:**  
**Share bullying experiences.** Children need to know that they are not alone. Provide young people with examples of people who have experienced and overcome bullying. Many celebrities, for example, have openly talked about being bullied. Such stories can give young people hope, and the confidence to tell an adult about bullying.
- **Tip 4:**  
**Be accessible to learners.** It is often easier for children to report bullying when none of their peers is around to hear or see them. Make yourself available to learners. You can post open office hours, for example, where learners know they can come in and discuss issues.







### The Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa

The Department of Basic Education has developed a Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa. This outlines the role that youth should play in building South Africa and their responsibilities with respect to achieving the rights established in South Africa's constitution. Key responsibilities with bearing on bullying include their:

- **Responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom and security of the person:** To not hurt, bully, or intimidate others, or allow others to do so. To solve any conflicts peacefully
- **Responsibility in ensuring the right to equality:** To treat every person equally and fairly. To not discriminate against others on the basis of their race, gender, religion, national-, ethnic- or social origin, disability, culture, language, status or appearance
- **Responsibility in ensuring the right to human dignity:** To treat people with reverence, respect and dignity. To be kind, compassionate and sensitive to every human being, including greeting them warmly and speaking to them courteously
- **Responsibility with respect to education:** To attend school regularly, to learn, and to work hard. To cooperate respectfully with teachers and fellow learners and to adhere to the rules and the Code of Conduct of the school
- **Responsibility in ensuring the right to own property:** To respect the property of others. To take pride in and protect both private and public property, and not to take what belongs to others
- **Responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of expression:** To respect other people's right to freedom of expression. To acknowledge too that there are limits to this freedom, and to never express views that advocate hatred, or are based on prejudices with regard to race, ethnicity, gender or religion

The Bill of Responsibilities provides a useful platform for educators to discuss with learners their rights and responsibilities, particularly with regard to preserving other people's right to dignity, respect and safety. A poster of the full Bill can be accessed on the LeadSA website, at [www.pod945.co.za/podcast/other/BOR/files/POSTER%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.pod945.co.za/podcast/other/BOR/files/POSTER%20FINAL.pdf).



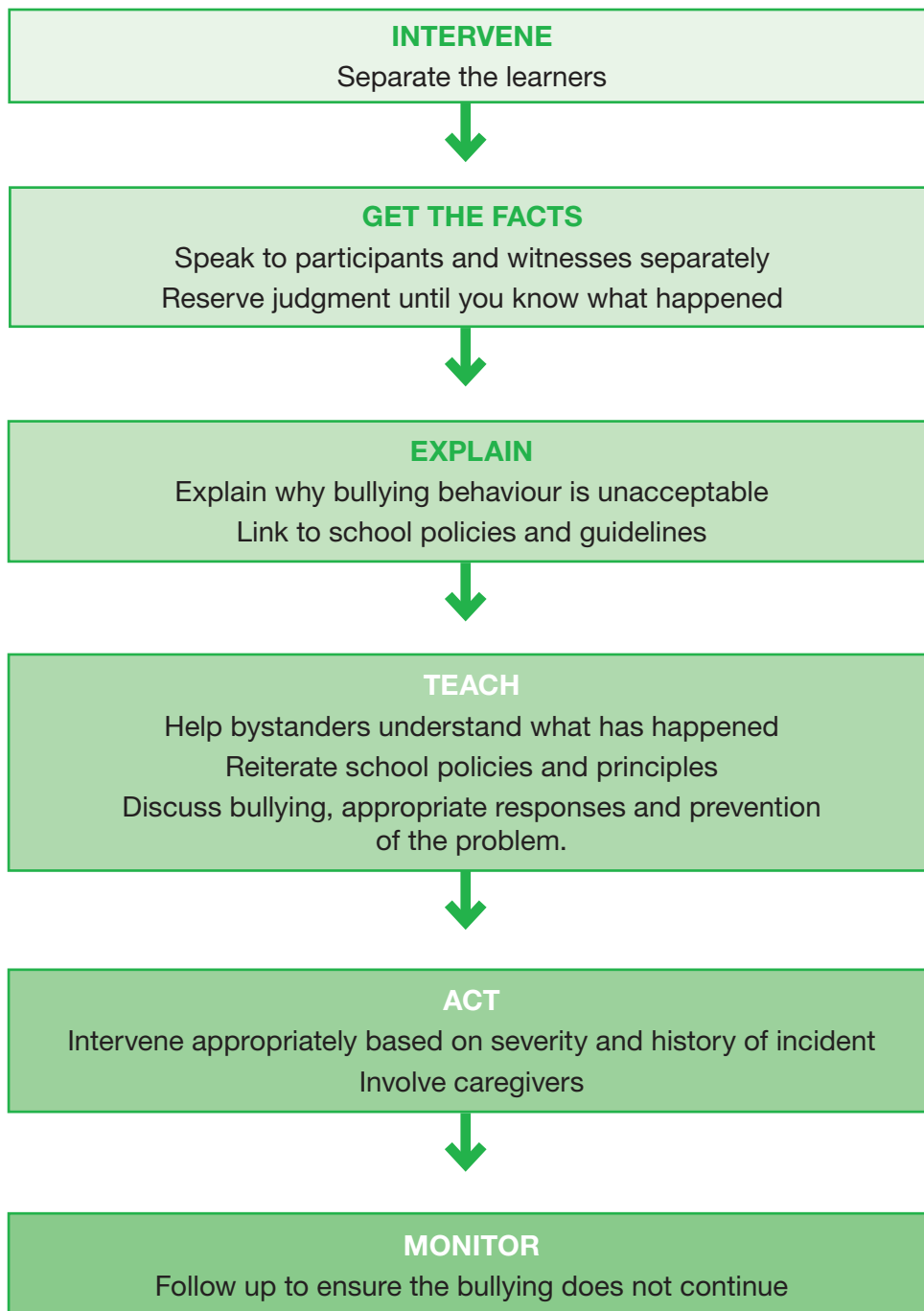
### Tips for engaging with parents

Even though schools need to build bridges between the home and the school in order to address bullying, this is not always easy. These strategies can help educators and others to work with parents and gain their support:

- **Tip 1:**  
**Use school policies as an entry point.** Invite parents to meetings to discuss the Code of Conduct and/or the school's anti-bullying policy, or summarise the key points in a short letter and send these home with the children. Encourage parents to discuss the school and classroom code of conduct with their children and to sign these documents together.
- **Tip 2:**  
**Meet caregivers.** Arrange regular parent-teacher meetings to discuss children's progress, policies and other issues. Arrange home or school visits, especially when you need support of parents or caregivers in addressing issues. Choose convenient times to meet parents, such as after working hours or on a Saturday. Try to find a solution together with the parents and the learner and set up a follow-up meeting to review progress.
- **Tip 3:**  
**Share good news.** Instead of focusing only on problems, make an effort to share good news with parents and caregivers. Phone parents or write a note to inform them about improvements in their child's behaviour, positive behaviour or their academic performance.

# Responding to bullying incidents

There is no set formula for the best way to intervene. It is important to consider a variety of issues, including the safety of the young people involved, the age and gender of the children, the circumstances surrounding the bullying, the form and type of bullying, and the role of bystanders. The following provides a guideline:



## Note:

Punishment does very little to change behaviour. It does not address the root causes of bullying and may sometimes exacerbate bullying. Bullies may retaliate. Both witnesses and victims may also be less inclined to report bullying if the bully is likely to be punished severely, suspended or expelled.

The bully must be held accountable for their actions, but it is also important to focus on understanding and tackling constructively the attitudes and issues that underlie bullying behaviour. Bullies need to understand that bullying is unacceptable, but they also need to understand the impact of their actions, be equipped with the resources and skills to develop more positive behaviour (see Training Module on Positive Discipline in Schools).

Suspending and expelling the learner should be a last report. This should only be considered where other attempts at rehabilitation have failed and in the most severe cases.

## Actor-specific measures during and following a bullying incident

### For the target of bullying

- Check in regularly with the learner who was bullied
- Determine whether the bullying still continues
- Provide a supportive environment
- Review the school rules and policies with the student to ensure they are aware of their rights and protection
- Assess whether additional external assistance is required and make the appropriate referrals

### For bystanders

- Encourage them to talk about the incident
- Review the school rules and policies with the learners
- Discuss with bystanders how they might intervene and/or get help next time
- Acknowledge learners who took action to stop the bullying

### For the bully

- Identify and name the behaviour
- Review the school rules and policies with the student
- Ask for positive change in future behaviour
- Consider referring them for professional or other services as appropriate
- Consider appropriate graduated consequences
- Encourage the student to channel their influence and behaviour into positive leadership roles
- Monitor and check in frequently

### For parents or caregivers

- Describe the incident
- Review the school rules and policies with the caregivers
- Describe the intervention measures taken as appropriate
- Develop a plan to follow-up



### TIP

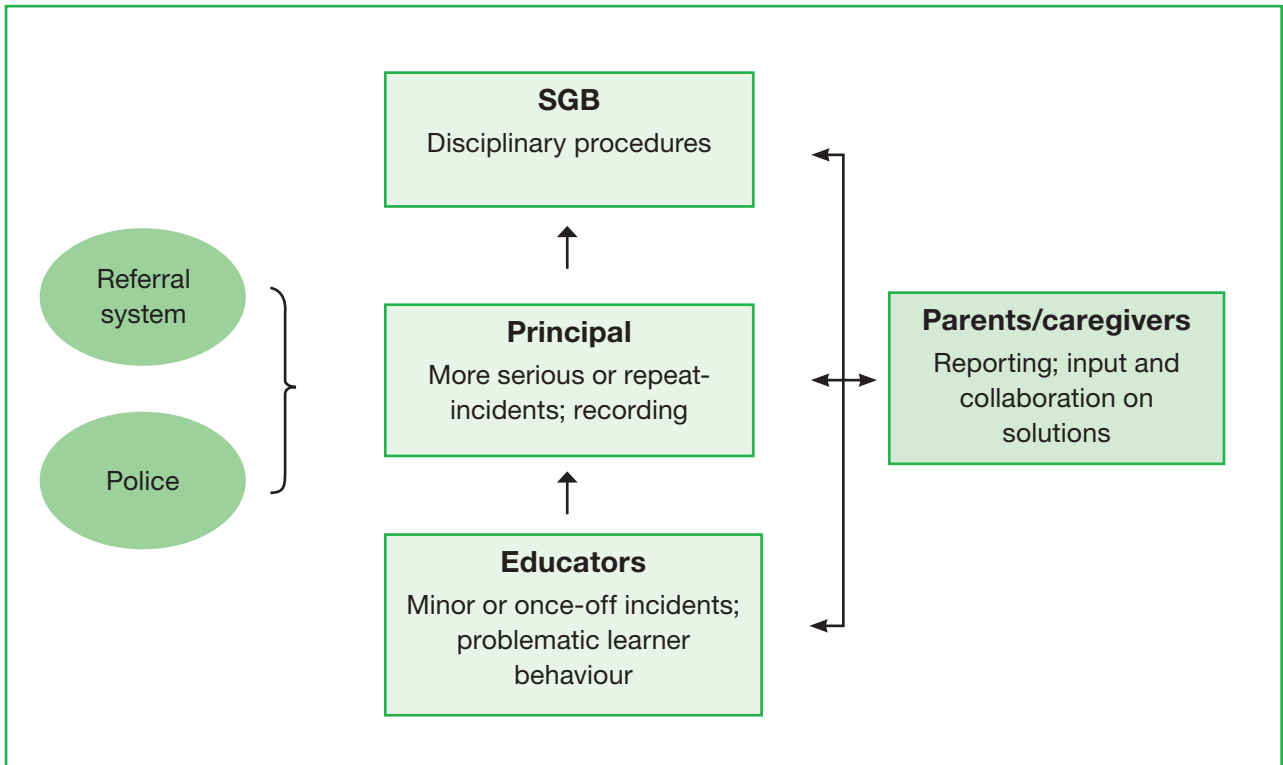
Brainstorm a list of possible actors for a referral system with school staff and the School Safety Team. Possible role-players include local doctors or clinics, counsellors or other mental-health professionals, social workers and youth support groups.

# Roles and responsibilities when responding to incidents



See Appendix 3 for guidelines on assessing and addressing different levels of misconduct

The response to bullying incidents involves different actors, depending on the seriousness. Minor incidents can be dealt with in the classroom or on the playground, but more serious or repeat incidents must involve school authorities and possibly external role-players. The various roles and responsibilities include:



## Responding to bullying: Tips for parents



See Appendix 4 for tips on responding to cyber bullying

### If your child is bullied:

- **Tip 1:** **Make sure that they know that bullying is wrong.** Assure them that bullying is not their fault and that you will act to protect them.
- **Tip 2:** **Ask what happened.** Ask them to describe exactly what happened. Remain calm; show concern but do not over-respond as this may cause them to close-up and stop talking.
- **Tip 3:** **Ask for their input on what can be done to make them feel safe.** Work with them to find solutions. Do not encourage them to fight back; using fists or insults as protection against bullying is not a good solution—it could make things worse, get them hurt and get them into trouble.
- **Tip 4:** **Talk to the school.** See your child’s teacher or the school principal. Encourage your child to come with you and describe what they experienced. Ask how you, the school staff, and your child can work together to ensure that the bullying does not happen again.
- **Tip 5:** **Document bullying.** Write down what happened, where and when it occurred, how your child reacted, and how the bully and bystanders responded. Indicate what solutions were agreed upon and if they worked.
- **Tip 6:** **Help your child develop strategies and skills in handling bullying.** There are many different things they can do, including being more assertive, ignoring, using humour to diffuse tensions, and asking for help.

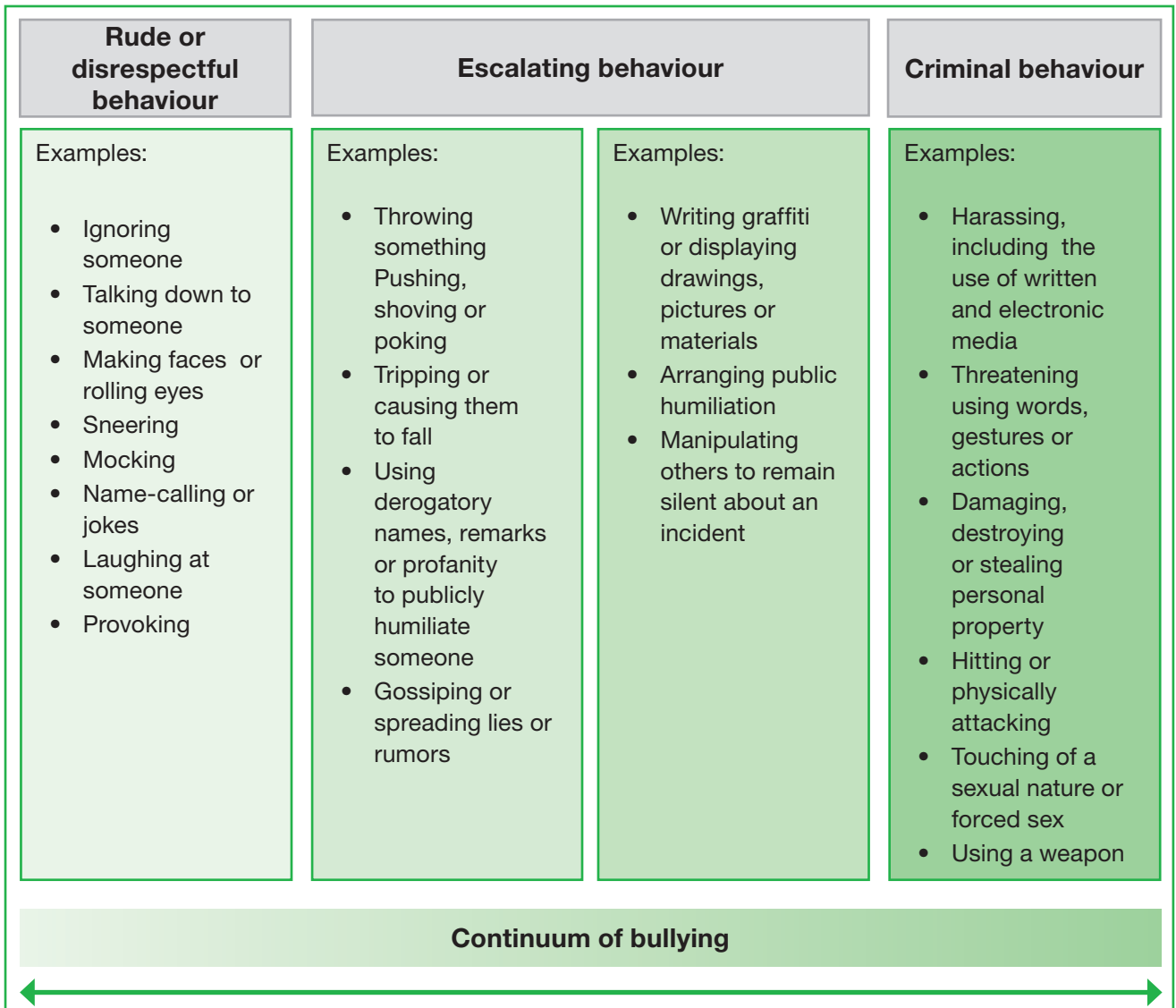
### If your child is bullying others:

- **Tip 1:** **Listen.** Be objective and listen carefully. Do not get defensive, nor take it personally.
- **Tip 2:** **Talk to your child.** Calmly ask for an explanation. Find out if your child was the instigator or joined in.
- **Tip 3:** **Explain that bullying is unacceptable.** Ask your child if they know that bullying is unacceptable. Help them to understand how bullying hurts not only the victim, but also them and bystanders.
- **Tip 4:** **Work to find solutions.** Work with the school to determine what can be done to ensure that the bullying does not happen again. Let your child know that you will work with the school personnel to monitor their progress. Ask to be kept informed.

# When does bullying become a criminal issue?

Bullying incidents can usually be placed on a continuum from rude and disrespectful behaviour, to very serious occurrences that involve threatened or actual physical or sexual attacks, damage to property, theft and weapon use, all of which can justify the laying of criminal charges:

Bullying should very seldom escalate to serious, potentially criminal behaviour. Bullying tends to be an escalating behaviour. It generally starts with minor incidents involving undesirable conduct, which left unchecked progresses to more serious behaviour. If schools and the school community take bullying seriously, and intervene decisively to address it early on, it should rarely reach the point where it becomes criminal behaviour.



# Glossary

Censor	Examine and edit information to remove harmful or undesirable content.
Gender	Gender norms refer to the socially prescribed attitudes and behaviour and roles given to men and women. Gender is not the same as sex. While 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females, 'gender' is about what society expects from males and females.
Generic	A blueprint, unspecialised, one-size-fits-all approach or policy.
Homophobia	A fear, anger or dislike of people who are homosexual or towards homosexuality.
Information Communication Technologies	Refers to any communication device or application, including radio, television, cellular phones, and computer and network hardware and software and their uses, such as videoconferencing and distance learning.
Model	Refers to behaving the way you would like children to behave, or providing children with an example to be copied or compared.
Norms	Refer to rules of behaviour in a society or group. They tend to reflect the values of the group and specify those behaviours and actions that are proper and those that are inappropriate, and how the group rewards or punishes adherence and non-adherence. Gender norms, for example, often expect men to be strong and masculine, while women are expected to be more submissive and feminine.
Positive discipline	A non-violent disciplinary strategy geared toward reducing and improving poor behaviour by rewarding positive behaviour rather than punishing negative behaviour.
Slurs	A slur refers to insinuations or allegations about someone that is likely to insult them or damage their reputation.

# Appendix 1:

## An example of an anti-bullying policy

### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere that fosters knowledge and promotes respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. It will not be tolerated.

#### Objectives of this Policy

This policy outlines the school's position on bullying and establishes the procedures and processes for responding to bullying incidents. The specific objectives of the policy include:

- Support other school rules, code of conduct, policies and programmes in ensuring a caring, friendly and safe environment for all learners
- Assist in creating a climate in which the school governing body (SGB), educators, non-teaching staff and learners are informed about bullying, understand the various types of bullying that can occur and are empowered to report it and act against it
- Assist in creating a climate in which parents and caregivers are informed about bullying, understand the various types of bullying that can occur and are empowered to report it and act against it
- Establish the framework and procedures for dealing consistently and effectively to all cases of bullying

#### What Is Bullying?

Bullying comprises repeatedly singling out and deliberately hurting or harming a child with the aim of hurting or harming them physically or psychologically. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying takes many different forms. These include:

- **Physical bullying:** This includes hitting, pushing, slapping, tripping, or pulling someone's hair, as well as forcibly taking another child's lunch, money or things
- **Verbal bullying:** This includes threats, insults, ridiculing, name-calling and making racist or sexual slurs
- **Non-verbal bullying:** Includes writing hurtful messages, letters or graffiti, or distributing pictures and videos that shame, hurt or damage a child's reputation
- **Social bullying:** Includes gossiping, spreading rumours, leaving people out on purpose and breaking up friendships
- **Sexual bullying:** Includes passing inappropriate notes, jokes, pictures, taunts and starting rumours of a sexual nature. It can also involve uninvited touching and forced sexual behaviour
- **Cyber bullying:** This includes using the internet, mobile phones or other electronic technologies to insult and harass, spread rumours, damage children's reputations, and distribute harmful videos and pictures.



## Why is it important to address bullying?

- Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Learners need to be empowered with the knowledge and skills to prevent and deal with bullying.
- It is the school's responsibility to ensure that learners who are bullied receive help support and assistance they need
- It is also the school's responsibility to discipline the perpetrators of bullying and support them in learning different and appropriate ways of behaving.

## Rights and responsibilities

Every learner in this school has the right to:

- Learn, work and play without fear of being hurt emotionally or physically
- Be happy and free to play with friends
- Feel a sense of belonging, acceptance and friendship
- Be included in class and playground activity
- Be treated politely and with respect by others
- Ask for bullying to stop and ask for help if it does not.

Every learner has the responsibility to:

- Be respectful and friendly to others without discrimination
- Co-operate with others in school activities
- Report behaviour that may constitute bullying.

Every educator and staff member has the responsibility to:

- Treat children with dignity and respect and help to create an respectful school environment that promotes human rights
- To monitor children's behaviour and note and investigate behaviour that may signal bullying
- Intervene immediately in cases of suspected bullying
- Report all bullying incidents for further action.

Every parent or caregiver has the responsibility to:

- Report suspected bullying to the school authorities
- Work with school authorities in cases of bullying and follow school procedures on responding to bullying.

The school governing body has the responsibility to:

- Deal decisively with bullying when it occurs
- Ensure that procedures and processes are followed consistently and fairly
- In line with the South African Schools Act, initiate and steer disciplinary procedures in cases of serious misconduct.

## Procedures

Class teachers are responsible for dealing with minor or once-off incidents or problematic learner behaviour and relationships. More serious incidents should be reported to the school principal for further action. Once an incident is reported, the principal should:

- Interview separately the learners involved and witnesses to establish what happened
- Inform both children's parents or caregivers of the incident and call a meeting to discuss the incident and the way forward
- Determine the appropriate intervention and sanctions
- Report the incident to the SGB where appropriate
- Provide the bullied child with the necessary help and support, including referrals to counselling or other services where necessary
- Monitor the learners involved to ensure that the bullying does not continue
- Make a record of the incident to support monitoring and any future intervention.

## Outcomes

The school's response to all reported incidents of bullying will be sensitive and the consequences will be determined by the severity of the bullying, the age of the learners and the history of the incident. Possible consequences (in no particular order) include:

- Requiring the bullying to apologise verbally or in writing to the victim
- A verbal or written warning
- Detention
- Establishing a behavioural contract
- Referral to a counsellor
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Community service
- A formal disciplinary process

Wherever possible, measures will have a rehabilitative component aimed at addressing problem-behaviour.

## Signatories

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 2: An Example of an Acceptable ICT Use Policy

## Information and Communications Technology Acceptable Use Policy

### Learner Guidelines for Internet Use

#### General

Learners are responsible for good behaviour on the internet just as they are in a classroom or a school corridor. General school rules apply.

The internet, primarily, is provided for learners to conduct research and backup their work. Parents/carer's permission is required before a learner is granted access. Access is a privilege, not a right and that access requires responsibility.

Individual users of the internet are responsible for their behaviour and communications over the network. Users must comply with school standards and honour the agreements they have signed.

Computer storage areas (including any external storage media you bring to school) will be treated like school lockers. Staff may review files and communications to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on servers or storage media are always private.

During school, teachers will guide learners towards appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear responsibility for such guidance as they must also exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio and other potentially offensive media.

The following are not permitted within the school environment:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures.
- Using obscene language.
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others.
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks.
- Violating copyright laws.
- Using others' passwords or accounts.
- 'Hacking' into others' folders, work or files for any reason.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources, including printer ink and paper.

#### Sanctions

- Violations of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on internet/computer use.
- Your parents/carers will be informed.
- Additional disciplinary action may be added in line with existing practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.
- When applicable, police or local authorities may be involved.
- If necessary, external agencies such as Social Networking or Email Member sites may be contacted and informed.

## Learners

- You must have your parent's / carer's permission before using the internet.
- You must have a supervising teacher or member of staff with you at all times when using the internet.
- Do not disclose any password or login name to anyone, other than the persons responsible for running and maintaining the system.
- Do not upload/send personal addresses, telephone / fax numbers or photographs of anyone (staff or learner) at the school.
- Use of names of learners, or photographs of learners will require parents to have been informed about such use.
- Do not download, use or upload any material that is copyright. Always seek permission from the owner, before using any material from the internet. If in doubt, do not use the material.
- Under no circumstances should you view, upload or download any material that is likely to be unsuitable for children. This applies to any material of a violent dangerous or inappropriate context. If you are unsure ask the supervisor.
- Always respect the privacy of files of other users.
- Be polite and appreciate that other users might have different views than your own. The use of strong language, swearing or aggressive behaviour is not allowed. Do not state anything that could be interpreted as libel.
- Ensure that you have followed the correct procedures for using the internet.
- Report any incident that breaches these rules to the I.T. Network Manager or Co-ordinator of ICT.

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I have read and agree to abide by the rules stated in the I.C.T. Acceptable Use Policy. I understand the consequences if I do not.

Name: ..... Grade: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Source: Digizen, Safe To Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools.  
Available at <http://old.digizen.org/cyberbullying/fullguidance/resources/caseexample.aspx>.

## Appendix 3: Guidelines on assessing and dealing with misconduct

Levels	Examples of misbehaviour	Examples of consequences
<p><b>Level 1: Misbehaviour inside the classroom</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: The class teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lateness/bunking</li> <li>• incomplete homework</li> <li>• not responding to instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• verbal warnings</li> <li>• extra work related to offence</li> <li>• stay in class to complete work after school</li> <li>• making amends</li> <li>• community service</li> <li>• classroom chores, e.g. sweeping</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 2: Misbehaviour by breaking rules</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Senior staff member</p> <p>Parental involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• smoking</li> <li>• graffiti</li> <li>• dishonesty</li> <li>• abusive language</li> <li>• disrupting class work</li> <li>• leaving school without permission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written warnings</li> <li>• disciplinary talk with learner</li> <li>• signing a behaviour contract with learner</li> <li>• talking with their caregivers</li> <li>• daily behaviour report signed by teacher and learner</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 3: Serious misbehaviour or violation of school codes</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Principal</p> <p>Parental involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inflicting minor injury on others</li> <li>• being racist, sexist or discriminatory</li> <li>• vandalism, stealing or cheating</li> <li>• possessing dangerous weapons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written warning of noting that the learner could be suspended</li> <li>• referral to social worker or counsellor</li> <li>• community service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 4: Very serious misbehaviour or violation of school rules</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Principal and school governing body (SGB)</p> <p>Involvement of parents, social work services and the South African Police Service (SAPS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• threats using dangerous weapon/s</li> <li>• causing intentional limited injury to others</li> <li>• engaging in sexual activities</li> <li>• possessing, selling or using alcohol/drugs</li> <li>• forging documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refer learner for counselling</li> <li>• apply to education department for limited suspension from all school activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 5: Criminal acts which violate school codes and breach the law</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Principal, SGB and provincial education department</p> <p>Involvement of parents, social work services and the SAPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual harassment, abuse, rape or assault</li> <li>• robbery, stealing or burglary</li> <li>• using a dangerous weapon</li> <li>• murder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply to education department for expulsion or transfer of learner</li> <li>• allow for civil or criminal prosecution</li> </ul>

Source: RAPCAN, 2008; Western Cape Education Department, 2007

## Appendix 4:

# Tips for Parents and Carers on Cyber Bullying

When a child is the target of cyber bullying – bullying via mobile phone or the internet – they can feel alone and very misunderstood. It is therefore vital that as a parent or carer you know how to support your child if they are caught up in cyber bullying. This short guide will help you.

## PREVENT CYBER BULLYING

### Where to start

The best way to deal with cyber bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Although it may be uncomfortable to accept, you should be aware that your child might as likely cyber-bully as be a target of cyber bullying and that sometimes children get caught up in cyber bullying simply by not thinking about the consequences of what they are doing. It is therefore crucial that you talk with your children and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone. In this guide there is an anti-cyber bullying code which contains seven key messages for children, which you may find a helpful starting point for a discussion with them about issues, such as being careful about posting images on personal websites and where to go to get help.

### Use the tools

Most software and services on the internet have in-built safety features. Knowing how to use them can prevent unwanted contact. For example, Instant Messenger (IM) services such as MSN Messenger have features that allow users to block others on their contact list and conversations can be saved on most Instant Messenger services. Social networking sites such as MySpace also have tools available – young people can keep their profile set to ‘private’, for example, so that only approved friends can see it.

With bullies using text and picture messaging, it is also important to check with your children’s internet or mobile phone provider to find out what protections they can offer, including whether it is possible to change your mobile number.

## RESPONDING TO CYBER BULLYING

It is vital that you have strategies to help your child if they come to you saying that they are being cyber bullied.

### Educate

Start by teaching your children the Seven Tips for Learners. This includes advice on not replying or retaliating to cyber bullying, as well as not assisting a cyber-bully by forwarding a message, even as a joke.

### Keep the evidence

Keeping the evidence of cyber bullying is helpful when reporting an incident and may help in identifying the bully. This means keeping copies of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.

## Reporting cyber bullying

There are a number of organisations that can help you if you need to report incidents of cyber bullying:

- The school: If the incident involves a learner or learners at your child's school, then it is important to let the school know.
- The provider of the service: Most service providers have complaints and abuse policies and it is important to report the incident to the provider of the service - i.e. the mobile phone operator, the instant messenger provider (e.g. MSN Messenger, Blackberry Messenger, Yahoo), or the social network provider (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, or MXit). Most responsible service providers will have a 'Report Abuse' or a nuisance call bureau, and these can provide information and advice on how to help your child.
- The police: If the cyber bullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed you should consider contacting the police. Relevant criminal offences here include harassment and stalking, threats of harm or violence to a person or property, any evidence of sexual exploitation, for example grooming, distribution of sexual images or inappropriate sexual contact or behaviour.

Source: Digizen, Safe To Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools.  
Available at:

[http://old.digizen.org/cyber\\_bullying/fullguidance/resources/default.aspx](http://old.digizen.org/cyber_bullying/fullguidance/resources/default.aspx)

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