What is bullying and harassment?

Bullying and harassment occur when people use and abuse power to trouble, annoy or oppress a person.

As many as 20 per cent of students in Australian schools have experienced bullying and harassment. The real figure may be even higher, because many problems are not reported.

Bullying and harassment can often be based on perceptions about differences such as

- culture
- ethnicity
- gender
- sexuality
- economic status

- sexual orientation
- ability or disability
- economic status
- religion

- body size
- physical appearance
- age
- marital status

Bullying and harassment can...

- come in many forms for example:
  physical bullying: being hit, tripped, kicked, pinched etc
  verbal bullying: being called names, teased, put down etc
  psychological bullying: being threatened, stalked, gestures etc
  social bullying: being ignored, having rumours spread about you, excluding someone etc
  sexual bullying: unwanted touching or brushing against someone, picking on someone because of their sexual orientation etc
  cyber bullying: insulting someone in chat rooms, sending cruel or threatening emails/text messages; using the web, chat rooms or mobile phones to spread rumours or information about someone etc
- be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge
- make people feel threatened
- continue over time
- be hidden from adults
- continue if adults and peers take no action.

I WOULDN'T BULLY ANYONE! Whether we're younger, older, an adult, a friend, we can all be bullied or use our power to bully and harass others. Bullying and harassment can...

"To be bullied and harassed is not a good feeling, especially when you wake up in the morning and dread going to school because of the fear of being picked on."
...Year 9 student

Your rights

We all have the right to learn in a safe and supportive school environment that values diversity - an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.

We all have the right to be treated with fairness and dignity.

We all have a responsibility to keep others safe and to treat them in the same way - with fairness, dignity and respect.

Creating change

Creating a socially just and equitable school community where everyone is safe, supported and respected requires an integrated approach. This is a coordinated effort that engages and empowers the whole school community in long-term sustainable change while effectively identifying and responding to potential situations and managing specific incidents.

Approaches

Three broad approaches can be combined to suit each school community's situation.
- Collaborative and reflective approaches
  - Behavioural approaches
    - Individual approaches

Bringing it together

Using behavioural and individual approaches alone is not enough. Reflecting on the issues helps create school communities in which the members feel valued and respected.

http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/issues/change.shtml