

## Bias-based bullying

### What is it?

Bullying is often based on bias that stems from difference or perceived difference. A person can be bullied about many different things such as how they look, sound or speak; their background, religion, race or culture including Aboriginality; having a disability; their sex; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex, their size or body shape or any other ways they may be seen to be different.

### Who is affected by bias-based bullying?

Anyone can become the subject of bullying that is based on bias. We know that students who are involved in bullying behaviour - either as the person being bullied, the person bullying others or the bystanders - are at higher risk of behavioural, emotional and academic problems.

A supportive school community works together to develop a positive whole-school culture that values diversity and consistently reinforces the message that bullying is not acceptable.

### Preventing bias-based bullying

Preventive actions include planning initiatives that promote and support diversity, and specifically identifying any biased-based issues within the school community.

A large body of research indicates that although bullying is a difficult problem, it can be reduced through school-based interventions. Program planning should involve teachers, students, parents and carers, and specifically educate students about positive social interactions, anti-discrimination, conflict resolution and power in relationships.

Teachers play a vital role by creating safe, respectful and supportive classroom environments that help to reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour occurring. Early intervention and targeted support are essential for building and maintaining a safe environment. Identifying 'at risk' students is the first step in developing strategies, providing ongoing support and monitoring needs.

### Responding to bias-based bullying

Bias-based bullying can be reduced by explicitly teaching safe and effective ways for students to respond if and when bullying occurs.

Teaching students to be supportive bystanders (upstanders) is a powerful strategy to reduce and prevent bullying.

It is important that when bias-based bullying occurs, the bias is recognised, named and challenged. For example, it may be stated that the bullying is based on racism, sexism or homophobia with discussion on why this behaviour is offensive. Consult with the affected students when planning how the situation will be managed, and regularly follow up progress.

### Professional Learning

Staff professional learning builds the capacity of educators to maintain positive whole-school and classroom environments and to identify opportunities for early intervention. It also helps staff respond effectively with appropriate programs and strategies.

### More information

NSW anti-bullying website [www.antibullying.nsw.gov.au](http://www.antibullying.nsw.gov.au)

Bullying. No Way! Website [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

Office of the eSafety Commissioner website [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)