

**Bullying behaviour in schools.**  
**Towards Better Understandings and Practice.**

By

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## **Abstract**

This study of school bullying provides an overview of the development of international anti-bullying initiatives, an in-depth analysis of the state of anti-bullying approaches in New Zealand and a description of the impact of such approaches on the behaviour in one secondary school community.

Its findings endorse the use of effective, school-based, anti-bullying interventions, in particular, those developed in Scandinavia and Britain during the last twenty years. The efforts to combat bullying in New Zealand are reviewed. While some New Zealand programmes are found to be effective, the anti-bullying initiatives of the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office are found wanting, as is their failure to respond effectively to the growing public concern over bullying.

A number of anti-bullying interventions undertaken within one school community are evaluated. While generally found to reduce bullying, the limitations of these interventions became evident when one class group was viewed in greater depth in a study which discovered an entrenched bullying 'culture' and provided insights into the bullying dynamic.

The communication difficulties experienced when a small number of powerful individuals capture the dynamics of power and abuse, and in effect establish the relationship style for the whole group, are then highlighted. As a result of the understandings gained through this classroom-based study, a number of conclusions are developed about the importance of the role played by leaders, both teacher and pupil.

## Chapter 1

### *1.1 Why I have chosen to study bullying*

I have been a teacher in various capacities for twenty-three years. As a practitioner and administrator there are several issues that have been of growing concern to me. Of these, bullying moved to the top of my list five years ago. The more I read and studied bullying, the more concerned I became that the understandings and successful initiatives developed by academics were not being widely adopted by practitioners. This reading, a study tour to Britain<sup>1</sup> and action-based research in my own school, clearly showed that carefully implemented programmes were effective. As my understanding of the nature and impact of bullying grew, I became increasingly aware of important linkages between the mainly psychologically based anti-bullying research (Olweus, Smith etc.) and educational research into effective schooling (Fullan 1991, Hargreaves 1994 etc.). These linkages relate to the importance of a feeling of community and the need for individuals to feel responsibility for the welfare of that community. In addition, both Fullan and Hargreaves stress the importance of co-operative learning environments. Rather than being an important, but essentially discrete area of behavioural research, the anti-bullying work was clearly coming up with approaches and understandings that complemented contemporary educational thinking. Despite this crossover and the diversity of anti-bullying programmes available, I was concerned that they were not being widely adopted by New Zealand schools and, where used, were not being well implemented.

On my return from Britain in 1995 I was asked by a number of schools and organisations (Deputy and Assistant Principal Association, Auckland Safe

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<sup>1</sup> In 1994 the British Council in New Zealand selected me as one of three recipients of Nuffield Travel Bursaries. In early 1995, I used the bursary to travel to Britain, visiting Sheffield, Dundee, Glasgow, Cardiff, Bristol and London. There I attended conferences and discussed bullying with researchers and teachers.

Schools Association, Rotary Clubs) to share my findings with them using a seminar format. Encouraged and heartened by the response, particularly from fellow teachers, I developed a range of in-service courses, from one-hour presentations to two-day seminars, aimed at raising the awareness of New Zealand teachers about the nature of bullying. The popularity and response to these presentations was gratifying. Participants reported that they appreciated the way the seminars related academic findings to their classroom experiences. They reported a willingness to tackle bullying behaviour in their schools as a direct result of these sessions. These seminars, (more than fifty over the last four years) exposed me to hundreds of fellow practitioners who shared their stories and bullying experiences with me.

It became evident from the seminars that the whole school, anti-bully, approach process<sup>2</sup> was in itself a very important professional development opportunity for managing school-wide change. While the whole school approach had been advocated strenuously for a number of years, particularly within the New Zealand 'Tomorrow's School's' Self-Management orthodoxy, it appeared that few colleagues or schools had successfully used the process. The complexity of most school change projects was a key factor in slow adoption of the process. Targeting bullying behaviour provided an opportunity for the measurement of a discrete, measurable change that would encourage schools to embark on other whole school projects. Anti-bullying work also had the advantage of clearly improving the whole social environment for the pupils and consequently providing a strengthening of the school community, which could only enhance learning (Barth 1990, Fullan 1991, Hargreaves 1994).

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<sup>2</sup> The whole school approach, described in detail in Chapter two, is a change process where all members of the school community are actively involved. It begins with the development of a common definition of the issue being dealt with and concludes with united action.



While conducting the seminars, I was introducing a variety of anti-bullying approaches into my own school drawing inspiration initially from the *Kia Kaha* programme, my own research and what I had seen in Britain.

The indications of the success of the school-based interventions, the popularity of the seminars and a desire to test my personal experiences to see whether they could be of value to the wider school community, encouraged me to formalise my knowledge by pursuing a research qualification. This study is the result of this decision.

Reflection upon my practice and wide reading has allowed me to make some sense of the complexities of school bullying. Although bullying may originate outside the school, when it occurs in school, it is the school's responsibility to stop it re-occurring and worsening. A successful intervention is one which recognises both the key role of the individual class and its teacher and the empowering impact a bully free culture should have on learning.

### **Aims of the study**

In preparation for this study, in 1997 I enrolled for and successfully completed a post-graduate research methodology paper taught by the School of Education at Massey University<sup>3</sup>. This exposure to academic research methods allowed me to establish a framework for my existing knowledge and understandings of bullying. In undertaking a Masters thesis at Victoria University in Wellington, I wanted to put together a study that would formalise my own knowledge and place it within an academic context. I also hoped that my insights and experiences would be of some use to the wider educational community.

The study operates on several levels. Initially it reviews a significant section of

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<sup>3</sup> I had completed a postgraduate diploma in educational leadership (Dip.Ed.Lead) at Massey University, 1996. This three year part-time course had included a research project that evaluated the introduction of *Kia Kaha* into my school. (Cleary 1993)

the existing literature on bullying and traces the development of strategies and interventions for dealing with bullying both internationally and in New Zealand. It then considers the case of one school where a range of anti-bullying measures was implemented. The study concludes with the story of a group of pupils who shared their recollections of bullying in one junior secondary school class.

In brief, the study aims to:

1. Review the international literature.
2. Describe the state of New Zealand anti-bullying initiatives.
3. Present a range of school based initiatives in action.
4. Examine the impact of bullying on a group of pupils who had experienced a bullying culture.

### **Motivation**

I was motivated by a developing belief that dealing with the whole bullying dynamic was far more important than the typical school-based practice which was limited to either protecting the victims of school bullying or having them accept responsibility for the actions of the bullies and changing their actions. My view is that bullying is a complex behaviour. People can only bully if the other members of the social group allow it to happen. Unless an intervention addresses the complexity of the existing social relationships, it will be superficial and will probably fail. The literature makes it clear that bullying has the potential to create enormous lifelong damage for the victims (Olweus 1984, Cullingford & Morrison 1995, Robinson & Maines 1997). (Young bullies establish destructive relationship habits that may stay with them for a lifetime and get them into trouble, while many victims, humiliated by the behaviour and their inability to counter it, are likely to be insecure and distrustful in subsequent relationships.) The approaches advocated by many of the anti-bullying experts stress the importance of pupil-empowered solutions (Olweus, 1993, Smith and Sharp, 1994, Maines and Robinson, 1994 etc). These approaches were designed to assist in the development of assertive, pupil-based schools where bullying was easily identified and rejected, not through sanctions, but because the pupils

understood the real potential damage of the behaviour.

Clearly, schools and teachers that developed genuine 'bully-free' environments were helping to establish school cultures that were enabling, positive and pupil centred. In many ways I felt that anti-bullying initiatives, while primarily focused on outlawing bullying, could also be a powerful tool to positively change schools' cultures. When the initiatives are successful; the change is focussed, specific and manageable. They also contribute towards a safe environment where successful and genuine pupil learning can easily take place.

In light of concerns over teacher workload<sup>4</sup> and not wanting to add yet another job on over-worked colleagues, there was also a strong desire to link anti-bullying practice with effective teaching. It was important to communicate that working to prevent bullying was a positive and effective way of making teaching easier.

Due to the pioneering work in Scandinavia (Olweus 1978) and the extensive replications carried out elsewhere (Dickinson 1992, Smith & Sharp 1994, Rigby 1996) there is a high degree of consensus amongst academics as to the nature and occurrence of bullying. Work in New Zealand (Maxwell & Carroll-Lind 1997, Adair et al 1998) clearly shows that levels of violence and bullying here are certainly as high as, if not higher than, in other international settings. While further replication will certainly add to our knowledge, New Zealand practitioners have other needs beyond statistical confirmation of the incidence of bullying. While policy development would be assisted with more quantitative information there is a more pressing need to heighten the awareness of New

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<sup>4</sup> Several New Zealand researchers (Wylie; 1997, Sullivan; 1994) argue that our teachers are currently overworked, that they are being inundated with a plethora of new tasks, information and initiatives (Fullan; 1998).

Zealand teachers to the destructive power of a bullying culture and the positive impact on learning that follows the adoption of a comprehensive anti-bullying programme.

The research describes the development of school anti-bullying initiatives and suggests that in New Zealand there has been no effective strategy to challenge the behaviour on a national scale. By describing the impact of a bullying culture on a class group, my purpose was to illustrate the huge potential effective anti-bullying programmes have to address what is lost when schools fail to recognise and effectively deal with the presence of this bullying culture.

## ***1.2 Methodology***

### **The role of the researcher**

I have been a full participant observer in the research, initially as the Deputy Principal and latterly the Principal of the school community that is central to the fieldwork of the thesis. Although I was sometimes on leave (overseas or working at the university), I continued to be involved in the school. The focus group I interviewed recognised me as the initiator of many of the anti-bullying strategies that have been introduced during the previous five years, and were aware that I was to return to the school at the completion of the research. The identities of the classes and individual practitioners have been protected.

Much of the research is based on actions and events from the four years (1994-1997) when I was fully involved in the setting. A key task of the deputy principal is to ensure that a positive and safe learning environment is established and maintained and to ensure that the 'discipline' structures are effective and fair. I also assumed a responsibility for dealing with bullying, attempting to develop a high profile as one of the people pupils were to contact if they were being bullied, or were aware of others being bullied.

My research approach has combined elements of several methodologies. I have

been a full participant in the school-based section of the research and am clearly, in part at least, studying my own practice and that of fellow staff members and pupils who helped me identify problems and find solutions. This school-based research has most of the elements of 'action research'; I am the insider, documenting my own practice and developing my skills as a reflective practitioner (Zeni, 1998). On the other hand, the class case study pushes the research into the field of 'classroom ethnography'. Using a mixture of observation, statistical information and pupils' stories, I have been able to develop an understanding of the classroom dynamics involved in bullying. It has proved impossible for me to pretend to be an outside, qualitative researcher, 'peering into the shadows into the classroom' (Zeni, 10).

The central methodology is qualitative, supplemented by a range of quantitative research approaches. As a teacher/administrator I am engaged in action research while the use of the stories of the young people involved in bullying incidents clearly involves the methodology of the classroom ethnographer. The approach taken largely mirrors 'action research' as my initial motivation was to improve practice. My response to the identified problem; bullying, was considered (research), and on taking action, I evaluated the effectiveness of the response. I then sought to improve practice in the light of new information. This process is described in current action research literature as being a spiral of continuous improvement (Zeni, 1998).

As a reflective practitioner, it has only been through daily contact with pupils who have bullied, been bullied and who have allowed bullying to happen, that I have been able to conduct this study and most importantly develop my understanding and insight of the behaviour. At all times, my studies have been firmly grounded by the desire to find practical solutions for young people who are unlucky enough to find themselves in a peer group, class, year level or school where a bullying culture has been allowed to develop.

The pupils who have been involved in bullying relationships are given a voice to express how the behaviour impacted on them. By using the case study approach, the individuals are able to share the hurt that the isolation produced. In the main case study the 'story' of the experiences of a group of young people provides a powerful anti-bullying message.

### ***1.3 Reflective Practice***

Clearly, the position I have assumed during the research has been very close to that described in research methodology literature as that of the reflective practitioner. A more detailed examination of this qualitative, 'insider' viewpoint is thus warranted.

Reflective practice, an evolving approach, is variously described as an ongoing, cyclical process, which commences in response to a problem and aims to both change and improve teaching. (Dewey, 1933; Copeland et al., 1993; Pollard, 1996; Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Zeichner & Liston, (1996) provide what seems to me to be a clear description of my situation:

Reflective action is also a process that involves more than logical and rational problem-solving processes. Reflection involves intuition, emotion, and passion and is not something that can be neatly packaged as a set of techniques for teachers to use.

(P 9)

Identifying 'intuition, emotion and passion' as elements in the process made me conscious that my involvement in anti-bullying research was motivated by far more than a technical interest in a piece of educational research. Illustrating this point of view, Zeichner & Liston, (1996) comment that 'teacher intention' is a core ingredient of the reflective process. Teachers reflect because they want to

'promote high quality learning'. In linking the process with the concept of 'sense-making', Dewey, (1933), described reflective thinking as 'as a problem solving process which draws on tacit knowledge'.

Zeichner & Liston (1996) also identify three qualities in the reflective practitioner: open-mindedness, responsibility and whole-heartedness.

An **open-minded** teacher listens and accepts all aspects of their own and others' perspectives, listening for insight.

Being a **responsible** teacher '*...involves careful consideration of the consequences to which an action leads*' (Zeichner & Liston 1996 p10) and the constant questioning of what they see before them in their school or classroom. Three questions are being constantly asked: How is it working? Why is it working? For whom is it working? These of course demand three kinds of consideration of one's teaching:

- i. Personal consequences (effect of teaching on pupil self-concepts)
- ii. Academic consequences (pupil intellectual development.)
- iii. Social and political consequences on pupil life chances.

By being **whole-hearted** the teacher '*...regularly examines their own assumptions and beliefs and the results of their actions and approach all situations with the attitude that they can learn something new.* (Zeichner & Liston 1996 p11).

These views can be traced to the work of Schon (1983), who claimed that framing problems is central to reflective practice. For Schon, the first step involved the definition of the problem – grounded in a real teaching and learning context, and the exploration of all its dimensions. This naturally led to a three stage, spiralling process:

1. An appreciation of experiences, by means of the embedded

- values, theories and practices at work within the experiences.
2. Actions, which are then
  3. Reinterpreted, as the problem is re-framed in light of the previous action.

(Schon 1983)

In further developing these ideas, Zeichner and Liston proposed three levels of reflection as part of a process of critical inquiry that moves reflection beyond the interpersonal to the structural. The first level involves technical reflection and relates to pupil learning. At the second level there are situational and education contexts/constraints, and at the final level, moral and ethical issues become the focus.

Clearly, reflective practice is an ideology as well as a process, and should be viewed as being, in part at least, a subset of the critical theory approach to educational research. Critical theory is, in fact, multiple theories and it could be argued that these are united by four key characteristics: They:

1. Address real problems-
2. Assert the notion of emancipation-
3. Radically question and challenge beliefs and ideologies and
4. They are not simply explanatory.

Reagan (1993) argues that reflection, like critical theory, is multi-layered. He identifies three levels: Level one; the personal and interpersonal realm. Level two is where there is an analysis of issues at an institutional level. Level three involves a focus on the wider structural plane. The commonality between each of these levels is that each is about making change.

The qualities and attributes of a reflective practitioner suggest that he/she is a conscious, rational decision-maker with a sound knowledge base as a foundation for these decisions. Judgements are based on content and technical knowledge, which is individually constructed. Reagan (1993) suggests that the reflective



practitioner has a large body of tacit knowledge from which to base decisions.

There has been some discussion of the context that needs to be present for reflective practice to be effective beyond the single classroom. Hargreaves (1996), comments that 'flatter collaborative cultures' are necessary for reflective practice to happen at an institutional level.<sup>5</sup> He argues that slower evolving collaborative culture is founded on the values and qualities of trust, openness, and support between colleagues. The collaborative culture is described as compatible with local curriculum development, and acknowledges the role and richness of teacher biographies in education. This clashes with the “*control-centred, accountability-inclined, and efficiency oriented interests of mainly male administrators*” (Hargreaves, 1996, p322).

I feel comfortable identifying with this ideological perspective and believe that in many ways the school I am working in has at least some of the components of the collaborative culture described by Hargreaves.

More significantly, I believe that the research undertaken and my work in the bullying field place me within the context described above. My position as Deputy Principal has enabled me to move beyond the interpersonal dimension and to attempt to establish a bully-free environment at a whole school level. The research that has focused so tightly on a group of twenty-seven pupils has ramifications beyond them and their experiences. The messages that they send are significant for all who work with young people and they emphasise the importance of active teacher leadership in establishing an enabling, non-threatening social environment that will allow pupils to learn and grow.

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<sup>5</sup> This theme was developed further at a December 1998 Wellington workshop led by Canadian-based educationalist Michael Fullan who claimed that these collaborative cultures led to the development of 'professional communities of learners'. He argued that these collaborative cultures were atypical and instead described the landscape of many schools are being either a combination of individualistic (pedagogically conservative) or balkanised (power status hungry) cultures.

### **Information gathered**

The data gathered for this research is more extensive than is usual for a review of school operations. None of the statistical data used was gathered specifically for this study. Rather the way the data was used; the depth of the analysis, and some of the comparisons, was at a greater level than normal. The collection of statistical information on educational achievement has increased greatly over the last five years. Both the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office expect schools to be able to provide accurate information on pupil achievement and this increased the amount of information that is available.

Various types of data were used in my research on the school's anti-bullying initiatives, on the impact of these strategies and in the case study, and included the field notes from the introduction of Kia Kaha, the original surveys, pupil questionnaires and an extra mural research project (Cleary, 1993). Moreover, I had maintained a record of individual bullying incidents that I personally dealt with, paying particular attention to the first three cases where I had used the No-Blame Approach (Maines & Robinson 1992) (discussed in detail in section 2.5 & 5.5). These cases were recently included in a book detailing the method (Robinson & Maines 1997). Subsequently, I maintained a record of each of the No Blame 'conferences' I called. These notes were written on a large A3 art pad and were seen by all the participants. At some stage in each conference, I drew the Strathclyde relationship diagram and had the participants relate the behaviour that was being discussed to the various positions fixed on the diagram ([Appendix 1](#)). At the conclusion of the discussion I noted the actions each participant had suggested they would do to help stop the bullying. These notes provided a wealth of information. As part of the development of the Civics programme (see [section 5.42.2](#)) I conducted a pupil questionnaire answered by the participants. ([Appendix 2](#))

During the course of my study leave, I videotaped interviews of seven pupils and

one ‘focus’ group. The pupils interviewed were all ones that I had identified as having had a problem with bullying at some stage or had been participants in bullying. The interviews I conducted were based on a written questionnaire ([Appendix 3](#)).

### **Purpose of the research**

The primary aim of the research has been to gain a deeper understanding of the group dynamics that are present when bullying has become embedded as the culture of the group. By listening to the voices of the pupils in the group and combining this with the available research information on bullying I hope that a clearer picture will evolve that will assist teachers in their efforts to create safe classrooms. I hope that such in-depth understandings will shed productive light on the reasons for both the passivity of the peers of bullying pupils and for the isolation inflicted on bullied pupils.

By the end of the information gathering stage of the research, my focus had been reformed and redirected. I now wanted to use my knowledge, the literature and research to answer five significant questions that would be relevant to my teaching colleagues:

1. What is known about school bullying internationally?
2. What are the successful intervention strategies for dealing with school bullying internationally?
3. What is known about school bullying in New Zealand?
4. What intervention strategies are being used in New Zealand?
5. What impact can a bullying culture have on effective learning?

### **Participants**

There are a number of distinct groups of pupils who were the focus of the research:

- a The pupils who were still at school and who had been members of the class, which I shall label 3XX.

- b Staff members who were involved with 3XX
- c Senior pupils who had participated in the Civics programme.
- d Senior pupils in year 12 & 13 who had been involved in a bullying relationship in their year 9 or 10.

These pupils were all aged between 16-18 and were pupils at the school, while the staff members are have all been colleagues.

### **Participant relationship with the researcher**

Because of my position within the administration of the school, I had power relationship with all those I worked with, I was used to dealing with staff and pupils from a position of some institutional authority and generally 'having my own way'.

Consequently, the gaining of permission to interview staff and pupils had to be negotiated very carefully, as it would have been easy for me to coerce pupils into participating. The fact that at least three of the victims of the most severe bullying decided that they did not wish to participate in the research is an indication that those who did so did not feel coerced into co-operating. While I was very disappointed that I was unable to review these cases, the fact that they felt able to decline is an indication that the ethical safeguards (detailed later in this chapter) were working.

By the time I had completed my research at the end of 1998, all the pupil participants had left the school. Because this group of pupils had been present at the school during the development of the anti-bullying initiatives, I am confident that we shared common understandings on the nature of school bullying and interpersonal relationships. I also feel that the research has not only been beneficial in terms of gathering useful information but has also given the pupil participants a real chance to review the relationships that existed in their junior secondary school class. This reflection may well have a positive influence on their future relationships. During the course of the research, all of the

participants expressed concern over the bullying that had developed in the class. They recognised the impotence they had felt in dealing with it and several expressed support for more time being spent on anti-bullying programmes, with junior pupils, in an effort to stop this sort of behaviour.

### **Differences / Issues of power**

Care was taken to ensure that differences in age and rank did not unduly intimidate participants. The greatest difference between the researcher and the participants was age. The pupils are all aged between 16-19 and the researcher was in his mid 40s. When I was interviewing individual pupils, I always ensured that the door to the room was open. The school guidance counsellor was present while individual female pupils were being interviewed.

I also ensured that both the school principal and guidance counsellor (both female) were aware of the interview questions and I sought their advice informally at all stages of the research.

I was very conscious that many of the pupils I targeted for research had been victims of ongoing abuse from their peers. While I had worked with them all to resolve these problems, I recognised that for many they would not want to revisit these unpleasant experiences. Consequently in each case I approached the potential interviewee very casually. I made it clear that I was not operating as the deputy principal of the school, that for the year of the research I was a research pupil and they had the right not to participate in the research. I gave them the participant information sheet ([appendix 4](#)) and the consent form ([appendix 5](#)) asking them to read them overnight and that if they did not want to take part in my study this was completely acceptable.

### **Confidentiality**

By delving deeply into the culture of the one class, and exposing the depth and intensity of the bullying which had occurred, it could be argued that I have

exposed the school to unreasonable and potentially unflattering scrutiny. Sullivan (1999) discusses the case of a Wellington school, which proactively undertook an anti-bullying campaign being unfairly nominated as a bully school. It is important to be transparent and to challenge such counter-productive thinking. It is hoped that the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures will more than outweigh any negative perceptions arising from the existence of bullying.

Although I have attempted to safeguard the identity of the school, New Zealand is a small country and the educational community is even smaller. Many readers will easily identify the school. Because I have developed a profile nationally as an anti-bullying campaigner, there may be an unreasonable expectation that the school I work in has eliminated the behaviour. This study shows that even where progress has been made, it is difficult to completely eliminate a behaviour that appears to be an inevitable and unwanted part of school life.

While there is no empirical evidence yet to back up my claim, I would suggest that what is described in the research is not an aberration, that this type of culture is common and that it exists in every school to some extent but is not recognised or detected. During my seminars and teacher development sessions in other, often very dissimilar schools, throughout the country, my description of 3XX strikes a strong recognition.

### **Potential benefits of the research**

The benefits of the research are clear. Through a greater understanding of the dynamics of a bullying culture, teachers and schools will be able to deal with the issue more effectively. By carefully detailing and describing interventions that have been taken in cases of bullying, a greater level of knowledge of the behaviour and intervention strategies will be available. By focussing on the culture of one dysfunctional class group, we are better able to understand how such a culture develops and thrives. It will be this knowledge that will help us to be better able to arrest the development of such a group.

## **Risks**

When I embarked on my study I was clearly aware that there were risks inherent in the study. The main risk is, as has already been stated, the potential for the individuals involved in aspects of the research being identified. For the majority who have bullied in the past, this should not pose a major risk as they have acknowledged their earlier behaviour and have sought to change. For the victims, however, there is a risk is that they may feel further humiliated if identified. There was also the evident risk that they, in reliving the trauma of being bullied, might need a level of support that the researcher may not be able to provide.

## **Ethics**

In order to ensure that the research was both appropriate and ethical (and in order to comply with university procedures) I sought and gained the approval for the project from the Victoria University Humanities Ethics Committee.

Anonymity for my informants has been provided with the use of coded letters rather than names to identify those I interviewed. While all the details of the class are provided, their form name has been changed, as have the names of others in the cohort. It must be stressed that the extent and nature of the bullying in 3XX was not revealed until the interview with the prime protagonist four years after the events. At all times, any current bullying that was uncovered as a result of the research was dealt with energetically and professionally using the best methods available.

## **Informal supervision/support within the school**

Much of the research project has been a collaborative exercise. The school principal at the time of the research was kept fully informed and supported the project as one likely to improve the social and educational climate of the school.

All of the pupils involved were well aware of the aims and nature of the project. They were fully informed by the researcher and gave informed consent. Prior to embarking on the current thesis study, I was motivated by a desire to increase my own and my immediate colleagues' knowledge of school bullying. Through some initial research on Kia Kaha (Cleary, 1993), we had gained some insight into school bullying and were keen to continue developing our understandings. Our approach was typical of 'reflective practitioners' (Zeichner, K. and Liston, D. 1996). While we felt that the findings indicated a reduction in levels of bullying behaviour in the school, we had become aware of hitherto unsuspected bullying in the school. We believed that the pupils were less reluctant to disclose and we were thus more likely to be called on to intervene. Our early interventions (as described in chapter 5, section 5.31) seemed to be ineffective and the data that we collected about bullying in the 1996 school year suggested that we still were dealing with higher levels of bullying than we had anticipated. While at all times we endeavoured to involve parents, and had a special 'bully awareness' parent evening each year, no special efforts were made to gain the assent of parents when attempting new innovations and approaches. We followed normal school procedures for contacting parents and made every effort to explain and involve them when adopting a particular approach.

I ran my ideas past the school's principal and acting deputy principal as well my university supervisor at all stages of the research. Because I was involved in running a large number of in-service training programmes during my study year, I was also able to discuss the issues of bullying with a large number of fellow practitioners. It has been from these colleagues, their ideas and their personal stories that I have been able to refine and develop my own thinking.

### **Expansion of the study**

As is often the case, the scope and scale of the study developed and grew during the research period. While the initial intention of the study was to use the individual case study approach to illustrate the impact of the various anti-



bullying approaches used in the school, events that occurred and resulting new insights forced a major expansion and change of focus. It was during the course of pupil interviews about bullying that I became aware of the extent of bullying that had occurred in one particular class and decided to investigate further. The knowledge, insights and issues that developed as a result provided the basis of the main case study.

Thus, the final shape of this study is indeed very different from the original intention. I had begun with the proposal that would have seen the study end at chapter six, and where chapter five would have included several more individual studies. The stories and interviews that have been recorded nonetheless are valuable and provide useful insights and information about the behaviour under study.

It was the chance realisation during one interview, combined with a causal discussion with the teacher of 3XX, (Chapter 6), that made me aware that their story was special and would provide an opportunity to change the direction of the discussion of school bullying. By focussing on the class as a whole, there is a major paradigm shift from the individual, to the group. While it is clear from the literature that the group is a very significant element in school bullying, the usual focus is definitely on the individual players. By shifting to an analysis of the group, the understandings and perception change markedly.

### **Storage of research material**

The data, videotapes transcripts from the research will be stored at my home in a secure office area. They will be retained in the medium term as they contain valuable information that may be useful in later comparative studies but will be destroyed when this process has been completed.

### **Checking the results**

The study has led to a reconsideration of the assumptions made after the initial

Kia Kaha investigation (Cleary, 1993) and our subsequent claims that we had drastically reduced bullying at the school. The class investigation demonstrated clearly that, despite considerable efforts, an undetected bullying culture was able to develop and thrive. The investigation has certainly challenged our view of the effectiveness of our original interventions and has reinforced our desire to be more effective in challenging bullying behaviour.

### **On-going relationship with the school**

My research has been encouraged and supported by the school administration at every stage. The school has a culture of educational research and the principal at the time of the research had a master's degree in educational administration. I have been completely free from any overt organisational constraints, though the position of the school in what is currently describe as a 'competitive market place' imposes a subtle censorship on anything that may be interpreted as criticism of the school.

While the publication of this research might well provoke suggestions that the school should have detected the bullying earlier and intervened effectively, I am of the strong opinion that the landscape I described in 3XX is in fact typical and common, there is a need for further research to confirm whether the situation is indeed widespread.

As well as having an important impact on bullying and subsequent school violence I hope that the study will also encourage teachers and schools as a whole to look more carefully at classroom culture. In doing so evaluate, analyse and evaluate the leadership style of their most influential pupils and the effect this has on other pupils and the class as a whole.

Once a draft version of the main case study had been written, I spent several hours with the school principal, the year level dean and one of the original teachers of the class, reviewing the information and checking my interpretation.

Despite the fact that the events had occurred four years previously, they were shocked at the extent of the bullying that had taken place in the class. We had all been quite unaware of the problem and were disturbed that the level and extent of bullying had been successfully hidden from us.

### **Description of the study**

The insights gained from the study (a combination of knowledge and practice) are used to provide a view of how schools can effectively counter bullying.

Successful intervention needs to be at three levels:

1. Acknowledgement that bullying happens.
2. Understanding and recognising that bullying is anathema to the development of an effective community of learners, and realistically challenge the manipulative, hidden (from adults) and abusive bully culture.
3. Action, based on international research findings (detailed in chapter 2) needs to be taken and this needs to be based on the knowledge and understanding.

A range of international research and academic writings are analysed and examples of 'good practice' are described. Although I will discuss scholarship and research from Australia and the United States, my international focus has been on the Scandinavian and British studies.

Extensive research, which will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three, clearly indicates that the scale of the school-bullying problem both internationally and in New Zealand should be an area of major concern for educators. Many studies show that bullying is a predictable and common experience and that it can severely impact on the individual's social and academic success at school (Adair et al 1998, Boulton & Smith, 1994, Cram et al 1994, Cullingford & Morrison 1997, Farrington 1993, Lind & Maxwell 1996, Olweus 1978, 1984, 1993, Rigby & Slee 1993, Rigby & Slee 1999, Sullivan 1994a, 1999 & 2000, Smith & Ahmad 1990, Smith & Sharp 1994, Tulloch 1995). There is also general agreement that

bullying will happen in a range of settings and types of school (Smith et al 1999). These studies tell us that school bullying can have disastrous effects not only for the victims of bullying but also for the perpetrators and observers. Recent studies have established that the responsibility for dealing with the behaviour lies with schools and that clearly thought through strategies can establish a safe environment (Smith et al. 1999).

The various approaches that have been developed for dealing with school bullying in New Zealand are then described, and several important initiatives are discussed.

The central case study is developed against the backdrop of the adoption of a range of anti-bullying initiatives in one school. This study confirms the aforementioned research, that bullying can have a very harmful impact on pupils' academic and social skills and development. Also, for the school in question, it was found that a very high level of bullying was uncovered in one particular group but this was not found to be the case through out the school.

The key thrust of current educational thinking about 'bully-proofing' (developing pupils who are resilient in the face of bullying behaviour) is to emphasise the whole school approach where the maintenance of a safe (bully free) learning environment must be the responsibility of all the members of the school community. Everyone needs to develop a good knowledge and understanding of the behaviour. Subsequent action against bullying should not only derive from these, but must be endorsed school wide. No member of the school community should be able to abdicate responsibility. Action must take place at the individual, class, year and school community level.

In the conclusion, a number of specific recommendations are made that emerge from the case study, from my day-to-day work as a practitioner and from reflection on both the international and New Zealand research. These

recommendations stress the need for urgent supportive action to be taken by those responsible for the provision of good education in New Zealand. They emphasise the need for schools and educators to be alert to the signs of bullying. A combined effort is necessary to ensure that teachers, administrators and pupils act swiftly when bullying is detected.

In Chapter Two I will provide an overview of international anti-bullying work. This begins with a description of the pioneering work of Dan Olweus of the University of Bergen, Norway and his work in Scandinavian schools during the last two decades. The focus then turns to Britain, initially concentrating on the government-sponsored initiative for the adoption of the Olweus 'Whole School Approach'. The efforts that led to the English Department of Education's endorsement of the approach, based on the developmental work of a team of researchers at Sheffield University under the leadership of Peter K. Smith, are discussed. Their key recommendations and findings are discussed and described. One of these, The No-Blame Approach, developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson of Bristol, is described in more detail as, from the writer's experience; the approach provides a practical and effective anti-bullying intervention. (A more detailed description of the No-Blame Approach is undertaken in Chapter Four.)

This is followed by the description of several specific anti-bullying actions that have been initiated by two Scottish Local Education Authorities, Teeside and Strathclyde. The intensive, expert team approach adopted by the Teeside Local Education Authority is contrasted with the region-wide teacher training approach, supported by a quality resource, developed by Strathclyde Council Education. The Strathclyde descriptions are followed by an overview of the cohesive national anti-bullying strategy developed for the rest of Scotland, lead by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE). Each of the initiatives is further illustrated by the use of mini-case studies undertaken in the participating schools. The Chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the key

ideas that can be drawn from the international scholarship.

Chapter Three focuses on anti-bullying work in New Zealand. It begins by exploring the actions and attitudes of the two government organisations that have a mandate to deal with bullying; the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Education Review Office (ERO). Their actions and responsibilities are reviewed and discussed, particularly in light of the investigation conducted by the Office of the Commissioner for Children into bullying at St Andrew's College, Christchurch.

The efforts over the last decade to quantify levels of bullying in New Zealand schools are also discussed and these measurements are discussed in light of similar international studies. In particular, the research of Vivienne Adair et al of Auckland University is discussed as it provides both the most recent and clearly the most comprehensive set of information. The work of Gabrielle Maxwell of Victoria University and that of Fiona Cram of Auckland University, along with several post-graduate studies are also examined. The research of Keith Sullivan of Victoria University of Wellington, on the other hand, is of a more qualitative nature and provides important insights into the nature of bullying as well as the impact of racist bullying.

A number of interesting innovations that have been developed over the last seven years are discussed in Chapter Four. Several of these are explored in detail. They are the Specialist Education Services '*Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger*' programme, (EVMA) the Aotearoa/New Zealand Peace Foundation's '*Cool School's*' programme, the Mental Health Foundation's '*Mentally Healthy Schools*' and '*Mental Health Matters*' programmes and the Police/Telecom public awareness raising '*Stop Bullying*' campaign. The Police Law Related Education resource kit *Kia Kaha* is examined closely because it is the only specific anti bullying resource available to New Zealand schools. Besides examining these anti-bullying initiatives I will look at the work of the Auckland Safe Schools'

Association. This organisation acted as a catalyst in that they promote safe school environments, as did the South Canterbury Principals' Association.

Chapter Four concludes with a brief discussion of bullying in New Zealand as it has been described in earlier research. The quantitative materials are analysed in order to provide an overview of the level of bullying experienced in our schools. The qualitative research, on the other hand, is used to add depth to this overview and to provide a greater level of understanding of bullying behaviour. This developing understanding of the prevalence and impact of the behaviour is contrasted with the lack of substantive action by the official agencies. This is followed by a consideration of the effectiveness of the various initiatives.

The central focus of Chapters Five and Six is on anti-bullying work carried out in one provincial state co-educational secondary school. In Chapter Five, the school is described and a demographic profile is established. A brief history and an overview of the philosophy of the school are provided to establish a context for the subsequent study. Against this background, the reasons for the anti-bullying interventions are discussed and the process used established. The various anti-bullying initiatives that have been used over the last five years are described and where possible analysed.

Several illustrative case studies describe the impact various interventions have had on individual pupils who have been part of a bullying relationship. In particular the use of the No-Blame approach provides valuable information in describing not only the impact of the bullying on the individual but also allows for a widening of the discussion to include an analysis of class dynamics.

The final and most complex case study is explored in Chapter Six. The impact of a bullying culture on the learning environment is outlined in a study that focuses on one class and attempts, through a series of retrospective conversations with members of the group, to explore the bullying culture that developed. The

story is further developed using a range of historical material that provides a more complete overview of the group. A salient theme emerges; the secret and conformist power of the bullying culture.

The study shows that a bullying culture is one typified by division, self-interest, misinformation and misunderstandings and creates an atmosphere in which effective learning is very difficult. It suggests that the methods used by the school, which were in line with mainstream thinking, were not adequate to change and detect pervasive bullying environments.

Chapter Seven draws in the understandings developed in earlier chapters and provides a comprehensive discussion of the state of anti-bullying research and practice in New Zealand with reference to the international literature. In this chapter I question the effectiveness of some current practices. Drawing on case study chapter, I argue that the adoption of an effective anti-bullying initiative is essential in the creation of a successful learning environment. The research backs this up and it clearly indicates school bullying can be dramatically reduced by increasing an understanding of the dynamics of bullying behaviour backed up by a consistently applied reaction to its occurrence. The resultant culture by necessity must emphasise concepts of co-operation and tolerance and has all the hallmarks of an effective community. It will thus be an environment that will be conducive to effective learning. The study concludes with a number of clear recommendations that focus on:

- The need for an effective, nationally accepted approach to school bullying supported by well-prepared and accessible resources.
- Consistent, school-wide action against bullying, based on the whole school approach.
- The need for heightened awareness from all teachers about the need to bullyproof all classes in order to develop effective learning environments.

### **The likely consequences of this research**



I would like to think that this research could be of use to my teaching colleagues. By providing an overview of the state of bullying in New Zealand and placing this within the context of the international literature, I hope this will contribute to a better understanding of what the research and literature can tell us. Secondly it is my hope that the study can provide some insights into the complex nature of school bullying. By providing a stark insight into the closed and individualised world that some classes develop as a consequence of bullying, the case study may extend our knowledge about the dynamics and effect of bullying. In the case in point, help was neither sought nor provided and the abuse was able to continue unchecked, impacting on a growing number of pupils. In a small way this study may assist some teachers and schools to appreciate the need for well thought-out educational strategies that will ensure that pupils are not trapped in such a powerless predicament.

Finally I hope that having established the importance of linking anti-bullying action, to a comprehensive understanding of the behaviour, by using the international research knowledge, others investigating bullying initiatives, will follow a similar course. However above all, I hope the study will be able to be summarised and disseminated so as to encourage practitioners to take action based on a combination of their acknowledgement and their own understandings of the behaviour.

## **Chapter 2: International Interventions**

After proposing a definition of bullying behaviour, in this chapter I will examine the development of international bullying research with a particular focus on Scandinavia and Britain. The important work of the ‘grandfather’ of anti-bullying research Professor Dan Olweus of the University of Bergen will be used to open the discussion that will then trace the impact these strategies have had in Britain. This will initially focus on the Sheffield based research projects and then investigate some independent anti-bullying initiatives that were developed in Scotland, Wales and other parts of England.

### **Definition of bullying**

As this thesis is a study of strategies used to counter school bullying a definition of the behaviour needs to be proposed prior to any detailed discussion of the existing scholarship.

While there are many definitions of bullying, it is accepted as being a subcategory of aggressive behaviour. Most agree that it is a deliberate, hurtful behaviour that is often repeated over a period of time and where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. There are several distinct types of bullying; physical; that is hitting, kicking, taking belongings; verbal that is name-calling, making insulting, racist remarks or gestures and the indirect bullying that is spreading nasty stories and excluding individuals from groups. Maines and Robinson (1992) provide useful, if somewhat generalised, descriptions of the characteristics of the bully and the victim:

**Bully:** A person behaving in a way which might meet needs for excitement, status, material gain or group process and does not recognise or meet the needs and rights of the other people/person who are harmed by the behaviour.

**Victim:** A person or group that is harmed by the behaviour of others and

who does not have the resources, status or ability to counteract or stop the harmful behaviour.

(1992:18)

## **2.1 History**

During the nineteen nineties bullying has increasingly become recognised as an important and worrying issue for schools. As our knowledge has increased there has been a gradual change in public perception of the behaviour. From being an ill-defined, insidious yet almost inevitable part of growing up, bullying is becoming more precisely defined and increasingly viewed as unacceptable. Any wide reading of literature shows that the behaviour is not new. Rigby (1996) uses quotes from *the Bible* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays* to illustrate this point while many of the other anti bullying resources available use telling quotes from other literature sources to good effect<sup>6</sup>. While bullying still remains very much a part of a human experience that for generations has tormented school-aged children, the international research findings emphasises that it is not an experience exclusive to one setting or culture.

International research has increased our knowledge and understanding of bullying over the last twenty years. There is evidence that bullying has long term debilitating consequences and we also know that specific anti-bullying interventions can dramatically reduce the behaviour (Olweus, 1993, Smith et al 1999). However recent research demonstrates that for a significant section of the educational community, bullying remains an ever present, ill-defined and hidden behaviour (Adair, 1999, Tulloch, 1995).

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<sup>6</sup> There are extensive links to a wide range of literature available. The Strathclyde kit, (McLean, 1994) contains an excellent list of available titles. Kia Kaha also has some good suggestions for reading using extracts from the New Zealand "School Journal." published by Learning Media, Wellington.

## 2.2 Dan Olweus

Many contemporary anti-bullying interventions particularly those used in the British Sheffield project and the Scottish interventions can be traced to the work of Swedish psychologist Professor Dan Olweus. He began investigating aspects of a type of bullying known as 'mobbing'<sup>7</sup>, in the late 1970s. It is largely due to his work that a unified, international anti-bullying movement has gained momentum over the last decade.

Olweus examined teenage aggression and was particularly interested in aggression amongst boys.<sup>8</sup> During the 1970s he began a more focused study of the 'mobbing' phenomena (Olweus 1978) noting that the term was confusing and had multiple meanings. He opted instead to define what he wished to focus on and chose to employ the expression 'bullying'. His study also focused on the long-term relationships and their effects rather than on one-off incidents.

Unhappy with the standard description of the victim as a 'deviant' (Olweus, 1984:57), he was drawn to gaining an understanding of the key players, the bully and victim, and their perceptions within this relationship. His studies in Sweden during the 1970s enabled him to develop a better understanding of the bullying process. His research indicated that bullying was a significant problem in Scandinavian schools, and Olweus found that approximately 10% of school children in his study were victims of regular bullying. At this stage of his research Olweus found that he was unable to identify predictors as to the type of

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<sup>7</sup> Mobbing is a type of bullying which is used by Peter-Paul Heinemann (1972) and borrowed from Lorenz (1966) which was used to describe 'collective violence against a deviant.' (Olweus, 1984:57)

<sup>8</sup> Many of his early studies focused only on boys. Olweus confined his research to boys for theoretical and practical considerations. The main consideration being that the bully/(whipping boy) victim problems are more common among boys and have more serious manifestations because of a stronger component of physical violence. More recent studies, (Sheffield, Mellor, Adair, Maxwell and Lind etc) contradict this view acknowledging that both boys and girls suffer enormously from emotional and indirect bullying.

pupil who would become either a victim or a bully.

Relatively small differences were found between the bullies and the whipping boys. Both groups were average or slightly below average in school achievement. Finally there were no socio-economic differences between the parents of the whipping boys, bullies, control-boys, and the particularly well-adjusted boys.

(Olweus 1984:63)

Olweus' research has indicated that '*Structural or system variables (school size, teacher satisfaction, group climate) did not come out as relevant*'. His conclusion was that the prime determinant of the incidence of bullying was nature of the aggressive boys and a characteristic of the bullies in his research was that they tended to be more aggressive in their relationships with both teachers and their peers (Olweus 1984:63). Despite variables in teachers and school environment, there was a high degree of 'aggressive stability' displayed by the bullies (the bullies retained their aggression even when the settings and personnel changed). He also found that interventions targeting an individual's aggression were largely ineffective. In his findings, Olweus suggests that the aggressive pupils continued to behave aggressively towards their peers and teachers regardless of the setting. In other words, they were leaders in establishing the social context of the classroom and playground:

It may be concluded that the behaviour of the highly aggressive boys was to a large extent maintained irrespective of some environmental variation and the opposition of social forces presumably acting to change this same behaviour. The high degree of stability becomes even more remarkable in view of the possibility of variations due to developmental changes during the 3-year period studied.

(Olweus 1984:66)

In his discussion of bullies, Olweus determined that they:

...felt non-anxious, confident, tough, and had on a the whole a positive attitude toward themselves' and 'that their aggressive behaviour cannot be accounted for as some sort of compensatory reaction in response to feelings of social inferiority in the school setting.

(1984:67)

In his later writing Olweus (1993a) rejects the often-popular notion that bullies are, in fact, victims themselves acting out as a result of the actions of others, driven by outside factors such as peer rejection and alienation. He comments:

I do not think there is much evidence to support the hypothesis that these factors actually cause aggressive behaviour...a good deal of aggressive behaviour and in particular bullying, can be seen as "self-initiated behaviour" with the deliberate aim of inflicting pain and discomfort, of dominating and oppressing others, and of obtaining tangible and prestigious rewards through coercion... Bullying behaviour is not primarily seen as a consequence of lack of skills or abilities but rather as a function of "deviant" motivations and habits. It is [more] a question of what the aggressors want to do and are used to doing than what they are able to do.

(Olweus 1993a: 120)

In the conclusion to his discussion of the nature of the bully, Olweus stresses that those who bully actively select and create the context for a bullying incident. He argues that they tend to view violence positively and will respond aggressively in a range of situations and display little or no personal control over their aggression.

In his studies, Olweus identified two types of victims (or whipping boys as he describes them in his early writing) who fall prey to bullying behaviour. The

most common victims were the passive boys who were generally found to be more anxious, insecure, unpopular had lower self-esteem and a more negative attitude toward themselves than boys did in other groups. The second group, later called the 'provocative victim' (Olweus 1993), were more actively irritating, tension creating, restless, hot tempered and, when attacked, they got angry and fought back or at least attempted to. While they face some peer rejection, the passive victim was unlikely to fall victim to bullying until they '*enter a group with one or several highly aggressive boys- (potential) bullies*' (Olweus, 1984:68).

This led Olweus to come to the conclusion that:

... 'personality and to some degree, physically characteristics (weakness-strength) of individual boys- potential victims and bullies- must be assigned great weight in explaining the appearance and maintenance of the problems under consideration.'

(Olweus 1984:69)

In response to three high profile teenage suicides in late 1982, each linked to school bullying, the Norwegian authorities asked Olweus to work alongside their schools to develop anti-bullying strategies. It was his work in this government-sponsored project that led to the development of an intervention programme that due to its success had been widely recognised and used as the basis of many other major intervention programmes (Sherman et al 1997, Smith, 1999). The project that began in November 1983, remains one of the most comprehensive and significant anti-bullying interventions to date, and must be seen as the culmination of his extensive studies in Sweden and Norway in the 1970s. It was in this nation-wide programme funded by the Norwegian Ministry for Education and involved all schools (3,500) that Olweus was able to apply his understandings of the problem of bullying.

The intervention was comprehensive and involved providing information for all involved. All school personnel were given a thirty two-page information booklet that described bully/victim problems in some detail. A four-page parent pamphlet and a video that showed bullying episodes were also made available for schools. With the purpose of heightening awareness of the nature of bullying and to further gauge the scope and scale of the problem, a questionnaire was administered to all pupils. A follow up meeting with teaching staff was held fifteen months later to gather feedback.

The programme was built around three basic principles.

The school environment should be:

Characterised on one hand by *warmth, positive interest and involvement from adults* and on the other by *firm limits to unacceptable behaviour*.

In cases of violations of limits and rules, *non-hostile, non-physical sanctions* should be consistently applied.

(Olweus 1993a:115)

In his discussion of the first of these principles, Olweus states that: '*this represents the opposite of the child-rearing dimensions that have been found in our research to be important in the development of an aggressive personality pattern*' (Olweus 1993a: 116). He goes on to explain that his earlier work had established that children develop aggressive personalities when their early childhood experiences were marked by the following three factors:

- Negativism on the part of the primary caregiver.
- Permissiveness and lack of clear limits.
- The use of power-assertive methods<sup>9</sup>.

The remaining two principles emphasises the importance of adult involvement in

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<sup>9</sup> The methods used by primary caregivers in raising the child are marked by control methods where the superior power of the caregiver is the primary determinant.



the maintenance of a bully free environment. Clearly the intervention is very much an adult driven one, where the adults in the environment are involved, providing leadership, direction and safety.

Olweus also promotes four sub-goals that underpin the programme:

1. To increase the awareness of the bully/victim problem and advance knowledge about it.
2. To achieve involvement on the part of teachers and parents, adults must recognise that it is their responsibility to control to a certain degree what goes on among the children at school. Teachers are encouraged to intervene in possible bullying situations and give a clear message to the pupils: **Bullying is not accepted in our school.** Teachers are also strongly advised to initiate serious talks with victims and bullies and their parents if the bully/victim problem has been identified in the class. Again the basic message should be: "We don't tolerate bullying in our school and will see to it that it comes to an end."
3. To develop clear rules against bullying behaviour:
  - a) We shall not bully others
  - b) We shall try to help pupils who are being bullied
  - c) We shall make a point to include pupils who become easily left out.
4. To provide support and protection for the victims

(Olweus 1993a)

The interventions were successful with measurable reductions in the levels of bullying for boys and girls in all levels of schooling. Olweus reports that when his programme was used, reductions were as high as fifty percent for pupils reporting being bullied or reporting bullying others. (1984:69).

While bullying was not eradicated from the school setting, there were important

positive side effects such as a marked reduction in general anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, theft and truancy. As well it was noted that a range of other marked improvements in “school climate” were observed, with *‘improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships and more positive attitudes towards school work and the school.’* (Olweus 1993a: 110).

In line with this view, major foci of the present intervention program are the bullying behaviour itself and its “opportunity structure” (opportunities to bully others with associated expected positive or negative consequences), to borrow a term from criminology.

(Olweus 1993a: 118)

He is firmly of the view that bullying is about *power relationships* and that the adults need to take an authoritative stance on the unacceptability of bad behaviour and that this rejection of the behaviour needs to be clearly ‘owned’ by the pupils as well. He talks about the need for consistency of message and for a *collective commitment* to the programme.

The intervention that Olweus developed is also significant in that by adopting the whole school focus the aggressive behaviour is placed within a social context. Traditionally, aggressive pupils are separated out and, while they become the centres of attention, the rest of the social group is removed from the situation. By not just targeting the bully and the victim, the process ties in all members of the school community and demands that everyone be involved in the prevention of the behaviour. The suffering of the victim and the impotence of the majority of the ‘followers’ are acknowledged and provide a powerful motivating force to justify the programme. This empowers parents and teachers who are able to affirm the democratic right of every child to be *“spared oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation, in school as in society at large.”* (Olweus 1993a: 105) This view allows the school to assert a moral force to combat the bullying. It repudiates the view that bullying is a passing phase and that the victims will

toughen up and that the bullies will outgrow the behaviour, leaving it behind and assuming the qualities of good citizenship.

### **2.3 Evaluations of Olweus' interventions**

There have been two main evaluations of the impact of the Norwegian Schools Project of the early 1980s. The first conducted by Olweus was conducted in the neighbourhood of Bergen while the second, under the leadership of Erling Roland investigated the impact of the intervention in the Rogaland County around the Norwegian City of Stravanger (Roland 1989, 1993). There are major discrepancies between the findings of the two studies. Olweus' findings were unambiguous and positive:

There were marked reductions in the levels of bully victim problems for the periods studied. The reductions were obtained for both boys and girls and across all cohorts compared. Sustained for the longer periods similar reductions were obtained for the aggregated peer rating variables... Reductions of approximately fifty percent were obtained in the pupils reporting being bullied or bullying others.

(Olweus, 1993:110).

Olweus was also able to measure a decrease in the incidence of new cases of bullying, and was thus able to state that '*On the basis of this analysis it can be concluded that the intervention program had both primary and secondary prevention effects*'. (Ibid. P110)

In his study of the use of Olweus' intervention in thirty-seven schools in Rogaland (1983-1986) Roland found overall that there was little evidence of a decrease in the rates of bullying after three years. He found, however, that for those schools that had made effective use of the intervention pack there was a modest decrease in the bullying behaviour.

Olweus (1999) challenges Roland's findings and argues that the studies in Bergen and Rogaland were conducted very differently. The planning, data quality, times of measurement, and contact with the schools differed greatly. In defence of his study, Roland (1993) argues strongly that the data obtained by

Olweus in his forty-two-school Bergen study was distorted by the ongoing support that was provided to these schools by the researchers, which ensured that the intervention was maintained and encouraged. If Roland is correct this tends to suggest that the intervention will work where it is adequately supported and will fail when the intervention package is provided without backup. It could also be argued that an evaluation by Olweus of his own project could not be considered neutral.

### **Conclusions**

Olweus' work in Scandinavia in the 70s and 80s clearly exposed as myths the many traditional justifications for ignoring bullying. His longitudinal studies showed that a significant number of bullies (60%) identified as such in grades 6 & 7 would, by the age of 24, have at least one criminal conviction (six times more prevalent than the non-bullies) (Olweus 1991). This research is also corroborated by studies in Britain (Cullingford & Morrison 1995) and elsewhere and is supported by most surveys that find that while the influence of the bully decreases with age, they are unlikely to change their style of peer behaviour. His Norwegian intervention involved the full school community and made a deliberate effort to move outside the school to involve parents. Because it had as its main focus the whole social group, individual teachers were fully involved and, because the victim, the bystander and the bully were the target, they could not abdicate their responsibility to specialist psychologists who have traditionally had the job of dealing with delinquent behaviour.

Olweus' work was seminal and has had a significant impact. Clearly the world has gained a much better understanding of the nature of school bullying as a result. His figures for the prevalence of bullying behaviour in schools have been replicated the world over (See Smith et al, 1999) and his methodology of data gathering has been accepted and used as a model. This base of empirical knowledge on bullying, combined with his lifelong work on aggression, has allowed for the development of a comprehensive intervention approach that has

had far reaching implications. His rejection of the accepted notions of the cause of aggression in young people led him to develop an inclusive programme that demanded the participation of the whole community to solve the aggression problem, a problem that the conventional practice of isolating the bullies and victims had failed to fix. Olweus has provided educators with a comprehensive overview of bullying behaviour, which while it has been refined, remains the basis of current practice. Due to his efforts many schools have been able to address school bullying effectively and to save many thousands of young people from the loneliness and despair of rejection and isolation. Not only have these young people had their lives improved, it is very clear that the age-old mythology of tolerating bullying behaviour has been debunked. The mistaken belief that the aggressor would 'grow out of it', has in the past condemned countless young men and women to lives made miserable by abusive and destructive relationships because their anti-social behaviour had been unchallenged.

What is significant is that the underlying principles that underpin Olweus' anti-bullying programme run counter to many skills-based approaches to addressing aggression in young people. Most recent programmes have assumed that bullies have either a social skills deficit and consequently need to gain the attention of their peer group, or they themselves have been the victims of peer rejection. Believing the bully shares the underlying values and norms about appropriate behaviour, the approach is to tackle the problem of aggression and bullying by focusing on building the social skills and esteem of the bullies. However, developing better conflict management skills and improving self-esteem do not ensure that they will conform to these norms and values. Olweus' work suggests that this belief is, in fact, a mistake and that the bully's behaviour needs to be the main target.

There are a number of other important implications from Olweus' work, the most significant of which is the reported flow-on impact of the intervention in

improving the whole social climate of the class and the school. By successfully targeting bullying behaviour the schools noted a drop in vandalism and truancy. The work habits and general environment improved hinting that the programme has huge implications for all educators.

### ***2.3 Anti-Bullying work in the United Kingdom***

The reported success of the intervention in Norway aroused interest in the approach internationally. In Britain, the publication of the work of Olweus and Roland attracted the attention of several writers and researchers, which led to the publication of several works on the issue in 1989 (Tattum and Lane, Roland and Munthe, and Besag). At the same time the growing interest in the topic was reflected in the landmark Elton Report (DFS, 1989) on discipline in schools. The report mentioned bullying and recommended that schools should; *'encourage pupils to tell staff of serious cases of bullying, deal firmly with bullying behaviour and take action based on clear rules and backed by appropriate sanctions and systems to protect and support victims'* (P102-3).

In an early British development (1987) Tiny Arora, a research fellow in the Education Department of Sheffield University, developed a 'Life in School' checklist. With the help of staff and pupils of Thornhill High School, the survey aimed to find out whether there was bullying in the school (Arora and Thompson 1987). The checklist asked for information on specific, observable actions that could have happened to a pupil rather than relying on the more direct 'are you being bullied?' thus they bypass the need to supply the surveyed studies with a constrictive definition. They justify their approach by identifying that bullying is too imprecise a term to provide meaningful information. (Smith and Levan (1995) support this view.) The survey has a checklist of 40 behaviours (ranging from physical intimidation to being helped with work) where the pupils identify checklist items that they have experienced over the last week. The survey was been further developed (Arora 1994) and its inclusion in Sharp and Smith's (1994) popular book, *School Bullying; insights and perspectives*, has ensured

that it is widely available as a measurement tool.

As early as 1990, the term whole school approach was being used in Britain. Foster, Arora, Thompson, (1990) described a three year involvement with schools which while having a primary aim of improving school climate by forging greater links with parents and the community, it also measured the incidence of bullying type behaviours of a physically aggressive nature. Parents were actively encouraged to participate in decision-making and were consulted over a range of issues including the pastoral care curriculum and break time activities.

Using the 'Life in Schools Checklist', they noted a substantial reduction (20%) in the number of bullying incidents reported over a two-year period. During the study period, a variety of interventions were used and the authors describe the measures in some details as *'together they form an example of a possible package for the reduction and prevention of bullying in schools in this country'*. (Foster, Arora, Thompson, 1990:2)

## ***2.4 The Sheffield Project***

Peter K Smith, at the time Professor of Psychology at the University of Sheffield, was drawn to the topic as a result of his extensive involvement in the field of children's social development and play. Intrigued by the reported success gained in the Norwegian interventions, in the late 1980s, he began to investigate the incidence and nature of bullying in England. Working with a range of other researchers, he replicated some of Olweus' work and has generated a vast quantity of information about bullying behaviour. With a psychological background to similar Olweus', Smith initially concentrated on further developing an understanding of the nature and consequences of bullying. A major contribution he has made is that he has involved a number of academics and practitioners in his research and has also worked closely with a number of post-graduate pupils to develop and extend the scholarship on bullying. His



influence has been great.

Smith and his team of researchers have produced an impressive number of articles and books (Ahmad, Y. and Smith P.K. (1990), Arora, C.M.J and Thompson, D.A (1987), Blatchford, P & Sharp, S (1994), Boulton, M.J. & Smith P.K. (1994), Cowie, H, Sharp, S (1994), Cowie, H. & Sharp, S (1994a), Sharp, S & Smith, P. (Eds.) (1994), Sharp S & Cowie (1994), Sherman, L., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., Bushway, S. (1997), Smith, P.K. (ed.) (1999), Smith P.K. and Ahmad, Y. (1990), Smith, P. K., Cowie, H. & Sharp, H. (1994), Smith P. K and Levan S. (1995), Smith, P. & Sharp, S (Eds.) (1994), Whitney, I. & Smith, P.K. (1993)).

For practitioners, perhaps the most significant of these are the two volumes published by Routledge in 1994: (Smith, P.K. & Sharp, S. (eds.) *School Bullying Insights and Perspectives* and Sharp, S. & Smith, P.K. (Eds.) *Tackling Bullying in Your School*.)

The first of these two works provides a theoretical overview of the nature and extent of bullying in schools and gives an account of research on various interventions. The second is designed as a guide for schools and teachers on how to implement strategies that have been identified as being effective in reducing bullying. Both volumes build on earlier published studies and pay particular attention to the Department for Education funded Sheffield Project, which will be described in detail later.

In 1988/89 working initially with Yvette Ahmad, Smith piloted a questionnaire based on the one developed by Olweus, in Sheffield schools (Ahmad and Smith 1990). In this study they compared the questionnaire with the 'Life in Schools' checklist and with other methods such as teacher and peer nominations and direct interviews. Ahmad and Smith concluded that the Olweus questionnaire was sufficiently reliable and valid for widespread use. This enabled a research team

to begin preparation for a large-scale replication of Olweus' work in and around Sheffield. Working with Irene Whitney, the questionnaire was modified to suit a British audience. This involved minor changes to the terminology and the definition of bullying was made more explicit especially as it referred to psychological bullying. The definition used is:

We say a child or young person is being bullied, or picked on when another child or young person, or a group of children or young people, say nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a child or a young person is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the child or young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a child or young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is *not bullying* when two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel.

(Smith & Sharp 1994:13)

Initially, with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK) and later the Department for Education (DFE), a large-scale survey was carried out in twenty-four schools in Sheffield beginning in late 1990. Seventeen primary and seven secondary schools were selected from the fifty schools that expressed an interest in being involved in the survey. Care was taken to ensure the sample included a diverse range of schools. The total number of pupils taking part in the survey was 6,758; 2,623 from the primary sector and 4,135 from the secondary sector. The results confirmed the findings of an earlier, smaller, surveys indicating that 27% of junior/middle pupils reported being bullied 'sometimes' or more frequently, and this included 10% bullied 'once a week' or more frequently. For secondary schools, these figures were 10% and 4% respectively (Smith & Sharp 1994:15).

As in Olweus' research, rates of victimisation decreased with age, and there was again little reduction in the numbers who reported bullying others. The reluctance to tell others (parents and teachers) increased with age. The research found that there were few or no significant correlation between school size, class size, and ethnic mix, having no friends in schools and being bullied to and from school.

Each of the twenty-four schools was provided with a comprehensive information portfolio containing data gathered in the survey. This detailed the bullying behaviour of pupils in the school and was broken down by gender and class. 'Hot spots' were described, and, all in all, the schools were given a complete picture of bullying in their school. As well each school was provided with an anti-bullying advice booklet (Tattum & Herbert 1990) and an advice circular for the school governors.

With the advent of Department for Education funding, what was initially a 'survey service', expanded to become a fully-fledged project that was able to measure the impact of a range of interventions. Twenty-three of the original schools opted to remain in the project, which was intended to support them in developing a range of interventions against bullying, to monitor their work, and evaluate their effectiveness with the help of a second survey carried out two years after the first (Smith & Sharp 1994:18).

Smith assembled an experienced and complementary project team. This included Yvette Ahmad and Michael Boulton (School of Health and Community Studies, Sheffield Hallam University), Helen Cowie (School of Social Studies, Bretton Hall College), Sonia Sharp (Educational Psychologist at Barnsley Psychological Service, Education Department) David Thompson (Division of Education, University of Sheffield), and Sheffield Local Education Authority officers and Irene Whitney who helped administer the second survey in 1992.

The team determined that while the schools would all implement a

comprehensive whole school policy on bullying, they would be offered a choice on the types of interventions they could opt into. Schools would be supported in developing a range of strategies from curriculum work, playground interventions, and group work, including assertiveness training and the use of the Pikas Method of Shared Concern, (Pikas, 1989) and working with individuals.

Each school's implementation of the various strategies would be supported and monitored and there would be an evaluative process that ranged from a full repeat survey to individual teacher and pupils interviews and questionnaires.

The sophistication of the project and the competence of the team involved have added greatly to the understanding of the whole school process. The results of the evaluations are worth commenting on in some detail, as this remains, aside from the work of Dan Olweus, the most comprehensive investigation of sustained anti-bullying work.

The analysis of the twenty-four schools clearly showed that the project schools were largely more successful in reducing bullying than the comparison schools (though two of the schools noted an increase in bullying over the two year research period). As in the Norwegian experience the amount of change varied from school to school:

It is worth noting that our own coding of school Input Total (based on teacher reports and our own records) correlate significantly - in both primary and secondary schools - with Perceived Actions (the pupils' perception of how much the school had done).

(Smith & Sharp 1994:53)

This effect, while not being particularly highlighted by the project team, is significant especially in the secondary schools. Here they noted an increase in the willingness of pupils to report bullying; they *'registered substantial increases in the proportion of bullied pupils who would seek help, for example by*

*telling a teacher'* (Smith & Sharp 1994:53).

The project team agreed with the Olweus evaluation in the most important respect: *schools can take effective action against bullying.*

What the Sheffield Project was able to do was to provide a large body of accurate information that clearly demonstrates that schools could no longer downplay bullying. They produced irrefutable evidence that where a school was serious about tackling bullying they could be successful if they put the effort into developing a commonly accepted understanding of the behaviour. As the Norwegians found, if concerted action and leadership from the adults in the school supported this understanding, the pupils would respond in rejecting the behaviour either directly or by seeking assistance. The increased knowledge allowed the adults to be better able to respond to bullying by providing the necessary support.

The Sheffield Project added to anti-bullying knowledge by their research into a wider range of interventions. This enabled the target schools to choose their strategies that in their opinion best suited their culture. The strategies used in the project need exploration and discussion.

#### **2.41 Strategies used in the Sheffield project:**

While each school was encouraged to develop its own unique set of strategies to deal with bullying within the scope of a whole school approach, outside expert training and support was provided. The publication of the practical handbook for teachers (Sharp & Smith, 1994) at the conclusion of the project provides advice on a number of these strategies.

The strategies fall into three broad categories; curriculum interventions, pupil

empowerment strategies and specialist interventions.

### **2.41.1 Curriculum Interventions**

In the chapter '**How to tackle bullying through the curriculum**', Helen Cowie and Sonia Sharp discuss three practical approaches; quality circles, drama and role-play, literature study and creative writing.

### **2.41.2 Quality circles**

Quality circles (QCs) are described as:

‘...a group of between five and twelve people who meet together on a regular basis, usually weekly, to try to identify ways of improving their organisation. They aim to increase general effectiveness and find solutions to common social and practical problems.

(Cowie & Sharp 1994:42)

This structured approach is based on the recognition that bullying is a social problem and acknowledges the key role the non-involved members of the class have in ameliorating the problem. It provides the process so that the pupils can develop their own solutions to the identified problem. *‘They also learn more about the nature of the problem. This process motivates peer pressure against bullying and is a powerful preventative measure.’* (Cowie & Sharp 1994:42-3) The members of the QCs develop a range of important skills that reinforce the concepts of co-operation, rights and responsibilities, and that everyone has a part to play in establishing and maintaining a safe environment.

The process is carefully detailed and structured and can easily be extended into a format that maintains the QC for at least a term. A range of possible activities for the QCs is given and there are useful suggestions to ensure that they remain ‘healthy’.

The main attraction must be that the process enables real resolution of bullying

problems within a group. Pupils are able to identify and discuss the problem in a non-confrontational role and come up with workable solutions. The 'quick fix' solution (often provided by adult intervention) is avoided and the time taken makes for a much healthier solution.

### **Evaluation of Quality Circles**

As part of the Sheffield project the QC method was evaluated:

This 'small-scale but intense evaluation involved three classes of primary pupils, aged between 9 and 11. The interview and questionnaire schedules were designed to establish how pupils and teachers responded to the QC process; what they had learnt from the QCs about themselves and about working with others; how the QC approach had affected their attitudes to bullying behaviour and their own behaviour.

(Smith & Sharp, 1994:93)

In one survey (Mellor-Smith, 1992, cited in Smith & Sharp, 1994:93) it was found that 97% liked the experience and 95% felt that the QC group had worked well together. Over half of those who took part stated that they had become more aware of bullying and that they now tried to stop it; 69% said that they were more careful about what they said and did to others at school.

While light on quantitative data, Cowie and Sharp are positive noting the constructive energy the process unleashes when the pupils have a real problem to grapple with and where there is no expectation to look to the teacher for the 'right answer'. The main problems identified with the approach were the lack of problems to solve (pupils were not reporting cases of bullying that could be discussed in the circles) and the inability of school management to logistically support (supervise) and encourage the pupils' initiatives.

### **2.41.3 Drama and role-play**

Cowie and Sharp suggest that drama and role-play be used to help pupils explore

the issues surrounding bullying from a number of perspectives (Cowie, Sharp 1994:59). In detailing ways both can be used, they stress that to be most effective they should '*lead to small group or whole group discussion about the issues and feelings that emerge*'. They identify issues that can be usefully examined as:

- Personal experiences;
- Motivation to bully;
- Consequences of bullying behaviour;
- The impact of bullying on family, bullied person, bullying person, bystander, teacher;
- Ways of stopping bullying behaviour.

(Cowie, Sharp 1994:59)

This approach allows for the practice of strategies and encourages 'victims' to practice these along with their peers without being identified as having special needs. Everyone in the group will have the opportunity to increase their social awareness, to heighten their empathy towards victims of bullying and the method forces pupils who bully, to reflect on the impact of bullying. In the discussions before and after the play, pupils have the opportunity to express their feelings on being present when someone else is being humiliated and the frustration of not being able to do anything. It is unusual for young people to normally talk about these feelings. The suggested activities range from:

**Being bullied:** Where pupils talk about a time when they have experienced someone hurting them by name-calling, being left out or being forced to do things they didn't want to do.

**Being a bystander:** In pairs pupils take turns of being a bystander explaining why they didn't intervene to support the other pupil who was being bullied.

**Bullying others:** This again involves pupils sharing stories in small groups about occasions when they have bullied others.



**What makes people bully?** Using the pupils imagination in groups of three they devise ways of getting control of an object that is precious and wanted by everyone.

**Is it ever right to bully?** The pupil's role-play situations where quick action is needed to achieve something that is desirable.

(Cowie, Sharp 1994:63-67)

These role-plays can be supplemented with the use of adult drama groups and videos. The experience can also be a powerful motivating force for the pupils to develop their own plays that explore issues that they have discussed. Cowie and Sharp note that there are a number of examples in Britain of such groups (Armadadillo, Neti-Neti, Shout) forming as the result of curriculum work using drama and role-play.

### **Evaluation of using drama, role-play and video**

Eight schools in the Sheffield Project helped to evaluate the videos and role-playing activities- four from both primary and secondary. A total of 568 pupils completed a short questionnaire two weeks after they had experienced the videos or drama workshop to establish to what extent they had understood the central themes of the curriculum work and to what extent they had changed their attitudes and/or behaviour about bullying after watching the video or being involved in the play.

(Cowie, Sharp 1994a: 99)

While teachers found the videos a useful discussion starter, they did not think that they had a direct impact on pupil behaviour.

The pupils' responses to the interviews and the questionnaires indicated the effectiveness of these materials for raising awareness amongst pupils

about the problem of bullying **if they are introduced and followed up in a meaningful way.**

(Cowie, Sharp 1994a: 99)

#### **2.41.4 Literature study and creative writing.**

This section suggests a number of appropriate literature studies to activate the pupils interest in the topic. *‘Literature and creative writing, like drama, offer young people the opportunity to develop a sense of themselves in different contexts, to experience new perspectives on how to relate to other people.’*

(Cowie, Sharp 1994:71)

The main focus of the evaluation of the use of literature focussed on the use of *The Heartstone Odyssey* the story of a young Indian girl’s experiences in Britain where she encounters racism and racial stereotypes. The story also establishes a context of inequality and injustice in the broadest sense. *‘Through discussion of the story, teachers can establish a forum where pupils can talk openly about the unjust and violent treatment which some groups of people encounter in their everyday lives, including their own experiences’.* (Cowie, Sharp 1994a: 104)

In the evaluation it was found that the story was engaging and 39% of pupils could remember strategies used in the story to combat bullying. In one more intense evaluation the researchers found that the bullies reported stopping bullying while the story was being read, the victims, who noted that they were not bullied during that period of time, confirmed this. In the classes where the teachers spent time exploring the meaning of the story and held discussions about bullying and racism there was a noted increase in pupils reporting that they would seek help if they were bullied.

Cowie and Sharp identify a number of general issues in their review of using the curriculum to tackle bullying. This approach is viewed as a vehicle for raising awareness of the nature of bullying for both pupils and teachers who are able to

enter into the pupils' world through the resultant discussion. They note the need for time to be spent in this area and that *'approaches that involve pupils regularly, and over time seem to have a more positive effect than those which are by their very nature confined to short-term exploration within the curriculum, such as playing a single video'*. (Cowie, Sharp 1994a: 107)

## **2.42 Pupil Empowerment Strategies**

The second group of strategies used in the Sheffield pilot schools all related to the use of pupil empowerment approaches (Sharp & Cowie 1994). The aim of these strategies is to provide pupils with approaches that will enable them to deal with a bullying incident should it arise.

### **2.42.1 Collaborative conflict resolution.**

This is identified as being a strategy and involves teaching all the pupils in the group how to negotiate their way out of a potential bullying or conflict situation. Based on traditional conflict resolution strategies the aim is that the pupils develop the skills needed to achieve a resolution in a threatening situation using communication, negotiation and mediation. For this to be successful the pupils need to develop the twin skills of expressing their feelings in a clear, direct and honest way combined with an ability to listen carefully to someone else. It has also been identified that pupils need to have other strengths such as *'respect for self and others; open mindedness and critical thinking; empathy and co-operation'*. (Walker, 1989) All participants need to have the desire to arrive at a resolution that is a win-win situation. Pupils need to recognise that when a conflict is unable to be resolved by communication and negotiation the chances of a win-win solution diminish. Then others need to be brought into the frame.

A six-stage model for resolution was taught:

- identify 'wants' and 'needs': *say what you want and why you want it, be very specific;*
- listen: *Listen carefully to what the other person says they want and*

*need; if they are not clear about it, ask them to be more specific;*

- brainstorm possible solutions: *think of all the possible ways you might solve the problem; don't discuss whether you think they are good or bad;*
- choose a fair solution; *reconsider each idea and choose solutions which will make everyone feel like a winner;*
- make an action plan: *when you have agreed on one idea, plan how you will put it into action - decide exactly who will do what and when.*

(Sharp & Cowie, 1994:111)

As well a mediation option was used where the participants in the dispute sought the assistance of a third party to help resolve the difficulty. The mediators, (another pupil, hopefully trained) concentrate on having the parties look ahead rather than spend too long going over the dispute.

### **Evaluation of conflict resolution procedures**

There is not evidence of a formal evaluation of these strategies as part of the Sheffield Project. Sharp and Cowie report that other researchers, principally Johnson and Johnson, (1991) have found the approach to be successful. They comment that:

Where conflict resolution and mediation skills are taught in school settings, interpersonal relationships are enhanced among the pupils and between teachers and pupils. In addition, all involved in the process will have learned strategies, which will serve them well when they encounter their next area of conflict.

(Sharp & Cowie, 1994:114)

#### **2.42.2 Peer Counselling.**

The next pupil empowerment strategy used in the project was a concept named peer counselling. This strategy obviously captured the imagination of the

researchers as they went on to produce a video and training package on the approach as well as publishing a book on it (Cowie & Sharp, 1996). The strategy involves training a number of senior pupil volunteers to act as contact points or pupil counsellors. The training is in basic helping skills and involves modules on active and reflective listening, dealing with confidences and such like. These volunteers then publicise their services and actively seek to provide support and advice for pupils who need help to overcome problems such as bullying. Carr (1988), quoted in Sharp and Cowie (1994:115), writes that:

Peer counsellors are people who put their caring into action by talking and listening to their peers about their thoughts, feelings and experiences. While they may give advice and other practical assistance when appropriate, they primarily encourage self-exploration and decision-making.

The strategy is based on the belief that '*when faced with worries, frustrations and fears, adolescent pupils are far more likely to turn to their peers than to an adult*' (Sharp and Thompson, 1992 quoted in Sharp and Cowie (1994:115)). In order to establish a safe, open environment, schools need to constantly seek ways of encouraging distressed or abused pupils to seek help.

In discussing the introduction of a peer counselling service in school, Sharp and Cowie address four key areas that impact ethically and organisationally; confidentiality, responsibility, training and supervision. They note that it is essential that the pupil-based service be seen as complementing existing professional support services and not replacing them.

In my visits to a number of schools in Britain, I was able to look at a number of very active peer counselling services in action. Of great concern was the evidence that in several schools the adults responsible for the service were not adequately supervising the counsellors. I raised this issue with Helen Cowie and

wrote a brief article on my impressions of the intervention for the Peer Counselling Networker (1995), a newsletter published to support the peer counselling initiative. I stressed my view that there needs to be quality supervision of the peer counsellors. The Peer Counsellor must not be seen as anything other than an accessible contact point for shy, isolated or vulnerable children who find it dreadfully difficult to make contact with teachers and other school-based support personnel. Any school that fails to provide adequate adult supervision and to emphasise the need for the peer counsellors to report is in danger of placing the pupils involved at great personal risk. There is a strong probability that once the peer counsellors gain the trust of vulnerable younger pupils, they will be confided in on complex issues such as drug taking and suicide. Any use of this approach demands quality training, supervision and support.

### **Evaluation of the peer counselling service**

The service was evaluated in terms of the value placed on it by pupils. Thorndon, (1993) reported that nineteen pupil counsellors and sixty randomly selected pupils in years seven, nine and eleven were interviewed. Mainly younger pupils had used the service; thirty three percent of year seven pupils indicated that they would use it. Monitoring the actual usage of the 'counsellors' corroborated this. *'Almost all of the pupils who were interviewed felt that the service was a good idea and felt that it contributed positively to the school's anti-bullying strategies'* (Sharp and Cowie 1994:120).

The researchers identified problems in that some pupils worried about the confidentiality of the service and teaching staff found it difficult to provide the necessary support and supervision of the counsellors. They do conclude however that;

The service demonstrated that pupils can be effectively involved in

tackling the problem in bullying and in assuming supportive roles for their peers, but also that schools must be thorough in planning how such a service might be implemented.

(Sharp and Cowie, 1994:121).

The Peer Counselling Networker (renamed Peer Support Networker) has highlighted the issue a number of times. The newsletter is largely the work of Helen Cowie and in its two editions each year advertises suitable training opportunities for both teachers and parents interested in the approach (Peer Support Networker, Issue 6, 1997). It is significant that both newsletter and approach have changed from Counsellor to Supporter, reflecting a much greater awareness of the limited support (rather than counselling) role of the pupil volunteers.

#### **2.42.3 Assertiveness training for bullied pupils**

Working on the understanding that bullied pupils lacked assertion skills and that victims of bullying had lower self-esteem and that this decreased with the frequency of bullying, (as established by Boulton and Smith, (1994)), the project encouraged schools to assist victimised pupils in developing assertive skills. The aim of this was to help victims of bullying by:

...broadening the range of coping strategies available to them when faced with bullying situations providing opportunities to rehearse implementing assertive strategies to resolve bullying situations; helping them to feel more self-confident and increase self-esteem.

(Sharp and Cowie, 1994:124)

Sharp and Cowie note that their teachers nominated more boys than girls for inclusion in social support groups. This recognition of boys who have been victims of bullying rather than girls is not born out but the equal numbers of both

boys and girls reporting being bullied in large surveys. They further comment that:

The worrying implication of this is that girls who are victims of bullying may be overlooked; perhaps because bullying amongst girls is more likely to be indirect and therefore less easy to detect; or perhaps because the role of passive bullied pupil is assumed to be 'normal' for girls.

(Sharp and Cowie, 1994:124).

The project supported and monitored six groups of pupils in three schools, which ran for approximately seven weeks.

The Pupils were taught how to:

- make assertive statements;
- resist manipulation and threats;
- respond to name-calling;
- leave a bullying situation;
- enlist support from bystanders;
- boost their own self-esteem;
- remain calm in stressful situations.

(Sharp and Cowie, 1994:125)

### **Evaluation of assertiveness training**

Using self-esteem-measuring tools the researchers found that the support groups successfully increased the self-esteem of the targeted pupils. Checks two terms later found that while this had dropped slightly it remained on a much higher level than prior to the establishment of the groups. This retention was more significant in the one school that maintained the group after the project finished.



Seventy-one percent of the pupils 'felt more confident as a result of the sessions' and when asked how they would respond to a variety of bullying scenarios, there was 'a significant change in the coping strategies preferred by the pupils'. This corresponded with a sixty-eight per cent decrease in being bullied at the final interview. 'Eighty-five per cent of the pupils said that they had applied the assertiveness techniques to situations around the school' (Sharp and Cowie, 1994:127). The pupils had found it difficult to apply these new skills outside the school.

#### **2.42.4 Conclusion: Pupil Empowerment Strategies**

At the conclusion of their chapter Empowering Pupils, Sharp and Cowie make a number of pertinent observations that highlight the importance of these strategies that 'often remain hidden within the peer culture of the pupils';

By providing pupils with the skills to be assertive, to be supportive of each other, to resolve conflict constructively, schools help the pupils to help themselves.

Although all pupils can potentially benefit from learning about these kinds of interventions, they are more likely to be effective if they are implemented as part of a cohesive and thought-out drive against bullying behaviour.

(Sharp and Cowie, 1994:131)

### ***2.5 Interventions to stop bullying behaviour***

The project also provided the pilot schools with a number of strategies that they could use to stop bullying pupils and to intervene directly when they are aware of bullying. While the literature identifies the importance of the school 'ethos' and the influence it has on pupils anti-social behaviour, these anti-bullying approaches recognise that bullying is inevitable and that individual teachers need specific strategies beyond the general school wide approach to deal with these

cases. In their chapter on direct interventions, in Smith and Sharp (1994), Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994) discuss three ways of dealing with pupils who are in bullying relationships:

- the Method of Shared Concern;
- the No Blame Approach
- Bully courts or school tribunals

### **2.51 The Method of Shared Concern (Pikas)**

Initially named the method of Common Concern, this way of dealing with bullying was developed by Anatol Pikas a professional psychologist at Upsalla University in Sweden. In his discussion of the approach he stresses the importance of differentiating between the two most common types of bullying (Pikas 1989). Firstly, the single bully operating alone against an individual or a group, and secondly the more common school bullying, ‘mobbing’, where more than one bully attacks physically or emotionally one pupil, or a group of pupils on a number of occasions.

Pikas explains that there are two distinct approaches available to be used depending on both the situation and the type of bullying. When pupils are under nine, where the bullying is of the first type and when the method of shared concern will not work or is not working the direct approach to the bully is suggested. This involves the adult confronting the bully about their behaviour and telling them unambiguously that the behaviour must stop. In other circumstances (group bullying with pupils ages at least nine) Pikas suggests that Shared Concern is the right approach.

The main thrust of the Method of Shared Concern is to ‘reindividualise’ the members of the bullying group. This is based on the premise that the members of the bully group participate either actively or passively in the abuse and rationalise their actions in a variety of ways, usually denying the victim’s suffering.

The Shared Concern approach aims to bring the '*conscious awareness of the feelings of unease or shame which individual group members have about the group's bullying behaviour*'. The teacher or counsellor, through a series of individual chats, establishes an area of 'common concern' with the various members of the group. Rather than attempt to 'get to the bottom of it' or to apportion blame, the adult strives to gain consensus that things are not good for the bullied child. It is hoped that this will bring about change in each member of the bullying group. The process takes place in three stages with typically one week separating each event:

1. Individual members of the bully-group and the victim are seen individually, beginning with the identified 'ringleader' and ending with the victim.
2. Follow up interviews to review progress
3. A final group meeting with everyone present.

Pikas provides teacher scripts to be used during the first stage 'chat', believing that this must be carefully structured. After the common concern is established, each of the individual pupils is encouraged to suggest ways of making the situation for the victim better. They are also asked to help think of how they could be enacted. They then agree to work on putting this solution into place. In interviewing the victim the adult needs to give the victim a chance to talk about the abuse and to make an assessment to see if the victim is provocative and also needs to moderate his or her behaviour. As in the bully interviews an action plan is made and a contact devised.

A second interview follows and is a check on progress and also to set up the group meeting that will follow in a week. The final interview brings all the participants together to put an end to the behaviour.

## **Evaluation of the Pikas method**

This method follows a closely prescribed format that details not only the script but also the setting and timing of the meetings. Consequently for it to be used as intended it is essential that the adults receive training. Olweus, amongst others has been outspoken in his criticism of the approach<sup>10</sup> suggesting that the more direct method is the correct one.

Twenty-one teachers representing both primary and secondary schools were trained in the method as part of the Sheffield Project. Of these, twelve used the method and reported it being successful and appropriate. Extensive evaluation involved interviews with thirty pupils and six teachers (Smith, Cowie & Sharp 1994). Seventy-five per cent of the pupils reported that in the short term the situation had improved.

They (the pupils) attributed this success to being offered the opportunity to express their feelings and perspectives on the situation individually as well as being encouraged to propose their own solutions rather than having one imposed by an adult.

(Smith, Cowie & Sharp 1994:201)

Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994) noted that the method requires the teacher or adult involved having plenty of free time to put the strategy in place. Consequently the school administration needs to be supportive. They stress the practice needs to be one of a range available to the school and needs to be supported by a general school-wide anti-bully practice.

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<sup>10</sup> Olweus challenges Pikas' claim that pupils who bully others feel guilt and argues instead that clinical evidence shows the opposite: pupils who bully others do not show empathy for their victims' feelings. Olweus points out that the method does not include involvement with parents and considers that this is a weakness since parents could co-operate with the teacher to reinforce and sustain the changed attitudes and behaviours. His most stringent criticism is that the method is unethical since it is 'built on manipulation and latent threats' disguised as co-operation between the bullying pupil and the teacher. Olweus (1988) as quoted in Smith, Cowie & Sharp (1994:200)

## 2.52 The No Blame Approach

As in the Pikas approach, the No Blame Approach developed by Maines and Robinson (1992) is firmly set within the pupil's social group. The approach works on the premise that to deal with bullying it is essential that the social dynamic is taken into account.

The bully is a powerful and influential member of the social group who enhances his or her group status at the expense of others. In order to stop this abuse, it is necessary to tap into the repressed group co-operative values and natural empathy and use this to change the style of interaction within the group to become more positive. As with the Pikas method, there is an effort to highlight the shared concern present within the group though this time it all happens within the group context.

The no blame method follows a seven-stage process that I have summarised in the following way:

**1. Interview the victim.** Concentrate on supporting and congratulating the victim in confiding in you. Stress that this is the most important first step. *“Don’t try to get to the bottom of it.”* Rather concentrate on convincing the victim that it is the behaviour of the other pupils that is aberrant, not theirs. They have done nothing wrong and they have every right to be left in peace. Discuss how it feels to be bullied, share the experience and the common human feelings of loneliness that comes from being isolated and rejected.

Tell the victim that you are going to work with the bullies and some others in the class/group to get them to understand the effect their behaviour or lack of support is having on one of their classmates. Ask the victim to suggest who they admire/look up to in the class or group and suggest that you will include them in the group discussion the next day. Ask her/him to spend some time putting down

their feeling on paper that night. (Many victims of bullying start diary writing as a counter to the isolation from their peer group.) Explain that you will share these feelings with the group in an effort to end the bullying.

2. **Consult with teachers who know the peer group well** to ensure that you are able to assemble a balanced group to look at the bullying. Try to have the main bully, his/her two main supporters, one or two bystanders who have been friends of the victim in the past as well as two dominant, assertive class members who have abdicated their responsibility to stop the bullying behaviour.

3. **Convene a meeting** of this group (**do not include the victim**) allowing at least thirty minutes.

4. **Explain that there is a problem in the class/group.** That (victim's name) is very unhappy and tells of her/his feelings. Share the feelings of the victim by reading a piece of written work or explaining the meaning behind a drawing, poem or song lyric supplied by the victim. **Don't get into details and certainly don't apportion blame.**

5. Discuss the concept of **group responsibility** if necessary, though allow the group to discuss the why the victim is feeling the way they are. This may lead to a larger discussion of class dynamics.

6. Each group member is then encouraged to **suggest ways the victim's problem may be solved** (i.e. made to feel happier). There is no need to solicit promises.

**Re-convene in about a week** to discuss progress stressing that you are leaving it up to them to support the victim.

### **Evaluation of the No Blame Approach**

Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994), despite noting the encouraging reports from

both teachers and pupils, are lukewarm in their evaluation of the approach. They feel the case study approach, the limited numbers and a lack of understanding of how the process works causes them to have reservation.

However, Young (1998) reports on the use of a slightly modified no blame approach as part of the Kingston upon Hull Special Educational Needs Support Service Anti-Bullying Project. She provides independent corroborative evidence of Maines and Robinson's (1992) findings that the approach is effective<sup>11</sup>.

Almost in answer to the indirect and muffled criticism of the approach in Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994), Young's paper not only provides solid quantitative information<sup>12</sup> (Young, 1998:36) she also provides a psychological context for the approach's success fixing within the 'applied brief therapy' setting. Young describes how 'brief therapy' (developed in the USA during the eighties as a response to dissatisfaction with time taken with traditional psychoanalysis) is a similar approach.

It was also recognised that many clients only attended the first session of psychotherapy. In order to be effective, brief therapists took account of this and developed a concentrated structure of questions to move clients towards the solution, rather than concentrating on the feelings and experiences within the problem.

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<sup>11</sup> A small-scale evaluation carried out by the Psychology Service Task Group and postgraduate Bristol University pupils focused on the first group of teachers trained in the No Blame Approach. It was found that two primary teachers between them used the approach to successfully end the bullying eight times and eight secondary teachers used it forty-nine times with forty-seven successes. (Mains and Robinson, 1992)

<sup>12</sup>The Kingston upon Hull Special Educational Needs Support Service used the approach in 55 cases over a two year period (70% of referrals). There was a 100% success rate for the 51 primary pupils. (Young, 1998:36).

When working to manipulate a system, small changes can lead to profound changes. Indeed, any changes in a system will inevitably lead to further change. Solving the problem, therefore, concerns making the small difference that makes all the difference, creating a virtuous instead of vicious circle.

(Young, 1998:37)

The No Blame approach is a successful strategy (Young, 1998, Robinson and Maines, 1997). It operates within the pupils' social context effecting real change rather than being an externally imposed change, as is advocated by Olweus. It has a distinct advantage over the approach advocated by Pikas in that it recognises the differences between individuals acting alone and the group phenomenon. By using the group, the adult acknowledges its power, and provides an opportunity for the group to reflect on their behaviour and to use the real opinions of the individual members rather than an assumed group opinion. In other words rather than manipulate the group, the facilitator of the process enables the individuals to reflect and communicate effectively.

I have used the approach a number of times and provide a detailed discussion of the approach in a later chapter. (Chapter 5.3, 5.4).

### **2.53 School tribunals or ‘bully courts’**

Pupil tribunals have a long tradition and were a feature of A.S. Neill’s Summerhill. More recently in the guise of 'bully courts' they have again received significant media attention. In Britain, 'Kidscape' advocated their use in 1990 as part of their high profile anti-bullying campaign led by parent advocate Michelle Elliot. A one-page strategy advice sheet was issued to schools advocating the use of an ‘honours court’. Made up of four pupils<sup>13</sup> and one teacher, the court would meet weekly with the responsibility of finding solutions

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<sup>13</sup> Two elected by their peers, two appointed by the teaching staff.



to and imposing penalties for the breaking of school rules. The initiative attracted the attention of three national newspapers; Guardian (12 April and 22 June 1990) the Independent (15 April 1990) and the Sunday Times (6 May 1990). These articles highlighted the courts were in operation and had the support of teacher organisations. Two indicated that the courts were operating in over thirty schools but provided virtually no information on where and how they were operating.

None of the twenty-three Sheffield Project schools adopted the strategy despite a number expressing interest. Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994) report that Michelle Elliot carried out an evaluation of the courts stating a reduction of bullying in one school from seventy percent to six percent during a three month investigation of the court's use in one school. They comment that:

Frustratingly little evidence is available on this highly publicised method...But the ideal of a pupil court...to deal with bullying matters remains an interesting one.

Smith, Cowie and Sharp (1994:211)

In most school settings bully courts would face many difficulties. Delegation of authority and identification of particular issues that should be referred to the courts are but two of the logistical problems that would face schools. Unless the school administration placed a great deal of faith in the process they would lack the necessary prestige. Clearly while Bully courts appeal, they would inevitably be too difficult to administer and maintain.

### **Conclusion: The Sheffield Project**

The Sheffield Project remains the most significant investigation of the efficacy of a wide range of anti-bullying initiatives. Building on the work of Olweus it provides a huge resource for schools, administrators and researchers. The resultant publications have added greatly to our understanding of school bullying and more importantly provide a helpful reference for all interested parties.

One of the most tangible effects of the Sheffield anti-bullying project was the production in September 1994 of the Department for Education publication *Bullying' don't suffer in silence*. Accompanied by a teacher in-service training video the eight-part folder was made available to all schools in England. The intention of work is stated in the introduction:

The pack is intended to assist schools in developing an effective whole-school approach against bullying behaviour. Its main recommendation is that all schools should establish an anti-bullying policy, linked with, but in addition to, the school's behaviour policy.

Department for Education (1994:6)

Of significance is that the self-described core text focuses solely on the development of a whole-school policy on bullying. This clearly validates the view that this process is, in the eyes of the team associated with the Sheffield project, the key to effectively combating bullying.

The work in Sheffield has expanded the knowledge base for practitioners and has greatly increased the range of options available to schools in countering bullying. The research has provided a huge amount of information that has made it easier for teachers and schools to identify bullying and also for choosing an intervention that suits them.

## ***2.6 Scotland***

While the work in the Sheffield project added much to our knowledge of bullying and gave a good indication of effective ways of dealing with the behaviour, a good deal of practical work had also been undertaken in various parts of Scotland. One of the most significant was the production of the "Action Against Bullying" pack developed by the Scottish Council for Research in Education and distributed to all Scottish schools by the Scottish Office Education

Department in 1992. This was also made available to English schools in 1993. Prior to this the only advice available to Scottish teachers confronted with bullying, was a single sentence contained in the report from the Committee on Truancy and Indiscipline in Schools in Scotland (1977): *When detected, bullying and extortion should be dealt with firmly and quickly.*

The attendance of two Scottish teachers at the European teachers' seminar on "Bullying in Schools" in Stravanger, Norway during 1989 led to a campaign for action against bullying largely led by one of the attendees, Andrew Mellor. He described his efforts to gain official support for such an initiative in a paper presented at the Conference on Children's Peer Relationships, Co-operation and Conflict held at the University of South Australia, Adelaide in January 1994. While he recognised the need for the creation of a climate of concern, he began by establishing a knowledge base through research. Using the methodology established by Roland, he carried out a pilot research project using confidential questionnaires completed by 153 12-14 year old boys and girls from three secondary schools in southwest Scotland.

The research results were sufficient for him to receive funding for a larger scale project from the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) involving ten Scottish Secondary Schools. This survey, supported by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) and supervised by Pamela Munn the SCRE Depute Director, found that in the sample schools there was a remarkable similarity with the figures the Norwegian survey had uncovered:

6% of Scottish pupils said that they had been bullied recently, the same figure for the 12-16 group in Norway. The number of children who said that they had bullied others was slightly lower in Scotland, 4% as opposed to 7%.

(Mellor, 1994:207)

What he found significant was the variation in bullying rates between the

schools. As in the Norwegian surveys, these differences could not be explained by the size of the schools, their geographical locations or by the social class of the parents of the pupils. The most important conclusion was that some schools were apparently successful in containing bullying.

It was as a result of an investigation into these successful schools and a further examination of the international research that led Mellor to state that there were several preconditions necessary for a school to combat bullying successfully:

\*Recognition- schools must be honest about admitting that bullying exists.

\*Openness - opportunities must be provided for people to talk about bullying without fear of rebuff or retribution

\*Ownership - if parents, teachers and pupils are involved in formulating an anti-bullying policy they will have a vested interest in making sure that it succeeds

(Mellor: 1990)

This research combined with the growing publicity led the SCRE to develop their *School Action Against Bullying* (SCRE, 1991) a support pack that was made available to Scottish schools. It was distributed to all Scottish schools and subsequently to schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. (By 1994, over 40,000 copies of the kit had been sold internationally.)

At the beginning of 1993 the SOED agreed to the creation of the full time position of Scottish Anti-bullying Development Officer filled by Andrew Mellor again under the supervision of Pamela Munn of SCRE. The initiative aimed to:

- provide advice, information and training
- work with education authorities which are developing their own initiatives
- carry out school-based studies with the aim of producing support

materials

(Mellor, 1994:208)

The Scottish Schools Anti-Bullying Initiative (SSABI) had an immediate impact in supporting schools that wished to combat bullying and Mellor's appointment was extended into 1995.

They quickly developed an approach that emphasised the need for schools to become committed to the three principles mentioned earlier; *recognition, openness and ownership*. A strong theme of 'building better relationships' was given priority and Mellor was successful in gaining a high degree of media exposure that ensured the message was received widely and that the initiative was more than a flash in the pan.

The response to the initial kit led to the publication of the second support pack, known generally as the Second SCRE Anti-bullying pack (Munn, 1993), which had a greater emphasis on involving families and non-teaching staff in anti-bullying work. This pack provided further advice for head-teachers in involving their community, (Munn, 1993) and a specific guide for parents (Mellor: 1993a).

The emphasis on bullying had a nation-wide impact with the various regions adopting a range of strategies to support their schools.

### **2.61 Tayside**

In response to a perceived need to deal effectively with school bullying, the Tayside Region established a specialist three-member bullying/truancy team in early 1993. The team members came from diverse backgrounds; one teacher, one social worker and one educational psychologist. They successfully used their range of skills to provide an appropriate and worthwhile service to the schools of

Tayside. The team supported individual schools to combat bullying by providing in-depth staff awareness raising training and access to intervention strategies.

Centred in Dundee, the team began by establishing a telephone help-line that was part of a large-scale publicity campaign. They also arranged for the specialist intervention training based on the Pikas method of “Common Concern”.

The Help-line was initiated in 1993 and carried on into 1994. It proved to be enormously popular and was very well received. The free-phone line was worked in conjunction with the Childline organisation and was supported by British Gas and the Dundee Safer Cities Project and the Tayside Regional Council. The volume of calls overwhelmed the organisations with the main problem being the difficulty of contacts gaining a free line. The service was promoted by a range of publicity leaflets (given to all school age pupils in the Tayside area), key rings with the number printed on them and large posters.

The main focus of the intervention team was the provision of training to individual schools and organisations. In their first year of operation the team delivered 162 school-based training sessions covering 64 separate schools, both primary and secondary (25% of the regional teaching staff).

In order to train the region’s Education Support Staff in the Common Concern Method, Anatol Pikas was brought to Dundee. The method was further advocated and enhanced by the development of a regional training package for use by these specialists and other school counselling personnel. By January 1995, the method was *‘becoming recognised as an effective way of dealing with difficult cases.’* (Ballantine et al, 1995).

The Tayside team, as a last option in eight difficult cases, used the method,

where it provided ‘a short, focussed input to assist the individuals and families involved’ (ibid.). They also provided advice and support to a range of regional education staff dealing with individual cases.

### **2.61.1 Case Study Craigie High School**

As part of my Nuffield Travel Bursary, I spent several days with the Tayside team and was able to visit several schools they had worked with. An illustration of the Tayside Anti-bullying initiative was the excellent work I witnessed being carried out at Craigie High School, Dundee.

Craigie High School is an inner city full secondary established in 1970 with a 1995 roll of 550 pupils. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds with the majority coming from a large council housing area.

The school became involved with the Tayside Anti-bullying initiative in 1993. The process was comprehensive and involved as a starting point the development of a school bullying policy (a prerequisite of involvement). Rather than develop the policy in isolation, the school chose to go through ‘a values clarification’ exercise during 1994 where the values important to Craigie were identified by a staff and parent working party. A staff pupil survey was used in the information collection stage. One of the key values identified was the desire to have a safe and secure environment. This led to the formation of an anti-bullying committee that involved parents, staff and the region’s anti-bullying team that planned the development of the policy and its implementation.

The process began with an open evening for parents led by the regional anti-bullying team, where the issue of bullying was discussed and the initiative was explained. This was followed by a half-day in-service course for all staff, and

later by a half-day course for all year 6 pupils.

Both courses were led by the anti-bullying team and were very positively received. The staff made a commitment to deal with every case of bullying consistently and swiftly using a range of strategies that were discussed as part of the training.

The senior pupils agreed to form two anti-bullying teams; one using the senior boys the other the senior girls. Both teams were involved in raising awareness amongst the juniors and were supervised by members of the guidance staff. There was recognition that the junior pupils who were being victimised were much more likely to seek support from a peer or an older pupil than approach a staff member.

The next initiative was the development of curriculum materials to heighten the awareness of the junior school. They opted for a compulsory English unit that was imbedded in the course structure and taught to all junior pupils. The unit was very much activity based and included drama and role-play.

A further part of the initiative was the reinforcement of the anti-bullying message in the school's regular newsletter and the ongoing reference to the issue at school wide forums such as assemblies.

The principal, Mr David May, reported that the whole process had an overarching emphasis on relationships and self-esteem. In an interview he noted the pivotal role of the anti-bullying team whose 'expertise and leadership' was vital to the success of the initiative. They were able to respond immediately to a crisis situation and provide a huge amount of information to guide the school through the process. The in-service training was first rate and a key to gaining the total commitment of the staff and parents.



An extension of the campaign was the playground development programme. The staff pupil survey identified the physical environment as one of the main irritants in the provision of a safe area. The Dundee climate (lots of rain) meant that for much of the year the green areas were out of bounds and the pupils were crammed into confined areas. As a result, the school began a full playground redesign. Using local funds and grants a number of 'quiet' spaces and games areas were developed. The pupils were involved in the design process and the range of activities available at break-time has been increased. A huge effort was put into improving the type and quality of play with, according to the principal, quite some success.

The development of an anti-bullying ethos was successful and, according to Mr May, has reinforced the school culture of promoting positive relationships. The retention rates at the school have risen and there has been an increase in the number of pupils seeking help when a difficulty with another pupil arises.

## **2.62 Strathclyde**

The Anti-bullying approach adopted in Scotland's largest Local Education Area primarily focussed on the development of a top class resource package that would support schools in the development of anti-bullying initiatives. The commitment to the resource kit by the LEA is part of a number of ongoing approaches to deal with 'social and emotional difficulties, abuse and indiscipline' (Strathclyde policy on Bullying and Indiscipline, 1994).

In 1992, in recognition that teachers have a key role to play in developing a safe school environment, the region launched a package, *Promoting Positive Behaviours* aimed at teachers, assisting them in developing their own assertiveness so that they do not abuse their authority and inadvertently encourage bullying and intolerance.

During 1994, over 10,000 pupils in schools in the Strathclyde region were surveyed about their experience of and views on bullying. The results indicated that 10% of the children surveyed said that bullying had adversely affected their views on school and that 5% of children reported having been bullied on a daily basis for years.

The August 1994 Regional Policy on Bullying established a number of policy principles that were intended to act as a framework for schools in dealing with bullying and indiscipline:

2.1 Bullying is something, which happens in a relationship that involves some form of hurtful abuse of power. It may be:

Verbal -as in name calling or making personal comments

Social -like not being spoken to or being left out of activities

Material -as when possessions are stolen, damaged or extortion takes place

Mental -as when pressure to conform is applied

Physical -as in physical assault.

(The types of bullying are further developed in this section, as are the “rewards” children can achieve through bullying.)

2.2 In order to establish an effective strategy for dealing with bullying, schools were required to incorporate the following principles into their policies and approaches.

- Traditional ideas about bullying and punishment need to be challenged;
- Clear messages must be given that bullying is not acceptable;
- Parents and children must be reassured that the school is dealing with bullying seriously;
- A partnership should be developed with parents in dealing with

bullying across the school;

- A climate of openness should be established in the way that issues and incidents of bullying are addressed.

2.3 A whole school approach to bullying based on these principles should then develop to support a school ethos, which is firmly based on equality of opportunity, mutual respect and co-operation. It is important that within **every** school there is recognition of the pervasive nature of bullying and the damage it causes, and there should be a clear public statement of acknowledgement of the problem of bullying and how the school intends to tackle it. This will usually be in the form of a policy statement for the school, on bullying, social and emotional development, or school ethos.

(A Policy on Bullying, 1994:2-3)

The policy statement then outlined the process to implement an anti-bullying policy. It comments that *'There is much evidence to show that the traditional punitive response to misbehaviour is not appropriate.'* (A policy on Bullying, 1994:3) Stressing the need for positive action rather than relying on punishment, the policy includes ten 'indicators of good practice' (with specific action ideas as a subsection-not included here):

- i. Setting the right ethos
- ii. Encouraging the reporting of bullying
- iii. Raising awareness
- iv. Linking the formal and informal curriculum
- v. Supporting bullied children
- vi. Involving the silent majority
- vii. Changing the bullying behaviour
- viii. Dealing with problem areas and times
- ix. The communication of policy and strategy

x. Monitoring and evaluation

(A policy on Bullying, 1994:3-5)

**Strathclyde anti-bullying curriculum resource**

In 1994, the Local Education Authority (LEA) contracted the University of Strathclyde Faculty of Education to develop a package of anti-bullying training materials. The aim was to enable the individual schools to present a range of workshops for parents, teachers and senior pupils and an outline for awareness raising sessions with junior pupils. Written by Alan McLean, Principal Psychologist, Glasgow Northeast, the very comprehensive pack includes a video where a number of pupils and adults describe the impact bullying has had on them.

A precondition of using the 1995 “Bullyproofing our School: Promoting Positive Relationships” is the attendance of at least two staff members at an in-service course run by the LEA educational psychological service.

Apart from the video, the resource kit contains eight booklets each with a different focus and with overlapping content:

Book 1 Users Guide.

This booklet provides an overview of the programme, discusses the focus of the programme and details the aims of the various workshops. An overview of the video is given complete with suggestions for discussing the contents. A full transcript of the video is included. As well as providing all the necessary overhead transparency masters and a useful bibliography, the appendices include an excellent list of relevant children’s literature; a sample letter to parents and a bullying survey form.

### Book 2 Teacher Workshop.

Included in this comprehensive workshop is a statement of aims, outcomes and general guidelines. A number of core activities are identified and these are split into three distinct groups to allow for a three-part delivery. The programme includes a wide range of activities with indications of the minimum time needed for each activity. An emphasis is given to providing an answer as to why bullying happens before moving onto what can be done. Acknowledging what the teachers think about bullying and the development of a definition should precede this. Other topics in the workshop are:

- 4 How can we bullyproof our school?
- 4 Managing name-calling.
- 4 Making the most of your playground.

### Book 3 Parent Workshop

Allowing for a two-hour session the aims and objectives of a workshop are provided. These involve opening up a positive dialogue with the parent community so that they can better help children alleviate the problem and to give the parents the opportunity to be involved in the development of a school policy. Parents will gain a clear view of the nature and signs of bullying and the effects of the behaviour. They should become more willing to report bullying and understand that the school finds the behaviour unacceptable. A range of ways of supporting bullied children is explored.

The programme allows for the discussion of parental concerns as well as working through four key topics:

What do you think about bullying?

What is bullying?

Why does it happen?

What can I do?

A parent advice pamphlet is also provided to give to parents as they leave the

meeting.

#### Book 4 Senior Pupil Workshop

The booklet details a three-hour session for senior pupils. It aims to:

Develop their awareness of the issues that surround bullying.

Provide vital feedback on the level and nature of bullying in the school.

Involve them in the formulation and development of policies and practices for dealing with it.

Encourage them to offer support and advice to younger pupils.

A more precise statement of objectives is included as well as a detailed programme, complete with the necessary activity sheets and overhead transparency masters.

#### Book 5 Pupil Programme

The central booklet of the series provides enough material for nine forty-minute lessons on bullying. The aim of the programme are stated as:

To communicate to pupils that bullying is the responsibility of all pupils.

To communicate to pupils that bullying is unacceptable and should be reported.

To help pupils discuss and develop their views on bullying.

To help pupils develop a range of strategies for dealing with bullying.

Six core units are identified:

Ideas about bullying

Definition

Why it's hard to tell?

Learning from experience

Reporting bullying

What we can do?

Advice over the structure and timing of the programme is given. At least three sessions are necessary and the comment is made that a concentrated programme

over a few weeks had been found to be more effective than a course spread over many weeks. Clear advice is given that adequate support structures must be in place for pupils who are in bullying relationships when the programme is being delivered. It is also suggested that for parts of the programme the composition of pupils groups needs to be carefully considered with the suggestion that separate boys and girls groups would be appropriate at certain stages of the programme.

### Book 6 Early Stages Storylines

This booklet is unique amongst anti-bullying resource kits as it specifically targets very young school pupils. The aims of the 'storylines' are given as:

To communicate to young people that bullying is unacceptable and should be reported.

To make children aware of their own and others' feelings.

To help young children and parents develop a range of strategies for dealing with bullying.

In commenting on the use of the programme it suggests that it can be used on its own to promote thinking and to develop strategies for dealing with a bullying situation. It can also be integrated into a wide variety of other programmes as the issues dealt with correspond to strands and levels of personal and social development, religious and moral education and environment studies.

The kit contains six storylines with a 'background' for each story and characters to put into place on the background.

### Book 7 Photocopy Masters

An integral part of the whole package, this folder provides single sheet photocopy masters for all the overheads, worksheets, activities and handouts, needed to deliver the programme.

### Book 8 Background Reading for Schools

Possibly the weakest part of the package this twenty-page booklet expands and provides limited extra information for those using the kit. While the section on improving the playground; “Making the most of the Playground” provides some useful advice the rest of the booklet is limited and lacks the depth and insight that most practitioners would find helpful. Most of the advice is taken from the earlier workshop materials.

### **School visits in Strathclyde**

During my 1995 visit to Glasgow I spent several days looking at the Strathclyde initiative. As well as attending a day’s training session for schools wishing to use the kit, I visited several schools that had been involved with the development of the resource. One such school was Bellshill Academy.

#### **2.62.1 Case Study Bellshill Academy**

A good illustration of the anti-bullying at work in the Strathclyde region was at Bellshill Academy in suburban Glasgow. This 750-pupil school serves a community that had suffered from large-scale unemployment including the closure of the Ravenscroft Steelworks in 1992. (Half the pupils were assessed as being at risk).

The school had has significant involvement with the development of the regions anti-bullying resource kit being one of the trial schools. This was mainly due to the hard work and availability of Derek Goldman, a partnership officer at the school, who started the Bullyproofing initiative at the school. Mr Goldman’s position (a four-year trial funded jointly by the Scottish Office Education Department and Strathclyde LEA) was designed to ‘explore a variety of ways to improve home-school relations’. He had taken advantage of a loose job description to become involved in the early stages of the Strathclyde anti-bullying initiative working closely with pupils, teachers and homes.

The school had been impressed with the impact of the region's ‘Building Better



Behaviours<sup>14</sup> programme and become involved in the development of an anti-bullying strategy. This began in February 1994 with a voluntary in-service half-day. Supported by the region, the course involved thirty staff and forty parents, pupils and education workers. From then until March, a series of awareness raising activities took place, in English, at assembly etc. A year 3 (fifteen-year-olds) English class put together a drama group that worked on a number of role-plays on the topic of bullying. These were very well received. In June, the rest of the staff and a number of others from the parent body and wider community attended another in-service course. After this second training day, a core group was established to lead the initiative.

At the beginning of the new school year the drama group (named 'Shout') performed again at assembly and began being used to lead sessions at other schools. A range of resource materials was developed for use in the general curriculum. In September, a full compulsory in-service course was held using the Scottish Schools Anti-bullying Initiative Officer, Andrew Mellor. The members of the lead group facilitated the workshops and 'Shout' were used to provoke discussion.

In March, a parent evening was held to discuss the initiative and Shout once again successfully produced a number of role-plays and the actors took a leading role in the subsequent discussion.

When spoken to, Derek Goldman was convinced that the impact of the anti-bullying programme was profound. He described it as a practical, effective way of shifting the school ethos from one based on confrontation to one where

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<sup>14</sup> The region saw this teacher professional development project as an essential first step in improving relationships in schools. It targeted teacher attitudes and values and aimed at developing more co-operative and collaborative strategies amongst the profession.

collaborative relationships were being developed.

## ***2.7 Other International Research***

Over the last decade there have been significant research into bullying behaviour in many countries. The commonality of the bullying experience is the main theme in at least one of several international publications that have been produced in the last year (Smith et al 1999). While I have restricted my review of the scholarship to those locations that I have had personal experience with, there are several key developments of anti-bullying initiatives in Australia and the United States of America that deserve mention.

Of particular importance to New Zealand is the work of Rigby and Slee from the University of South Australia who have written prolifically on the subject. In 1991, they published the findings of their first investigations into school bullying that supported their contention that bullying was an issue for Australian school children. Using the Olweus survey tool as a guide they developed their Peer Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) (Rigby and Slee, 1993) which has been used extensively in Australia and in a more limited fashion in New Zealand since.

Rigby was largely responsible for organising an international gathering held in Adelaide in 1994. The Children's Peer Relations conference attracted a wide range of international experts and was significant in raising the profile of the issue in the country (Oxenberry et al 1994). The liaison between Rigby and the ACER has ensured that his publications have been available to New Zealand practitioners. As well there have been three articles directly about bullying that have appeared in the NZCER/ACER SET publications (Dickinson 1992, Cleary et al 1996, McLean 1998).

In the United States as elsewhere, the work of Olweus has been recognised. In one significant American study that investigated school based strategies that were effective in reducing crime, anti-bullying campaigns were identified as an

example of a strategy that worked to reduce delinquent behaviour (Sherman et al 1997). The publication, *'Preventing crime: what works, what doesn't, what's promising.'* was prepared for the National Institute of Justice, Washington and presented as a report to the United States Congress. In it anti-bullying programmes such as those developed by Olweus are recognised as being amongst the few that are effective.

There is general recognition that bullying has not received, until very recently, much attention in educational or in the scientific literature (Harachi et al 1999). Consequently there appears to be no standard definition of bullying used despite there being a wealth of US based research into delinquency, peer relationships, youth aggression and other associated issues.

The most recent US literature suggests that 'the critical next step is to develop or agree on a common definition of bullying and to specify clearly what behaviours are being included in the term' (Harachi et al 1999:291). We wait with anticipation for this development.

## ***2.8 Conclusions***

The international research into bullying over the last two decades has clearly signalled that the behaviour can be dealt with. The research has provided practitioners and parents with a concise definition of bullying and developed a body of knowledge about bullying. Further investigations including psychological and school studies have extended our understanding bullying. The research has established the preconditions that assist in the development of a bullying culture, the long-term impact of it on both victim and bully and more importantly identified strategies that help reduce its occurrence. There is little evidence yet that bullying can be eliminated though there is some evidence that given the right preconditions schools can reduce the likelihood of the behaviour becoming ingrained into the school's culture (Olweus 1993, Rigby 1996).

Working in Scandinavia, Olweus' research provided groundbreaking insight into bullying. By carefully defining the behaviour he was able to establish a comprehensive understanding of this aggressive behaviour that has plagued school children for generations. His large-scale investigations not only gave the world a large amount of information about the behaviour; they also identified the basic principles that assist in addressing the problem within a school community. By using these principles and some well-articulated goals Olweus was able to put in place an intervention that successfully reduced levels of bullying. This intervention, called the whole school approach, remains the basis for contemporary school-based anti-bullying interventions. Importantly Olweus noted the positive impact the interventions had on a range of other indicators.

By extending and replicating Olweus' work, British researchers have added enormously to the knowledge and understanding of bullying. Led by Smith, the Olweus Whole School Policy approach was successfully replicated in a number of British campuses. Detailed and large scale research projects (Sheffield and Strathclyde) demonstrated the international commonality of the bullying experience while the public airing of bullying in the media heightened the awareness of the devastating impact bullying had on victims. By identifying a range of successful strategies within the whole school approach the Sheffield project gave teachers, parents and schools a choice as to how to tackle bullying. This recognised that there were interventions beyond Olweus' direct approach and Pikas' method of shared concern.

The diverse, though both successful approaches adopted in Tayside and Strathclyde demonstrated that the most important issue is that bullying can be countered by taking action. Both models, one intensive and based on outside support and facilitation, the other school based and supported by quality resources, work and do reduce bullying. The cost of the Tayside approach would, I suspect, be viewed as prohibitive by most educational authorities. The action taken by the Scottish education authorities was decisive, unified and

effective and provides a good lead for education bodies around the world.

Despite the fact that the international scholarship has provided all teachers with a comprehensive framework within which effective anti-bullying strategies can be put in place, the problem of school bullying today is of greater concern than it was before the research. Olweus, Smith, Rigby and others have established a clear body of knowledge that both describes and explains the behaviour.

Extensive quantitative studies consolidate this knowledge with consistent and reliable data that appears to be consistent around the world. Many psychological (Cullingford, 1995, Farrington, 1993, Olweus, 1984, Smith, 1999,) and educational studies (Maines and Robinson, 1991, Sullivan, 1994) have established the damage the behaviour can cause on all involved. The knowledge is there and has been acknowledged by the educational community in most settings. The cohesive and corroborative nature of the international research would suggest that bullying behaviour, while being an inevitable consequence of grouping young people should be easily addressed. Unfortunately, there is a clear gap between the academic knowledge and school practice.

## **Chapter 3: Bullying in New Zealand Schools; Policy and Scholarship**

### ***3.1 Overview***

In comparison with the fully developed anti-bullying research in the United Kingdom, anti-bullying work in New Zealand could be described as being piecemeal. Lacking central co-ordination or a substantial input from government, a number of promising initiatives have failed to take off. There have been three main university-based research investigations that have focused on the issue of the experience of school children with violence. The information provided by these projects, the various postgraduate research projects, and individual school studies enable a limited picture of bullying in New Zealand to be developed. Only one locally developed curriculum programme, the Police resource *Kia Kaha*, (1993) deals directly with bullying though there are several other innovative approaches that aim to tackle issues of school violence and conflict. The *Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger* project and the *Cool Schools Project* are two such programmes.

#### **3.11 Ministry of Education**

In contrast to the approach in Britain, there has been a noticeable lack of central involvement in addressing bullying as a specific problem. While the Ministry of Education has hesitantly supported the use of anti-violence programmes such as *Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger*, (EVMA) it has not tackled the issue directly (the relationship between the Ministry of Education and the EVMA project is discussed in more detail in section 4.2). There has been no Ministry circular to schools dealing specifically with bullying and the limited support they have given the EVMA programme has been because of funding obtained by other government agencies.

This is not surprising as the role of the Ministry has reconstructed several times since the 1989 educational reforms determined that the Ministry is a policy

making body. (This is in direct contrast to the old New Zealand Department of Education, which like its counterparts in Britain was directly involved in the development and implementation of education policy.) The orthodoxy suggests that it is the duty of each school to implement subsequent policy. From a policy point of view bullying is covered by the National Administration Guideline five:

Each Board of Trustees is also required to:

- i. provide a safe physical and emotional environment for pupils;
- ii. comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the safety of pupils and employees.

(MOE 1993)

Thus individual schools have a regulatory obligation to provide a safe environment for all their pupils. There is, however, no formal direction to schools to address the specific issue of school bullying from either the Ministry or the Auditing authority the Education Review Office. In 1993 the School Trustees Association established a working party to investigate solutions to violence in school (STA, 1993). The report was narrow in scope and while it provided an excellent overview of current good practice it overlooked the important international findings.

When I recently questioned the commitment of the Ministry of Education to reducing bullying, especially in light of lack of action over the O'Reilly report (1996), an official, (Malcolm Bell) writing on behalf of the Minister, commented that:

Measures to prevent this problem [*bullying*] were in place well before Mr O'Reilly's report was released and new measures have been

developed since.

(Bell, 1998)

Initiatives such as the draft curriculum statement, *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* and Special Education Grants to schools are mentioned, though, not surprisingly there is no reference to any specific anti-bullying programmes. In reference to the Eliminating Violence Managing Anger Programme the comment is made:

The decision to offer this programme [*Eliminating Violence Managing Anger Programme*] or to choose other programmes, which are available, resides with [individual] schools.

(Ibid, 1998)

The introduction of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum in 1999 (Ministry of Education 1999) as a compulsory part of the national curriculum clearly places a greater responsibility on all New Zealand schools to address abuse issues. It should also provide a platform for many schools to review the way they are currently dealing with bullying:

Stand C - Relationships with other people:

1. Pupils will demonstrate sharing and co-operative skills in groups, *for example, during physical activities, on outings, at home, in the classroom, and in the playground.*

(Ministry of Education 1999:14)

Strand D - Healthy communities and environments:

1. and 3. Societal Attitudes and Beliefs - Rights, Responsibilities, and Laws. Pupils will take individual and collective action to contribute to safe environments that can be enjoyed by all, *for example, by addressing teasing and bullying, meeting specific needs, setting*



*classroom rules, picking teams, taking turns, and accommodating culturally different behaviours.*

(Ministry of Education 1999:15)

Generally action against bullying has been left to the governing bodies (Boards of Trustees) of the individual school that may or may not identify the issues as one to deal with.

### **3.12 The Education Review Office**

According to the current Chief Review Officer, the Education Review Office (ERO) is;

...the government department responsible for evaluating and reporting on education in all schools, all early childhood centres, and all other forms of pre-tertiary education in New Zealand.

The mission statement of the Office is:

***High quality evaluation contributing to high quality education.***

The key guideline for the work of the Office is the educational well being of the pupil - the young person whose educational needs and expectations society intends to answer and inform.

(Education Review Office, 1997a)

Under the current structure the Education Review Office has the responsibility for checking that individual schools are implementing the National Education Goals and their individual charters. The basis on which each school is reviewed is outlined in **The Handbook of Contractual Obligations and Undertakings-Schools** (ERO, 1996). This substantial Operating Manual used by ERO reviewers when auditing a school does not have a single reference to bullying.

A further insight in to the workings of the Office is contained in the document, **Accountability Reviews, a guide for Boards of Trustees:**

### **What is ERO?**

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department, which reports to Government and other key education stakeholders on the education and care of pupils in schools and early childhood centres. As a government department ERO is responsible to its own Minister.

The chief executive of ERO is the Chief Review Officer, who formally accredits individual Review Officers to carry out reviews in schools and early childhood centres<sup>15</sup>.

Excellence in education is a high priority for the New Zealand Government. ERO's findings contribute to high quality decisions about education at the school level by boards of trustees and at national level by Government policy makers.

ERO's primary focus is on the quality of education provided for each child in New Zealand.

### ***What is an accountability review?***

An accountability review is the process ERO uses to report to boards of trustees and to the Government on the quality of education being provided to the pupils at individual schools.

The purpose of each review is to assist in improving the quality of

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<sup>15</sup> The functions and powers of the Chief Review Officer are described in Part 28, ss 325-328 of the Education Act 1989. This Act gives the Chief Review Officer the power to investigate, inspect and report on the performance of education institutions.

education for pupils.

Each accountability review is based on earlier ERO reviews and on information provided by the school. This includes information supplied by the board in an Annual Declaration to ERO. The Annual Declaration is sent to all schools at the beginning of each year, to be completed and returned during the first term. Accountability reviews are normally carried out every three years or so.

(Education Review Office, 1998a )

In the absence of any clear leadership from the Ministry of Education, schools often look to ERO for leadership in this, as in other important school issues. While the office has had a high profile in identifying isolated cases of bullying, I would argue that a review of their reports and operating manuals reveals that they have a narrow view of the behaviour.

Bullying is mentioned specifically in several of their publications

In **Barriers to Learning Number 9 - Winter 1995**, bullying is identified as an issue, though they have not taken on the tight definitions developed in Scandinavia and Britain and blur the distinction between sexual harassment and bullying:

Some schools had linked pupil codes of conduct or safe school projects to sexual harassment. Projects to eliminate bullying through the development of a school culture of peer respect lend themselves well to developing specific gender respect.

(Education Review Office, 1995)

In **Addressing Barriers to Learning** under the heading **Incompetent teachers** the following comment was made:

Some issues of poor teacher performance relate directly to the actual teaching task. For example there may be teachers employed in schools who do not have sufficient subject knowledge, who are unable to organise classroom materials, or who do not have the skills or personal qualities to run a disciplined classroom. In these cases pupils are not provided with in-depth coverage of the curriculum, they are not given the opportunity to develop practical skills and they can be in classrooms where, because of a lack of teacher control, **bullying** [*my emphasis*] and other offensive behaviour occur.

(Education Review Office, 1996a)

The most significant reference to the behaviour came in a publication entitled **Pupils in Boarding Schools: Their Safety and Welfare** (April 1997). The report was a response to growing media attention to cases of bullying in boys' boarding schools.<sup>16</sup> The section **Pupil Safety at Boarding Schools** makes several specific references to bullying:

The Education Review Office has recently drawn attention to undesirable and possible illegal activities in some boarding schools, including sexual abuse and harassment, threatening behaviour, physical and verbal assault and bullying.

Pupils who are in boarding schools for 24 hours a day can be particularly vulnerable to the effects of such behaviour. Abuse or bullying can have life long effects on the emotional and physical well-being of pupils.

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<sup>16</sup> The Holmes television current event show had highlighted an episode at Wesley College. The Press in Christchurch had run a number of articles on bullying at St Andrew's while ERO had produced a number of very critical reports on Maori boys' boarding schools (St Stephen's, Te Aute College, Hateo Paora)

In nine schools (12 percent of all state and state integrated schools with boarding hostels) ERO reports identify bullying as an issue. In four of these schools ERO recommended that the board needed to develop anti-violence policies and procedures to ensure the school provided a safe environment for its pupils.

In the other five schools, both the staff and the board had acknowledged the occurrence of bullying and they had developed policies and systems to address it. In two schools the SES (Specialist Education Service) had assisted the school with the implementation of anti-violence programmes; a third intended to obtain such assistance.

In 11 (14 percent) of the state and state integrated schools with boarding facilities, ERO reported issues to do with pupil safety and welfare with concern that the systems for pupil support within the school could not guarantee pupil safety and well being.

Typically, in these 11 schools, there were:

- a lack of formal behaviour management and discipline policies and procedures or an inconsistent and uncoordinated application of existing policies; and/or
- a pupil counsellor who was inaccessible to the pupils or pupils who did not know what support services were available to them; and/or
- a lack of formalised policies for dealing with suspected cases of child abuse.

Of these 11 boarding schools, five are boys' only schools, three are girls only and three are co-educational. Six of the 11 are state-integrated schools; nine have rolls of fewer than 500.

(Education Review Office, 1997b)

In a subsequent section **Pupils at Risk in Boarding Schools** bullying again is mentioned:

In cases where there is abuse or bullying, pupils at a boarding school may be particularly vulnerable. Because pupils are likely to be in contact with those who are abusing or bullying them for 24 hours a day, the impact may be particularly severe and pupils may feel under further threat if they disclose the abuse. Because they are living away from home, pupils may have no one to whom they can turn to for advice outside the school.

The distinction between education and accommodation is unlikely to be appreciated by parents who have concerns about the physical and emotional safety of their children. If pupils are subjected to abuse or bullying when attending boarding school, parents are likely to be equally concerned whether this takes place during or outside formal school hours.

The experiences of pupils in hostels can have a strong influence over the quality of learning and pupil achievement. On the one hand where school and hostel values are consistent and boarding in the school hostel is a positive experience for pupils, their learning and achievement can be enhanced. On the other hand bullying or abuse in a school hostel is likely to have a detrimental effect on learning. As the central concern of ERO is pupil achievement, it has an interest in all factors within schools that both contribute to or hinder pupil achievement.

(Education Review Office, 1997b)

In the Education evaluation report **Choosing a Secondary School**, a publication directed towards parents the behaviour is mentioned several times:

**Bullying** is physical, verbal and emotional assault. Bullying can occur among pupils or can involve teachers. All schools should take steps to eliminate bullying and it should not be dismissed as merely part of growing up.

Good schools are very public about their opposition to bullying and intervene when bullying or any other violence is suspected or identified. They actively promote considerate and non-violent behaviour.

Good schools help pupils to develop an awareness of all forms of harassment and to deal effectively with difficult situations.

Find out what the school does to prevent harassment, violence and bullying, and how it deals with complaints. Your child should be able to be happy and safe at school.

(Education Review Office, 1997c)

**In Pupils at Risk: Barriers to Learning** as part of a discussion of truancy, bullying is mentioned:

Repeated or long-term truancy may reflect serious underlying problems. Children who repeatedly truant are likely to have a lack of parental support and supervision, and may come from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is not sufficient, however, for schools simply to attribute truancy to disadvantages in the home and the family circumstances of the pupils. Some of the causes of truancy (such as bullying) arise within schools themselves.

(Education Review Office, 1997d)

The most recent comment appears in **Good Schools Poor Schools number 4 autumn 1998:**

An assertive discipline programme is implemented with positive results. A programme to deal with bullying is also reported to have a beneficial impact on pupil behaviour. [Small primary school]

The school has designed its own behaviour management programme based on rewarding good behaviour and applying sanctions when necessary. It is effective in promoting acceptable behaviour. Parents and pupils are aware of behaviour requirements and respond positively to standards set by the school. Pupils were observed interacting positively with no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour. [Medium sized primary school]

(Education Review Office, 1998b)

According to the Chief Review Officer, Dr Judith Atkin, the Office responded to the Commissioner of Children's report on bullying at St Andrew's College by instructing managers of local ERO offices:

*'To include in their audit of compliance with this NAG<sup>17</sup> an explicit investigation of each school's anti-bullying policy and practices'* (Atkin, 1998).

She comments further that:

This year we introduced Accountability Reviews as our main reporting vehicle, we included the provision of a safe physical and emotional environment as an explicit element in each investigation of every school's performance. Review Officers check what documentation the schools have, how the documented policies are implemented, what checks are made to ensure the environment is physically and emotionally safe, and what sort of self-review has been carried out, for example by seeking the views of pupils and parents.

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<sup>17</sup> National Administration Guideline 5



(Atkin, 1998)

Dr Atkin then uses the Office's actions at Otago Boys' High School as an example. In December 1996 a review identified issues to do with the safety of pupils and specified the actions that the board should take to address these issues. A further review was carried out in October 1997 to evaluate the extent to which the board had implemented the actions. ERO found that while the board was *'more than aware of its responsibilities'* the office could *'not be assured that the environment was a safe one for the pupils'*.

A further review in July 1998 showed that *'while some action has been taken, ERO can still not be assured that the board is providing a safe physical and emotional environment for the pupils'*.

This resulted in a public statement from the Chief Review Officer to the effect that Otago Boys' High School was failing to provide a safe physical and emotional environment and that the parents of pupils should contact the school to gain assurances over the safety of their sons.

### **The impact of the Review Office on Bullying**

The Review Office, while publicly taking a strong stand against school bullying, does not appear to have developed any clear understanding of the issues involved with the behaviour. Despite clear evidence that bullying in New Zealand schools is both widespread and does affect all types of schools, (Adair, 1988) the Office appears to have focussed almost entirely on boys' schools with attached boarding hostels. The combination of the failure of the office to provide a clear message on school bullying and the sensational attention that has been paid to the failure of several boys' schools to adequately deal with the behaviour has in many ways been counter productive.

Consequently, many schools looking to both the Ministry of Education and the Review Office for leadership and direction are not aware that bullying might be a significant problem for their pupils. They will not become aware of the significant body of international literature on the subject and the hidden nature of the behaviour (typical of so many similar abuse behaviours) ensures bullying will remain largely undetected.

The 'Tomorrow's Schools' system with the almost complete devolution of power to each individual school community has failed to provide a process whereby each school community can gain the benefits and insights of educational research and development. Traditionally these developments would have been passed onto schools either through the Inspectorate or via Department of Education circulars or directives. The weight of research is clear, unless schools develop and gain a working understanding of the behaviour they will have difficulty both in detecting and dealing with it. The Review Office's failure to provide schools with a clear understanding of bullying behaviour based on available and reputable international research is disappointing. Their current misdirected approach is lulling many schools into a false sense of security thus directly affecting the successful education of many thousands of New Zealanders.

The Review Office should be leading in ensuring that very accessible international knowledge and understanding developed during the 1980s and 1990s is available to New Zealand schools. Their literature fails to do this. There is no clear definition of the behaviour; indeed they appear to have ignored the Scandinavian and British research. The lines between sexual harassment and bullying are not drawn and by the focus on boys' schools they failed to provide strong or decisive leadership. Appropriate or concerted action requires at the very least an acknowledgement of the international findings and endorsement of the understandings of the behaviour. Neither is provided by ERO.

### ***3.2 Historical overview: Bullying becomes an issue in New Zealand***

Bullying first began to be identified as a significant school issue in the early 1990s. This elevation can be traced to two key events: Firstly the investigation by the Commissioner for Children, Laurie O'Rielly into allegations of school bullying at St Andrew College, Christchurch. Secondly the development of the two programmes, the Police resource Kia Kaha, and the development of the Manukau North Specialist Education Services Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme (EVMA). As part of the EVMA programme's development the first significant literature review of the topic was carried out (Cram, 1994). At the same time the long established New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, working with the newly formed Auckland Safe Schools' Association began promoting the peer mediation programme, Cool Schools. Each of these initiatives were independent, worked in isolation from each other and were in response to the growing awareness that growing levels of societal violence was impacting on our schools. The School Trustees Association's School Violence taskforce was established at the same time and also reflected this growing concern.

This flurry of involvement obviously owes much to the international influences from both Scandinavian, British and North American studies, but it is also important to acknowledge the impact that the structural changes in education has

had. The changes empowered parents, who for the first time were prepared to challenge the way schools dealt with cases of bullying and also now had an expectation of schools being accountable to them. Parents were prepared to take complaints and concerns to the media who in turn were prepared to investigate.

### **3.21 The Office of the Commissioner for children and the Saint Andrew College Report**

In December 1994 the Commissioner for Children, Mr L M O'Reilly published a hard-hitting report that dealt with complaints of bullying at St Andrew's College, Christchurch. This was a seminal report and represents one of the very few official documents in New Zealand that specifically dealt with the issues that surround bullying behaviour. In the report, O'Reilly identified bullying as an issue of widespread concern and states that:

The St Andrew's complaint should not be seen in isolation. While the purpose of this Report is to address issues raised by the St Andrew's complaint I also hope it will serve the wider function of raising awareness about bullying in all school communities and encourage schools to identify and address issues of violence.

(O'Reilly, 1994:1)

In the introduction of the report, O'Reilly discusses the term 'bullying', justifying the use of the term because the focus of the complaints has been on "bullying". He fears the *'practice of referring to such abusive behaviours as bullying has the inherent danger of trivialising the behaviour'* adding that in his view it is a term that is synonymous with violence.

O'Reilly then provides a useful overview of bullying in New Zealand schools. This is significant as he avoids a narrow focus on abuse in one school and highlights the need for all those involved in schools to be aware that bullying is *'widespread in New Zealand schools'*. This is *'substantiated by both (sic)*

*research, feedback from teachers and others...and by the calls and letters received by my office*' (O'Reilly, 1994:2). A definition of the behaviour is provided<sup>18</sup>.

On local developments he comments:

There are some excellent New Zealand anti-bullying initiatives including the Police *Kia Kaha* programme and the Specialist Education Service's *Eliminating Violence* programme.

(O'Reilly, 1994:2)

Unfortunately, from a research point of view, O'Reilly gives no quantifiable reasons for making this positive assessment of the programmes.

The 1993 research (Cram, Doherty & Pocock, 1994) from the Manukau North Specialist Education Services is used; *'that 76% of pupils in the random sample of primary, intermediate and secondary schools surveyed saw themselves as victims of violence at school at least once over the last year'*. Alison Kearney's (1993) research is also quoted<sup>19</sup>. (O'Reilly, 1994:2) These findings are seen to be in line with overseas surveys.

This level of abuse reflects a failure of schools to accept the problem as a school-based issue. O'Reilly touches on the complex nature of school bullying and the communication difficulties that confront both those pupils affected and their

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<sup>18</sup> This is based on the work of Delwyn and Eve Tattum who were brought to New Zealand by the Office in early 1994 for a number of very well attended seminars. They define Bullying as the wilful conscious desire to hurt another and put her/him under stress. This includes physical bullying, verbal bullying, gesture bullying, extortion bullying and exclusion bullying. (Tattum & Lane 1989)

<sup>19</sup> 52% of primary, intermediate and secondary school pupils in one North Island city had been bullied at least once in 1992 and 10% had been bullied once a week or more during that year (Kearney, 1993).

parents when he comments:

‘One of the regular problems reported to my Office is that when parents raise their concerns with school authorities, the concerns are dismissed as imagined or exaggerated inventions of the child.

(O’Reilly, 1994:2)

This is elaborated further:

It seems likely that with this form of abuse, as with all others, the relevant sections of society are slow to acknowledge the extent of the problem and take appropriate responsibility in challenging it.

Denial and minimisation of the extent of bullying and of its destructive effects on both the victim and the bully have contributed to school violence being unchallenged and ignored. Unfortunately, for too many youngsters, the adults who care for them have reinforced physical and verbal violence and oppression by modelling, sanctioning or ignoring such behaviour.

(O’Reilly, 1994:2)

O’Reilly then points to research data (from the 1970s) that aligns bullying behaviour to single sex education.<sup>20</sup> The introduction then concludes with a list of factors that may contribute to bullying:

- Negative role models provided by male authority figures and heroes
- Revered traditions glorifying violence

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<sup>20</sup> RR Dale (1971) in his research *Mixed or Single Sex School* reports on a previous ignored causal factor in bullying. Almost half the ex-pupils of boys’ schools estimated that bullying was frequent or very frequent. In coeducational schools the estimate was a little more than one fifth. One in five girls thought that bullying was frequent or very frequent in their girls’ schools compared with one in eighteen in their coeducational schools.

- Closed ‘systems’ in organisations which defy investigation and encourage “secrecy” intimidation around telling
- A school culture which supports violence and abuse of power
- An over emphasis on physical toughness and competition
- Normalisation of behaviours which are not normal
- Inter-generational (family and school) patterns of violence
- Family acceptance or reinforcement of violence.

(O’Reilly, 1994:4)

The next sections of the report detail the powers and authority of the Commissioner to investigate the complaints and the nature and style of the investigation.

## **The Findings.**

### **1. Level of violence**

The report found that the violence in the hostel has been at an unacceptable level. There seems to have been a tradition, perhaps over decades, which has gone unchecked, that gives a particular “cyclic” character to the violence. Even in analysing incidents over the last four or five years it became evident to me that “today’s victim can be tomorrow’s perpetrator”.

There seems to be a view about that it is all part of a “growing up” process or part of a “making a man of him” ethic. Some would justify the so-called traditions on the basis that “they did not harm me”.

What is surprising in the St Andrew’s context is the expectation that when pupils reach the senior classes there will be something of a retributive cleansing: wrongs or hurts suffered in the junior college will be righted by punishment meted out as a senior.

(O’Reilly,1994:10)

### **2. Nature of the violence**

Three types of behaviour were classified in the report:

- a. Serious criminal assault
- b. Verbal insults, intimidation, harassment
- c. Abuses of power by prefects

Comment is also made about anecdotal accounts of extortion of money that in some cases led the victim(s) to steal or to buy unwanted pornography to meet the demands of the abusers. *‘Some practices developed were akin to fagging.’*

The report then discusses the role played by prefects, the structure of houses, the demands on staff, counselling services, hostels, accountability to the Board of Governors and ethos.

The report details how the individual hostel houses were in effect autonomous self-contained fiefdoms (*little kingdoms*) where unsuitable pupils gained powerful positions that enabled them to abuse *‘young and vulnerable’* boys. There was a failure to use the school counselling system and an over reliance on keeping things *‘in-house’* rather than to actively seek assistance. The staff was overworked *‘stretched’*, had little time to themselves and consequently failed to adequately supervise the pupil leaders and failed to *‘have regard to the pastoral needs of the pupils’*.

Under the section **Ethos**, O’Reilly makes some stinging criticisms of the school. Using their own words drawn from the 1994-Year Book and the College Charter he comments:

I have confidence in saying that often life in the boarding House falls well short of the stated aims.

I have reached a firm conclusion that some House Prefects and senior boys were grossly in breach of standards of discipline, that for significant periods of time they were able to assert effective control in the running of the Houses. That they were able to behave in this way



for extensive periods of time is concerning.

(O'Reilly, 1994:12)

In response to complaints that the media had sensationalised the issues of bullying at St Andrew's, the report comments that '*the media has served the public well and has served the College well in bringing the issue to a head. Bullying is an issue that needs public debate*'.

There are strong concerns raised in the section that deals with the disclosure of Abuse and Response. A consistent failure by the school to deal with complaints in a sensitive manner and the concern by both pupils and parents about subsequent retribution is highlighted.

In the report, O'Reilly makes a number of conclusions that are worth repeating. In discussing the general nature of bullying he comments that:

It needs to be stated at the onset that the problems confronting St Andrew's College are not unique. In fact, the inquiry has triggered off a significant response, nation-wide, indicating that the problem is widespread; it is not confined to private schools, to secondary schools or to boarding schools.

(O'Reilly, 1994:14)

The report identifies the crucial role that senior pupils play in establishing the culture of a school but expresses great reservation over when this leadership is invested with disciplinary powers and where the criteria for selection is narrowly based.

"I believe that some colleges have done very well with their youth council, leadership roles, buddy systems, peer mediation and the like."

(O'Reilly, 1994:14)

While the report does not single out any one staff member it clearly identifies that the boys perceived that the teachers were accepting of their actions:

The process of giving the wrong message can be seen at a number of levels. One level relates to the “response” or “lack of response” to complaints, at another level the “obstruction” of involvement of the counsellor or matron. At another level the “status’ given to sportsmen in the school had unfortunate consequences.

(O’Reilly, 1994:14)

The concept of justice, and the lack of it in the bullying that took place, is raised:

Generally, in our society when criminal behaviour occurs the perpetrators are identified: the standard consequences are criminal charges and accountability from the perpetrator and support, recognition of harm and justice on behalf of the victim.... Experiences of violence, intimidation and a general awareness of incidents perpetrated on other boarding pupils can maintain a high level of fear and a sense of vigilance as to self-protection. In such anxious states a pupil can act reactively. Often subtle incidence of “baiting” or “provocation” can lead to further victimisation with a focus on the pupil as the source of trouble rather than as a target of bullying behaviour.

The consequences of such an environment are feelings of shame, degradation and humiliation, which can fundamentally alter a person’s ability to relate to other people trustingly, openly or equally.

(O’Reilly, 1994:15)

The issue of secrecy and silence is also addressed in the report:

I saw elements of the process [also] (sic.) seen in other abusive environments, aptly described as a “conspiracy of silence”. A misguided loyalty to the school adds to this process of secrecy, which in

the long run does not serve the interests of the school and ignores the pupils' needs.

The problem [secrecy] is accentuated when pupils perceive staff to be supportive of that process of secrecy.

(O'Reilly, 1994:15)

The report concludes with nineteen recommendations, four are general and fifteen relate specifically to St Andrew's College:

1. That bullying be recognised as widespread and acknowledged by all schools and its extent and impact not minimised.
2. That schools take steps to assess the level of bullying in their school community.
3. That schools develop, implement and monitor policies and protocols for identifying and dealing with bullying.
4. That developing and implementing anti-bullying policy be seen as part of a school's charter requirement to keep pupils safe, and audited accordingly by the Education Review Office.

(O'Reilly, 1994:17)

### **Discussion of the O'Reilly Report**

The O'Reilly report is important as it identifies publicly the dangerous consequences of school bullying. Using a mixture of a thorough investigation and wide reading O'Reilly was able to produce a report that should have sent a very clear message to all schools in New Zealand. When questioned over the lack of action resulting from his predecessor's report, the present Commissioner commented:

The Office of the Commissioner for Children has widespread powers with respect to investigations, but in fact has no powers to require

recommendations be implemented.

(McLay, 1998)

### **Conclusions**

Despite the strenuous efforts of the Commissioner of Children, the report into the alleged bullying at St Andrew's College has resulted in few tangible changes in practice. O'Reilly's well-researched and conclusive report makes a number of significant general recommendations that have largely been ignored.

That the Education Review Office has in the last months of 1998 publicised reports that are highly critical of two schools failure to deal with pupil safety and in particular school bullying, highlights the failure of our education system to respond to and take heed of significant findings.

It is of concern that five years after the report there has been no recognisable government action directly attributable to the recommendations of the St Andrew's report. This, combined with the systemic failure to ensure New Zealand schools had ready access to the international information, is unacceptable.

### ***3.3 Research into Bullying in New Zealand:***

There is a limited amount of information available on the extent of bullying in New Zealand schools, with only one significant survey available on the behaviour in secondary schools.

To date, the information available comes from six main sources:

1. Research conducted by Dr Keith Sullivan of Victoria University of Wellington.
2. Research associated with the Eliminating Violence Managing Anger Programme.
3. Research conducted by Dr Vivienne Adair et al at Auckland University.

4. Research conducted by Dr Gabrielle Maxwell and Janis Carroll-Lind for the Commissioner for Children.
5. Small-scale research projects completed as part of post-graduate studies.
6. School based research projects.

Research conducted by Dr Keith Sullivan of Victoria University of Wellington

Sullivan initially focused on children's peer relations and the isolating impact of school bullying. In a paper he presented to the Children's Peer Relations Conference in Adelaide, in January 1994, he discusses the impact of bullying on one primary school pupil (Sullivan, 1994a). In a recent article on this topic he comments on 'the processes surrounding and characteristics of peer group interactions and the isolation of some children' (Sullivan, 1998).

His interest in bullying, and the isolation that resulted from the behaviour, is grounded in classroom observation. Sullivan had noticed unacceptable peer group behaviour in a combined standard 3 and 4 classroom of 'a well established and experienced older teacher, who was regarded as being excellent at her job' (Sullivan, 1998a). The teacher appeared to either accept or to be unaware of the poor behaviour. His interest aroused, Sullivan investigated and carefully observed the behaviour of the girl, the teacher and the peer group. He noted that because the child withdrew (perhaps in her view the only available safe strategy) the teacher ignored her. The child's academic and social performance caused concern. The hostile environment was not identified as causing the isolation and consequent failure; 'the school and her teacher were completely unsuccessful in creating a safe environment for her, and then blamed her for this outcome.'

Sullivan clearly identifies a number of important prerequisites for providing this safe environment that will steer the peer group away from adopting a bullying culture. The key understanding needed is that each case is a problem that needs to be solved and that blaming the victim or the isolated child is not appropriate.

He notes a range of strategies that will effectively support the problem solving approach and aims to replace a hostile, blaming peer group with a healthy one. Rather than focusing on the affected child the teacher will work at creating an environment that operates in a co-operative and positive fashion. A combination of effective classroom management (aided and abetted by adequate support and manageable class sizes) and a sound understanding of bullying behaviour will achieve this.

According to Sullivan (1999) there are four important issues that have emerged during his research into bullying in New Zealand:

1. Having a policy isn't enough, you must have effective practice.
2. Parents and communities need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.
3. If an anti-bullying policy is to be effective, it must be clearly stated and fully endorsed by the school.
4. Schools must take responsibility for any incidents and seek to find appropriate solutions.

In an overview of 'the state of the art' anti-bullying initiatives in New Zealand, Sullivan seeks to answer a number of questions:

1. What is the public perception of bullying in New Zealand schools?
2. What is the extent and nature of school bullying?
3. What programmes have we developed and how effective are they?

Sullivan's writing and study of bullying are significant as they provide the first detailed academic investigation and should have an impact on government policy and school practice. He should be an important catalyst in moving the direction of government policy towards a greater commitment to the whole school approach.

### **3.31 Research associated with the Eliminating Violence Managing Anger Programme**

During 1994 a survey on school children's experiences of bullying was undertaken for the Specialist Education Service (Cram, Doherty & Pocock, 1994). This is discussed in more detail in section 4.2)

In what is clearly the most important and far reaching bullying research project carried out in New Zealand, Dr Vivienne Adair surveyed initially 2066 pupils in years 9-13 in a number of co-educational schools in the upper North Island. Using a supplied definition of bullying 75% of the pupils had experienced at least one of the bullying behaviours that year. This compared to 44% when the pupils used their own definition of bullying and with no time delineation.

The survey also investigated the pupils' attitude to school. Bullies were significantly more likely to dislike school and those who identified as victims also were more likely than non-victims to dislike school.

- Year nine and ten pupils experienced more bullying than year eleven and twelve pupils.
- 10% of pupils reported being bullied on a daily basis.
- Only 21% of bullied pupils had told a teacher. (Of those who did tell a teacher 40% said that the teachers 'never' did anything and 36% said that they 'sometimes' did something, 24% said that when the teachers were told about the bullying, they often or always responded.)
- 76% of the reported bullying involved boys.

In her discussion, Adair makes some interesting and pertinent observations.

The response to bullying behaviour is of concern to those who would wish to see bullying in school eliminated. There appears to be a school ethos that resulted in little intervention by pupils when bullying was

occurring. It seemed that only when a pupil was a friend or liked would another pupil intervene. It was clear that pupils who had few friends, other family members at the same school or were not 'liked' were likely to have to deal with the incidents themselves.

One of the most concerning aspects of this study is the high number of pupils who report feeling powerless to stop bullying and believe that bullying has to be accepted as a normal part of school experience. This needs to be challenged by a public commitment from schools to deal with clearly defined unacceptable behaviours in ways that make the perpetrator responsible for his/her actions, rather than a focus on the recipient of that behaviour.

(Adair et al., 1998)

This initial survey had been supplemented by further work in a number of other single sex schools:

In New Zealand we (Adair et al., 1998) reported a figure of 11 per cent of children in co-educational secondary schools who stated that they were bullied once a week or more. For single sex schools, the levels ranged between 8 per cent for girls' schools and 17 per cent for boys' schools.

(Adair, 1999)

Discussing the need to target the bully's behaviour Adair observes:

If power-assertive behaviours and / or violence become the method of choice to get their own way, this type of behaviour can become inter-generational and part of a general anti-social and destructive behaviour pattern.

(Adair, 1999)

Commenting in her summary that "*No bullies at this school is, I am afraid, only a dream*" Adair does go on to make the point strongly that: "*Real change requires a commitment from teachers, school communities, and the wider society*



*in which schools are placed” (Adair, 1999).*

The research material that Adair and the Auckland University team have gathered is very important in providing concrete evidence of the size and level of the problem in New Zealand schools.

### **3.32 Other Research**

In a process that required the parents of pupils to opt into the investigation, Gabrielle Maxwell and Janis Carroll-Lind conducted a survey with two hundred and fifty nine pupils from eight intermediate and primary schools in 1995. The schools represented a mix of provincial and urban schools with a range of socio-economic groups. The survey asked the pupils about experiences of physical, sexual and emotional violence or abuse in the previous nine months. They were asked about events in general and about specific events. They were asked to indicate where the events happened and to rate the events for the impact that they had on them.

While the information provides us with a valuable insight into the attitudes of the participating children the participation rates make it difficult for the results to be seen as being representative:

Parents were asked to agree to their child’s participation in the study.

Many of the slips that went home were not returned. Overall, only 23% of the parents agreed to their child participating, 4% refused and the remaining 73% did not reply. **Thus the results cannot be taken to indicate the prevalence and incidence of events in the schools.** [*My emphasis*].

(Lind & Maxwell, 1996)

While accepting these limitations the report writers do feel that the information provided by the respondents ‘can demonstrate some of the important patterns that are likely to characterise the experience of all children and they probably establish a minimum rate for the prevalence of violent events.’

**The following were the events that had been experienced by more than 10%.**

**Physical**

49% of the pupils reported having *been punched, kicked, beaten or hit by children.*

23% had been in a *physical fight with children.*

**Emotional Abuse**

70% *having tales told, catty gossip or 'narked' on by children.*

67% *being threatened, frightened or called names by children.*

54% *being ganged up on, left out or not spoken to by children.*

14% *being treated unfairly or bullied by adults.*

**Sexual Abuse**

40% asked unwanted sexual things

**Witnessed violence or abuse**

64% watched someone threatened, frightened or called names by children.

62% watched someone ganged up on, left out or not spoken to by children

53% watched someone punched, kicked, beaten or hit by children

51% watched a physical fight by children

The children were also asked to rate the impact of the events on them using a 5-point scale. A third said that physical abuse had had a high impact with 28% giving a similar high rating to emotional incidents.

Being physically or emotionally bullied by other children had been experienced by more than 755 of the children and for about 255 it was among the three worst things that had happened to them.

The children indicated that bullying was most often hurtful, not because of the bruises and cuts, but because of the emotional impact as well as the physical harm.

**School differences:** All schools had at least a third of their children reporting being punched, kicked, beaten or hit at schools. At least half

the children in all schools report experiences of being threatened, frightened, called names, ganged up on, left out, not spoken to, having tales told about them or being victims of catty gossip. The researchers could not develop firm conclusions about the differences between schools.

(Maxwell & Carroll-Lind 1997)

A limited research project based at a provincial New Zealand secondary school that studied general perceptions was conducted in 1995 (Keenan). Using Olweus based questionnaires on a sample of the pupil population, the following information was established:

Bullied this year:	50%
Had been bullied once a week or more:	17%
Never been bullied	50%
Bullied others this year	36%
Told anyone	71%

Of this 71% the person(s) told was:

- Friend 95%
- Teacher 18%
- Parent 68%

**Where it happens:**

- Classrooms 34%
- Corridors 31%
- Grounds 29%

Almost half (43%) of the bullied pupils did not find the bullying a problem while 57% described the bullying as worrying or frightening.

More girls reported being bullied than boys did and the most frequent form the bullying took was verbal 43% with physical 36% a close second.

In the survey of staff perceptions it is interesting to note that of the thirty-three measures taken by staff when aware of a bullying situation. The most popular was “Remonstrated with bully, sought apology” (11 times or 32%), second was “referred to senior staff (9 times or 26%), working with the victim (6 times 18%). The victim was referred on to the counsellor three times.

**Kearney’s 1993 Palmerston North study** found:

Bullied this year: (two or three times plus)	52%
Bullied once a week or more	10%

### **The Bay of Plenty Study**

This study researched the “prevalence of emotional and behavioural disorders” in fifty schools in the Bay of Plenty region. 1,946 pupils in local primary and intermediate schools completed an ‘incidence of violence questionnaire’. 1,288 were in years 5 and 6 and 658 were in years 7 and 8 (Pope 1998). ([Appendix 6](#))

Pope identifies that bullying was an ongoing weekly problem for approximately 23% of the primary and 16% of the intermediate pupils who took part in the survey. This prompts him to comment:

Altogether 67% of children said that they had been victims of bullying at some stage in their schooling. The incidence of bullying (16% and 23%) suggests that it is episodic in nature (Pope, 1998).

The results show that all decile groupings have quite similar proportions (of physical and emotional violence) with a combination of physical and emotional acts of violence far out-numbering emotional or physical acts only. Girls (36%) and year 7 and 8 pupils (38%) collectively experience more emotional violence than boys (19%) and their younger peers (27%).

### **3.33 Individual School Surveys**

There are a range of individual school studies that have been undertaken by keen research orientated practitioners, pupils and teachers undertaking research projects for extra-mural studies. They all corroborate the finding of the more detailed and sophisticated studies that indicate that New Zealand has a relatively high rate of bullying in our schools. (See [Appendix 7](#)).

### **3.34 Implications of the studies**

While it is difficult to make accurate comparisons between different survey samples and tools the information consistently indicates that many New Zealand schools have levels of bullying that are at the high end of any international comparison. There is a general similarity between the results of the more rigorous academic surveys and those that took place in schools that were generally seeking information and had positive attitudes towards providing safe environments. It is obvious that New Zealand does have a significant problem with school bullying and that, if the government is to fulfil its educational responsibilities it is imperative that they take concerted action to address the problem.

## ***3.4 Conclusions***

Despite the excellent work carried out by concerned individuals and researchers, I would argue that New Zealand educators have been let down by the educational authorities who have failed to take either a leading or a supportive role in dealing with school bullying. In my mind, the two statutory bodies with educational responsibility, the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office have each reacted to the issue in a misguided and inappropriate fashion.

The Ministry has abdicated its responsibility completely, instead relying on the ability of 'self-managing schools' to provide safe emotional environments as part of their imposed charter obligation. They have offered no specific direction or advice to schools and their governing boards on how to define, prevent, contain

or reduce bullying. Unlike their counterparts elsewhere they have commissioned no studies that would measure either levels of bullying in our schools nor have they supported investigations into strategies that would help reduce bullying. This inaction occurs despite concrete advice and direction given to them via the Commissioner for Children's report on bullying at St Andrew's College (O'Reilly 1994). Rather than respond to the issue of bullying as was suggested by O'Reilly, they took a generic view targeting struggling schools with their 'School Support'<sup>21</sup> programme. This albeit successful initiative had the unfortunate consequence of aligning 'failing schools' (mainly low decile schools with high Polynesian pupil populations) with bullying and school violence creating an illusion for the majority of schools that bullying was not a problem for them.

To the Ministry's credit there are indications that the new Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Ministry of Education 1999) will begin to formally address bullying in schools. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that this document has taken notice of the knowledge and understandings already developed internationally. It is essential, even within a self-managing environment that the Ministry provides a conduit of information and advice to schools that have (in most cases) neither the time nor the expertise to keep abreast with significant international developments. By failing to give this advice and direction, the Ministry is guilty of allowing individual schools and teachers to dismiss as irrelevant the research findings. The inaction tacitly supports those who reject the understandings developed about bullying and collude with those who continue to ignore the impact of bullying in their schools.

The response of ERO to school bullying has been much more obvious and direct. It is evident that the office, unlike the Ministry took notice of the O'Reilly

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<sup>21</sup> School Support was a group established within the Ministry during 1995 when it became obvious that a significant minority of schools were struggling in the 'Tomorrows School's' environment. It was the first obvious move by the Ministry away from the policy only model.

recommendations (O'Reilly, 1994). Almost immediately the Office instructed its reviewers to '*include...an explicit investigations of each school's anti-bullying policy and practices*'. It does appear that this laudatory response was not backed up with research or direction for the only negative comment regarding bullying appear to relate to boys' only schools. While it should be congratulated for responding to the O'Reilly report, the shortcomings and failure to take heed of the body on international knowledge and understandings is of much concern. At the most fundamental level, the Office failed to provide a concise definition of the bullying behaviour anywhere. As has been mentioned, this failure to define the behaviour has resulted in a lack of clarity and a blurring of the distinction between gender issues as well as between harassment and bullying. The importance of this defining process is stressed as a key process in the whole school approach. Nowhere in their comments on bullying is there a reference to the huge and undisputed effectiveness of this Whole School Approach.

The Office missed the opportunity to provide leadership to New Zealand schools and teachers in dealing with bullying. This is an unacceptable failure particularly in light of the growing body of academic work that has established that New Zealand does, like other countries studied, have a significant problem with bullying. Working independently a number of researchers have established that we do have a problem with bullying in our schools. These studies, varied in scope and style are significant in that they place New Zealand within the international context of bullying research.

The approach to dealing with school bullying in New Zealand has suffered from a failure to co-ordinate our efforts. While there has been some excellent research that has provided a sound body of evidence as to the scale and depth of the problem in our schools, the failure to provide support and direction to schools by the statutory authorities has resulted in a lack of concerted action. This inaction, partly due to the structure of the authorities and the adherence to the self-managing model, has resulted in schools either ignoring or dismissing the

international experience. Those schools that have responded have not been recognised or supported.



## **Chapter 4 Bullying in New Zealand Schools; Interventions**

This chapter discusses a number of interventions that have been developed in New Zealand and that aim to target bullying behaviour in our schools. In all eight initiatives or programmes are discussed. The main two, *Kia Kaha* and the *Eliminating Violence and Managing Anger Programme*, are explored in some detail. Both of these programmes have undergone academic scrutiny and have been widely used in schools. The use of these programmes is illustrated using several small case studies that describe the way individual schools have made use of the materials. A further six interventions are reviewed and discussed. A number of conclusions are drawn about the disparate nature of these interventions at the end of the chapter.

### ***4.1 Kia Kaha***

The first specific intervention developed in New Zealand targeting bullying behaviour was a resource kit developed by the New Zealand Police Force called *Kia Kaha*. Launched in March 1993, the resource (developed with the help of a corporate sponsor) was for use by classroom teachers working with the local Police Youth Education Service Officer<sup>22</sup>.

There was significant media interest in the release of the project and each police region held a launch at which the contents of the kit (available to schools on request) were outlined to the invited guests.

In a paper presented to the Children's Peer Relations Conference in Adelaide, the

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<sup>22</sup> The New Zealand Police Youth Education Service is a group that promotes individual safety to young people, families, teachers and school communities, to help create to safer communities. Police Education Officers are working in partnership with teachers in the classroom to achieve this goal. (Internet reference <http://www.police.govt.nz/yes/>)

Curriculum Officer for the Youth Education Service of the New Zealand Police, Gill Patterson identified three key questions that the resource intended to answer:

1. So what makes some people good targets for someone who wants to frighten, threaten or coerce other?
2. What makes some people want to use strength or power in inappropriate ways?
3. How can both the victim and the bully be encouraged to change their behaviour so that the bullying can be stopped?

(Patterson, 1994:261)

In the teaching guide the aim of the programme is given as:

“Pupils, parents, caregivers and teachers will recognise that bullying is unacceptable behaviour in both the school and wider community; they will develop skills and strategies to stop bullying and replace it with acceptable behaviour.”

Seven objectives are also stated:

- To give victims the skills necessary to choose options to overcome bullying and to put them into practice.
- To enable pupils, parents, caregivers and teachers to define bullying and to recognise why some people bully and why others condone or support it.
- To enable pupils, parents, caregivers and teachers to recognise what behaviour makes someone a potential victim and how this can be overcome.
- To encourage bullies to acknowledge their bullying behaviour and to consider alternative ways of behaving which would allow them to enjoy social interactions.
- To provide teachers, parents and caregivers with ideas and options so

that they can help and support young people who may be victims.

- To provide teachers, parents and caregivers with ideas and options so they can help the bully adopt more socially acceptable behaviour.
- To give adults ideas on ways of creating an environment where there is no payoff for bullying.

(Kia Kaha, 1992: 2)

The resource targets the standard three to year ten (years 5-10, ages 9- 15) range and is made up of several components, including a programme booklet, lesson plans, a video and a resource list. Clearly based on overseas research, the booklet emphasises the need for the school to involve the wider community and the need to carefully implement the programme using a number of full staff meetings. The kit aims to raise the awareness of the pupils by making them think about bullying situations, reflect on what makes a bully bully, and a victim a victim. It then moves on to develop strategy suggestions to overcome the experience.

### **Description of the kit**

In two sections the resource is easy to use. Section one of the teaching guide encourages careful planning and implementation and uses an eight-stage approach to ensure that the aims and objectives of the programme are realised.

Stage one, *check the prerequisites*, suggests that the readiness of the school and staff for the bullying programme be assessed. As well as encouraging the school to look at some of the Health Education material on self-esteem and other pro-social issues, the guide suggests that this review investigate the skills of staff in listening, facilitating discussion, sharing, decision making with pupils and facilitating role-play.

Stages two and three involve introducing the issues and the programme to the school staff before the delivery of the programme. These address issues such as

how to support the victim, how to handle the bully, modelling positive social interactions and a look at the environment. These staff sessions need to identify who and how the programme will be delivered.

Stage four is a strategy for involving the wider community especially the parents and caregivers. It suggests invitations to a special meeting be sent home (a suggested agenda for the meeting is included).

Stages five and six involve the planning and delivery of the programme. Stage seven is an evaluation of how effective the programme has been and the guide provides a number of questions that will aid this with suggestions for including all members of the community in the evaluative process. Stage eight suggests a number of strategies for maintaining the impetus the programme will develop.

Section two of the teaching guide provides a more detailed overview of the teaching activities. It identifies that using the video as the pivotal activity.

**Before viewing the video** the pupils are encouraged to discuss bullying incidents. There are a number of stories and songs suggested in the guide that can be used to stimulate and focus interest. The adults are encouraged to share their own experiences. A *post box* activity is suggested where the pupils anonymously respond to a number of questions. The responses are then collated by groups and presented to the class. The questions all relate to everyday bullying incidents.

It is then suggested that the class spends time reflecting on what makes someone unlikely to be bullied, how a victim should act when picked on and what makes someone bully. There is a range of ‘hands on’ activities suggested that would support these ideas.

The section ends with the class working in small groups to develop a definition

of bullying. A number of suggestions are given that will assist the pupils in their deliberations.

**During the fourteen-minute video** there are several specially selected prompts asking for discussion and feedback about the incident that had just been shown.

**After the video** the guide suggests that three themes (parts) need to be developed and it provides a number of activities to support the development of the ideas.

### **Part 1 Feelings**

The aim of this section is for the pupils to identify and describe the feelings of both victims and bullies. They are asked to complete an activity where they write about a bullying incident focusing on the feelings of the various participants. This is concluded with an exercise where the pupils are asked to think about how others feel about bullies and bullying behaviour.

### **Part 2 Coping Strategies**

The aim of this section is for the pupils to identify and list strategies that they can use to overcome bullying. These are developed using discussion and reflection on the earlier activities referring to the video and the thoughts and feeling identified earlier. The class identifies specific coping strategies and these are displayed in the classroom. The guide provides several topics that should be discussed:

- Being assertive
- Avoiding the place where the bully goes
- Standing up to the bully
- Asking adults for help
- Getting supportive friends
- Using self defence

(Kia Kaha, 1992: 23)

These strategies are reinforced with the development of a set of class guidelines that cover three key elements:

- a) How can we make our classroom a place safe from bullying?
- b) How can we support victims of bullying?
- c) How will we treat bullies in our class?

(Kia Kaha, 1992: 24)

### **Part 3 Practising Coping Strategies**

The pupils role-play a variety of suggested situations and practise using the various strategies. They all take turns at being bullies, victims and bystanders.

#### **Use of the resource in New Zealand**

The response to the kit has been overwhelming:

Not only have there been an unprecedented number of requests for the resource from teachers, but also parents, grandparents and other concerned adults have rung local police stations wanting copies.

(Patterson, 1994:264)

Since its launch there have been more than 3,000 kits produced and distributed making it a one of the most popular Police education resources. However there must be some question on how often the kit is being used in our increasingly crowded curriculum. As will be discussed later in this section, one Otago research projection on Kia Kaha found it difficult to find schools that were actively using the programme (Bell 1997). There is scope for further investigation.

#### **4.11 Evaluations of Kia Kaha**

While there has been only one formal evaluation of the kit (Sullivan, 1998b), there have been several postgraduate studies on it. These include one Masters Thesis (Bell, 1997) a research study submitted as part of an Otago Bachelor of Education degree, (Phelps 1995), and one Administration Project (Cleary, 1993). Apart from information on the number of copies of the kit used, there is no information available on how well used the resource is. In the May 1993 report of the New Zealand School Trustees Association on Solutions to Violence in Schools, Kia Kaha was identified by seven schools as a “*practical programme to*

*the problem of violence in schools*” (School Trustees Association, 1993).

### **Sullivan’s evaluation of Kia Kaha**

Sullivan, in his formal evaluation of the kit, provides an overview of the resource (1998b)<sup>23</sup>. He initially establishes the context of the programme within the broader New Zealand Police Strategic Plan 1993 - 1998. This draws the comment that Kia Kaha is “*grounded in the very positive approach to policing...which focuses on establishing closer links with the community and clear policies for preventative policing.*” (Sullivan1998b: 7) Three broad intentions and three strategy areas are identified as being relevant to the development and ongoing support of the programme.

In the evaluation, Sullivan uses a qualitative methodology involving three focus groups. This approach elicits insightful observations often missing from more quantitative evaluations. Three quite different groups were used:

**Group one** comprised twelve postgraduate teacher trainees being tutored by Sullivan at Oxford University in 1995.

**Group two** was made up of six academics that were either recognised bullying experts or were involved in research on bullying. This group participated in a two-hour seminar discussion in May 1996 in Adelaide.

**The third group** of nineteen pupils was drawn from a third-year undergraduate course in Education at Victoria University of Wellington. Their discussion took place during the second semester of 1996.

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<sup>23</sup> Sullivan was initially given a set of five questions to be considered that would evaluate the kit and its effectiveness in the school setting. The intention was to evaluate the kit in two stages; an initial focus group approach followed by a full-scale evaluation of the implementation of the programme in schools. Funding was not available for the second part of the project.

Group one focused almost entirely on the video resource. They felt the script content identified a good range of bullying incidents, though they questioned its appropriateness for the target audience, the use of adult actors and the trivialising impact of some of the humour (in particular the use of the “*roving reporter*”).

The second group noted the cultural sensitivity of the resource<sup>24</sup>. A positive criticism was of the way the video characters discussed what has happened to them with their peers, emphasising the key role the peer group has in solving the problem of bullying. Unlike the first group they were positive about the use of humour and liked the use of the roving reporter to link scenes and develop themes. This group identified four specific areas for negative criticism:

1. The message that emphasised the need to meet power with power.
2. The failure to make the bullies, who were stereotypically presented, accountable for their actions.
3. The underlying onus that was presented that the victim was the person who needed to change their behaviour.
4. The overall shallowness of the video depiction of bullying.

(Sullivan, 1998b: 23 )

The group suggested four specific improvements:

1. Using children to act out the video.
2. Supporting the video with role-play activities to allow the pupils to practise the strategies used.
3. Inclusion of scenarios that ‘demonstrate how subtle and psychological bullying occurs.
4. The further development of the discussion questions that were in the video.

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<sup>24</sup> The group commented that *Kia Kaha* is culturally sensitive. Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand and by using the phrase. ‘*kia kaha*’, be strong, and by including the scene where the Maori girl visits her grandfather and receives advice, the programme clearly acknowledges Maori culture. (Sullivan, 1998:22)



In the evaluation Sullivan comments that:

Overall, there were more suggestions for improvement and revision of the philosophical basis of Kia Kaha than there were specific points of commendation. These experts felt that this was an inevitable process that any anti-bullying programme needs to go through, as it is only after implementation that the efficacy of a programme can be evaluated and changes can be made to accommodate issues that arise in real situations.

(Ibid. p: 24)

The third group had significantly greater time in their evaluation of the resource and was also involved in a comparison of the approach with that taken in the training video with the Maines and Robinson's No Blame Approach. Of the two approaches the majority of the pupils involved preferred the No-Blame method<sup>25</sup>. In their appraisal of the resource there were a range of comments that Sullivan placed into these categories; personal, group and general usefulness.

The group comments under personal usefulness, focused mainly on the advice and support being offered to the victims of bullying. The emphasis on communication and the way the programme addressed issues of 'assertiveness,

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<sup>25</sup> The focus group was asked to choose which of the two anti-bullying programmes they preferred. They had four choices:

1 replied "the *kia kaha* programme"

9 replied "the No Blame Approach",

6 replied "I found them both equally good",

0 replied "I thought that they both would be ineffective", and

3 did not reply to this question.

self-esteem, peer pressure and effective decision making' was viewed favourably along with the overall message that supported and gave options to children who *'wanted to "take action" and stop being bullied'*. (Ibid. p: 26)

In discussing the group usefulness elements, the pupils identified positively with the message that the peer group could *'take matters in hand, that they could communicate with each other, act as a group, initiate responses and talk about what to do'*. They also liked the idea that stressed that this action could be independent of adults. The focus group identified the critical role the bystander plays when dealing with bullying.

When discussing the kit's general usefulness the group acknowledged its unique New Zealand flavour, its listing of other ways of seeking help and the important role the kit plays in *'defining what is and is not acceptable'*. They also liked the way it exposed the dynamics of bullying.

The pupils, like the Australian bully experts, felt that the underlying message of the kit was too reliant on suggesting a confrontation with the bully. They felt that the message of standing tall implicit in the kit's title (and an important theme in the video), is both inappropriate and simplistic. Other comments made by this group included; discomfort with the use of adults in the video, the inappropriate use of humour, a too male orientation in the scenarios. They also felt the target audience was too broad. There was also the comment that the kit failed to emphasise the need for a whole school approach to the issue. In conclusion:

The overall feeling of this group was that Kia Kaha was too confrontational, that while it is useful for victims of bullying to stand tall and move from fear towards confidence, in real situations it is often very difficult to confront someone bent on physical intimidation and violence and make them back down.

(Ibid. p: 28)

In the discussion that follows the findings of the three focus groups, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the programme are identified. The quality of the programme booklet with its precise rationale and statement of aims and objectives is noted. The suitability of the resource's name is again commented on, as is the overall presentation of the packaged kit, with its logical order and lay out. The usefulness of the video is annotated with the quality of production, the relevance and variety of the scenarios and the support provided by the group being identified as strengths. Several clear concepts and ideas are seen to have emerged from the video:

- i. that if individuals act together as a group this has several advantages:
  - from group discussions solutions may be found to a bullying problem
  - if a group works in a combined way it can have more power than one or two bullies, and the group can protect its members from being bullied;
  - if the group works together it can institute norms that say that bullying is wrong;
- ii. that if a child is being bullied then this is a problem that can be solved;
- iii. that if a child is a bully then they too have a problem;
- iv. that children need to be taught/supported in being assertive, to stand up for themselves and to be brave - *kia kaha*;
- v. that although the bully(ies) and victim(s) are the main players in a bullying scenario, others in the group, the bystanders, play a role in supporting the bullying because they are aware that they could just as easily be the victim (self-protection).

(Ibid. p: 34)

The range of scenarios presented is seen as being appropriate and representative.

The focus groups were able to identify several key themes that are pertinent in assessing the effectiveness of the overall programme.

Foremost is the idea of victim assertiveness. There is a clear expectation in the bullying scenarios that the solution is in the hands of the victim and that if he or she is able to stand up to the bullies they will desist from the abuse. This is seen as an erroneous and dangerous assumption that demeans the victims of bullying (and other similar types of abuse) indicating that they have the ability to stop the actions of the predator but just haven't used them!

The second theme is strongly linked and deals with the assumption that the bullies are cowardly and will retreat if stood up to. Again this is seen as potentially dangerous advice as it fails to recognise that many bullies are aggressive and will not back down if challenged and will often be good fighters. An inconsistency in the kit's message is identified in the discussion of this point when it contrast the advice given to by the grandfather who when asked by Karen if she should fight, *'she is told no, kaore. According to this advice, she acts correctly (by not fighting), but the boys go beyond the advice. Or is she forbidden because she is a girl?'* (Ibid. p: 35).

The discussion concludes by identifying that while *Kia Kaha* is on the right track it needs to be updated. In its present state it fails to recognise the hurt of the victim and the implicit expectation is that it is up to the victim to solve the problem when clearly the child is unable to do so.

'While it is good to make it clear that children can do things for themselves, can work together in supportive groups and can learn to be assertive, it is not a solution to the problem of bullying... It is perhaps at this fundamental level that *Kia Kaha* needs most to change, at the level of

its philosophy. First the victim needs to be heard, non-judgementally, but simply heard. And the whole school needs to decide that bullying is unacceptable, something not wanted in that community. In this environment bullying will cease...The onus for change therefore falls on the whole group, and the victim is not labelled as unassertive and the one who must find the solution, and the bully is not labelled as a miscreant who is outside the realm of the group.'

(Ibid. p: 36)

Despite being in the '*vanguard of proactive responses*' to bullying when it was developed, the evaluation comments that six years later there are changes that need to be made. These changes need to reflect both consequent scholarship and feedback from implementation. The kit needs to be replaced by '*a newer, more wide-ranging and robust approach.*'

Fifteen recommendations are made in the report. The first two relate to the general aims of the programme as stated in the resource booklet and the failure of the current resource to fulfil the statement of aim. The next three recommendations call for a change in the philosophical basis of the programme, in particular they call for less of a focus on the need for the victim to change and a greater emphasis on the collective responsibility of all the school community to deal with the issue. The sixth recommendation affirms the bicultural dimension inherent in the kit and calls for an alternative name that would reflect the community responsibility to stop the bullying rather than the current title that suggests it is the victim's duty to stand up to the abuse. Suggestions specific to the content, scripting and casting of the video and the need for there to be greater links between the video and the programme are contained in the next five recommendations. The need for an information-gathering tool to be part of the kit is the next point made. The next two suggestions are directed towards the development of a new resource and stress the need for this to be carefully implemented and researched.

The final recommendation is one that emphasises the need for some sort of contract with schools that wish to use the programme whereby they give a commitment to completing the whole programme rather than picking out particular components.

In his evaluation, Sullivan calls for a major rethink of the philosophy behind the kit. He suggests that more emphasis be given to the stated programme aims (viewed positively) and advocates the use of a greater variety of approaches. The positive endorsement of the No Blame approach suggests that he intends that the focus move away from primarily on changing the victim's behaviour to that of changing the bully and gaining a greater involvement of the bystanders. By nature this would require the co-operation and active involvement of the whole school community in developing the understanding and awareness needed to support such an approach.

He also identifies the need for an information-gathering tool to be part of the kit. There is also a strong message in his conclusion on the development of a new resource and stresses the need for this to be carefully implemented and researched.

### **The Otago Study**

Bell's thesis focuses on the perspective held by teachers of the Kia Kaha programme (Bell, 1997). Twenty-eight selected teachers (including eleven principals) from the Otago, Central Otago and Southland regions participated in the study which involved the participants completing a detailed questionnaire on the programme.

Bell, a psychologist, identifies three approaches to understanding bullying:

- ***The social constructionist*** approach that considers bullying behaviour occurs because the social group constructs the bullying environment where bullies have a high status and are respected and admired by their peers. Consequentially any change in bullying behaviour will only be brought about when there is a change in the societal attitude.
- ***The Biological/Medical Model Explanation*** where a child exhibits bullying behaviour has, what is termed, a ‘conduct disorder’. Bullying behaviour is viewed as being due to a deficit, that is either a chemical imbalance in the brain or some ‘damage’ which has occurred that does not allow the child to function ‘normally’.
- ***Olweus’ Theory - An Integrated Approach*** that gives three main reasons why bullying occurs: Firstly, there is a perceived need for power, control and dominance over others on the part of the individual (i.e. Biological in nature). Secondly environmental effects. Thirdly, it can be a rewarding and beneficial behaviour.

(Bell, 1997:28-32)

While it is difficult to see how the ‘constructionist’ approach differs greatly from Olweus’ theory, Bell suggests that anti-bullying interventions such as Kia Kaha sit within the first approach. They aim firstly to change attitudes toward bullying within the whole group, before then addressing the specific unwanted behaviours.

The Kia Kaha programme itself seeks to provide sound scaffolding on which to structure a whole-school approach to reduce bullying.

(Ibid. p :37)

Bell’s selection of the sample for the study provides an interesting insight into the overall usage of the Kia Kaha programme. In consultation with local Police Youth Education Officers (PEOs) eighty-five schools were approached. This

was on the basis that these schools were suggested as being likely participants. Thirty principals (26%) returned the consent forms saying 'they were unable to participate in the study citing reasons such as the school not ever having used the kit, or that the teachers who had used it had moved on. Eighteen principals (15%) consented to their school participating in the study. It is worth noting that there are two hundred and forty five primary and intermediate schools in the area under study and that the eight-five identified by the PEOs represent only thirty five percent (35%) of all schools. When one considers that only eighteen of this eighty five were prepared to be involved (7%) it suggests that the programme is not being as extensively used as would be expected from the numbers of the kits being issued. Even within this sample the only stipulation was that they had to have used the kit in the last five years.

The information on the perceptions held by the teachers was gathered using an extensive questionnaire that focussed on nine main issues.

There was also scope to look at several broader issues such as the reasons for the



use of the kit<sup>26</sup>.

## **Findings**

The investigation found that schools used Kia Kaha because of awareness that bullying was an issue in their school. The availability of the PEO was an added incentive, as was the desire to up-skill vulnerable children on how to deal with bullying behaviour.

The respondents felt there was strong support for the programme from the other teachers, parents and principal. The implementation of the programme *commonly brought about the development of new guidelines to address the issue of bullying or the rewriting of the school's discipline policy to deal more consistently with bullying behaviour*, (Ibid.).

Bell's investigation found that the programme was taught within the health curriculum and was targeted at years 4-6. Some schools taught the programme

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<sup>26</sup> Issues that were covered in the questionnaire:

The support for the programme from other teachers, parents and principal.

The place of the programme within the curriculum and methods of delivery

Necessity of PEO involvement

Interest and motivation of the children

Consequent impact on the safety of the school

The usefulness of the video

Impact of programme on observable behaviour

Impact on school guidelines on bullying

Assessment of the programme against its aims

in years 1-3 as well, though this was not common.

The parent/caregiver pamphlet was well used and all but one teacher used the video. 86% indicated that there was nothing in the video that they did not like.

The teachers reported positively on the role of the PEOs finding them flexible to their needs and willing to adapt to the schools programme.

All respondents *'indicated that the range of activities set out in the programme was appropriate for their school, commenting that the variety was great'*.

There was strong agreement to the statement that the programme was interesting and motivational and that in general the children's reactions to the programme were positive, though a couple noted that some children found it hard to transfer knowledge gained in the programme to action. There was less unanimity in regard to the impact the programme had on behaviour, where although the majority attributed positive behavioural changes to the programme a quarter observed no difference in behaviour at all.

In her discussion Bell raises a number of interesting points about the programme.

She notes that the teachers felt the programme was successful, however there was nothing to suggest that the programme had actually reduced bullying.

In discussing the main anti-bullying strategy of the programme she comments:

..the main strategy put forward in *Kia Kaha*, that of 'standing strong against bullies,' is only one option that can be taken when dealing with bullying behaviour. Seeking help when unable to handle a situation, or removing oneself from the situation before it gets out of control, needs to be emphasised as alternatives too, and this can be done with the use

of additional programmes which stress these messages.

(Ibid. p: 67)

Further suggestions point to the need to have a wide range of strategies available to respond to bullying behaviour:

For example the New Zealand Specialist Education Service's Eliminating Violence Managing Anger Programme teaches that it's okay to be angry but not to be violent. This may prove a more useful strategy in dealing with children who suffer from psycho-medical problems.... If a child's bullying behaviour is a result of a biological dysfunction in the brain, as opposed to social influences, the response of the victim is unlikely to influence the bullying child from continuing his/her aggressive behaviour.

(Ibid. p: 68)

The research showed that the programme was effective in teaching children the strategies needed to stand up to bullies. There was no finding that suggested '*Kia Kaha helped bullies stop bullying*'.

This aspect of the programme is clearly identified and criticised:

Children are encouraged to cope with bullying by, among other things, being assertive, standing up to the bully, avoiding the place where the bully goes, and using self-defence. All these tactics are actions that the victim must carry out, not the bully. **Nowhere, except at the teachers' own discretion**, is the issue of the bullies' inappropriate behaviour focussed on in terms of helping children understand why bullies behave as they do, and developing strategies for bullies to reduce their bullying behaviour and practising these [my emphasis].

(Ibid. p: 70)

This prompts the conclusion that while the research shows that Kia Kaha is successful at changing the behaviour of the victims of bullying, if it is to reduce bullying it needs to change the behaviour of the bullies and their classmates:

...rather than one that simply teaches children how to deal with bullying better, the issue of not specifically dealing with the behaviour of bullies needs to be addressed. What is needed is the development of strategies that focus [on] changing the behaviour of bullies and this, according to the literature, is best achieved by implementing a whole school approach to reducing bullying.

(Ibid. p: 70)

In her final comment she echoes one of Sullivan's main recommendations noting that many teachers are using the resource in isolation. Some classes are exposed to it and others are not. There appeared to be a lack of co-ordinated approaches in many schools. This prompts her to comment:

Indeed, it may be worth considering whether an anti-bullying programmes should be put in place in a school at all unless it is going to be implemented across the school as a whole.

(Ibid. p: 71)

#### **4.12 Discussion of Kia Kaha**

The Kia Kaha resource kit is the only significant readily available resource that specifically targets bullying and the Police must be congratulated for its development. Other local programmes such as the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Programme rely, at the very least initially, on outside facilitation (with the associated costs) and usually address a much wider range of behaviours. Where the use of Kia Kaha in schools has been evaluated it has been

found to be a useful programme (Cleary 1993, Phelps 1995, Bell, 1997)<sup>27</sup> and the large number of kits that have been requested by schools since its publication reinforces this. Unfortunately, there is no information available on how the kit is used and how comprehensively the kit is applied. As discussed earlier, Bell's research in Otago suggests that in reality few schools are using the resource while Sullivan's test of the validity of the approach (1998) while endorsing the programme identified weaknesses.

There is general agreement on:

- The positive way the education community has received it.
- The programme structure and overall presentation that encourages careful implementation of the full programme and suggests that it sit within the broader whole school approach.
- The range of scenarios presented.
- The co-operative problem solving approach adopted in the video and encouraged in the activities.
- The range of activities that aim to develop both understandings of the behaviour but also provide opportunities for pupils to develop and practice appropriate anti-bullying strategies.

However a number of weaknesses have also been identified:

- The emphasis placed on the victim to act to counteract aggression.
- The failure to adequately put the responsibility for stopping the behaviour on the bully and the immediate community.
- The structure of the kit that allows individual teachers to deliver the programme in chunks or in isolation from the rest of the school.
- The failure to target significant year levels.

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<sup>27</sup> These studies have been undertaken as part of postgraduate studies. They have not had the advantage of being funded research projects and lack the necessary depth to provide any conclusive findings.

- The lack of a range of intervention strategies for pupils and schools to use when dealing with cases of bullying.

The kit works when the approach has had a whole school impact and where the initiative has gone beyond the curriculum. Where it has not been part of a wider school context the programme has been less effective in changing bullying behaviour. The programme is an appealing curriculum programme and is well supported by practitioners who find it motivating and interesting for their pupils. However even when well taught there is little evidence to suggest that on its own the kit will reduce bullying behaviour (Cleary, 1993, Bell, 1997, Hoani. L, 1998).

Despite Sullivan's (1998) emphasis on the video's shortcomings in the teacher evaluations (Cleary, 1993 Bell, 1997) it is clear that the video is used cautiously and is only a small part of the programme.

A serious weakness in the Kia Kaha programme (highlighted in the video) relates to the underlying emphasis that the solution to the bullying lies in the hands of the victim, albeit with the support of the larger group (Bell, 1997, Sullivan, 1998). This view is reinforced in the programme and is the major flaw that needs attention. It has the potential to utterly undermine the already shaky confidence of a young person in a bullying relationship. They will already have lowered self-esteem, be convinced that they are unable to counter the behaviour of the bullies and have become isolated from the group. The message emanating from the video, re-enforced throughout the whole programme, is that they can stop the bullying by standing strong and gaining the support of their classmates.

For an isolated, increasingly passive victim, this is the last message they need. They, like the victim of domestic violence, have had their personal autonomy stripped away. To actively stand up to the abuser is no longer an option. In their desperate state they have become reliant on the goodwill of the bullies and their

cohorts. For adults to send the message that standing up will stop the abuse is patronising, dangerous and of no real use. They crave acceptance and will do anything to 'fit in' to the group again; taking action is seen as the very thing that will further isolate them from those that they want to be with.

### **Conclusion**

In writing *Kia Kaha* in 1992 the Police obviously made good use of the scholarship available. The programme is comprehensive and uses as its base the whole school philosophy. However there is general agreement that this popular programme needs to be redeveloped, as in practice it appears that the programme is being used as an isolated curriculum intervention rather than as part of a whole school initiative to strengthen the anti-bullying culture of the school community. The programme needs to be rewritten. It will need progressively to develop pupils skills and understandings of aggressive peer behaviour as they grow and the underlying philosophy must be one that place the onus for stopping bullying on the whole community and not just the victim.

Despite the writers' intentions, *Kia Kaha* is essentially a curriculum intervention. One of the key findings of the Sheffield Project (Smith & Sharp, 1994) was that on their own, curriculum interventions have little impact on the frequency of bullying. For an anti-bullying initiative to be effective it must go beyond the curriculum and become embedded into the practice and culture of the school. Schools that have effectively addressed bullying clearly have taken the time and effort to ensure that the whole culture of the school is consistent with the bullyproof theme. This is a culture whereby all members of the school community understand bullying and agree with the definition that is used. They all have a commitment to defeating bullying when it happens and all have a clear understanding of the role they must play in this.

A strengthened *Kia Kaha* would be a programme that provides a process for schools to follow to bullyproof their community. It would include strategies that

could assist pupils to progressively develop skills to counter peer bullying and should firmly place the responsibility for acting against such behaviour on the shoulders of everyone in the school community.

#### ***4.2 Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme***

The most significant anti-bullying programme currently operating in New Zealand is the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project. Under the leadership of Manukau North Specialist Education Service's Christine Hilton-Jones and Fenella Gill, a special project was developed during 1993 in response to what members of the service perceived as an increasing level of violence in the area's schools.

Once the programme had been developed, it was offered to schools in the area and by the beginning of 1995 over seven hundred local teachers had received some training associated with the programme. In the Education Weekly (30/01/95) Christine Hilton-Jones reported that in one South Auckland school, programme intervention had dramatically reduced the levels of observable violence. For instance, in one month prior to the intervention, 104 acts of violence had been noted in the school. This fell by 80% after the programme had been implemented (Education Weekly, 1995a).

Hilton-Jones who is quoted in the April/May 1995 edition of Parent & School provides a clear idea of the philosophy of the programme:

We come from the premise that no violence is acceptable. As violence is a learned behaviour, it can be unlearned. Anger, which is an emotion, can be positively directed.

(1995 p: 12)

She suggests that central to the programme's effectiveness is the need to have the wider school community fully involved:

It was the Manukau North Specialist Education Service who developed



the course in 1993 because they felt there was no point working on changing individual pupil's behaviour if they didn't get the back-up from their community, school and home.

(Ibid. p: 12)

**Programme Objectives.** The Managing Anger Project had five clearly enunciated objectives:

- a) Heighten awareness of the pervasive impact of violence in schools and community.
- b) Teach parents, teachers and pupils the principles underlying the effective management of violence at a number of levels, e.g.: individual, group, systems and community.
- c) Teach pupils and others how to overcome their own and others anger and channel such anger positively.
- d) Enskill parents, teachers and pupils in pro-social alternatives to violent behaviours.
- e) Help teachers to provide an environment where pupils feel safe, welcome and respected at school.

These objectives were built around a definition where violence is seen as 'the control of others behaviour by fear, force, intimidation or manipulation and always involves an abuse of power'.

(Eliminating Violence managing Anger Handbook 1994)

By 1995 the programme was being well used and was gaining support at the national level. Much of this support is attributable to a combination of a positive research report (Cram, Doherty & Pocock, 1994) and satisfaction from schools. Much of this support was enabled by the research that was used to back up the claims made by the service. The initial post-graduate research project was expanded to include survey material at the request of the Specialist Education

Service. The survey represented a random 25% sample of primary, intermediate and secondary schools within the Manukau North Area. Atypical schools (private, special, and kura kaupapa) were excluded. This resulted in fifteen schools (four secondary schools, one intermediate and ten primary schools) being surveyed. The survey, based on an Olweus questionnaire, produced the following results:

- 75.0% of the female pupils and 76.9% of the male pupils self-identified as having been bullied at some time.
- 11.4% of the pupils reported being bullied several times a week, this rose to 19.9% of pupils when those who reported being bullied once a week were included.
- 33.8% of the female pupils and 50.5% of the male pupils self-identified as having bullied someone at some time.
- 4.0% of pupils reported that they bullied others several times a week; this rose to 6.7% when those who reported bullying once a week were included.
- The highest proportion of pupils reported being victims of bullying only. (39.9%).
- Over a third of the pupils had been both victims and bullies (36.4%)
- Approximately a fifth of the pupils had neither bullied nor been bullied (18.7%).
- Only a small proportion of pupils were bullies only (5.7%).
- 76.6% of pupils had witnessed someone their own age being bullied.
- Pupils' definitions of bullying focused mainly on physical hurt and verbal abuse.
- Incidents involving physical hurt and verbal abuse were most predictive of pupils saying that they had been bullied or that they had bullied someone.
- Teachers considered a variety of both physical and

verbal/psychological behaviours as bullying.

- Female pupils reported experiencing more verbal abuse because of their sex whereas male pupils reported experiencing more physical hurt and pushing/shoving.
- Pupils were more often bullied by older or same-age pupils, in both playground/field, and by several boys (if victim is a male pupil) or both boys and girls (if victim is a female pupil).
- Pupils were likely to feel sad/hurt or angry/vengeful when bullied.
- Less than half those who were bullied told a teacher.
- Pupils who bullied were more likely to do so in the playground/field, to feel sorry/regretful about the incident, and to bully in the company of other boys (if a male pupil) or other girls (if a female pupil).

(Cram, Doherty & Pocock, 1994: 1-2)

The programme successfully gained backing from the Prime Minister's Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) which supported the programme being delivered in twelve schools, this number was boosted to sixty-seven as part of a comprehensive crime initiative announced in the 1996 budget<sup>28</sup>. This funding was given to the Ministry of Education to oversee. They in turn contracted the Specialist Education Services to deliver the programme to 67 schools nationally over a three-year period.

In the view of the Ministry, the Eliminating Violence Managing Anger (EVMA) Project was developed by the Manukau North Specialist Education Service as a broad based programme to promote a cultural change in the way schools view

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<sup>28</sup> Also included in the funding were: Four Department of Corrections initiatives; parenting skills, alcohol abuse counselling, violence prevention, sex offender evaluation. Six Department of Social Welfare programmes; rural family violence, victim support services, Maori services, Personal safety training for girls, Family violence, Community support for Sex Offenders.

violence. It was developed as part of a broader Youth at Risk focus that was linked to the Children and Young Persons and their Families Service “Breaking the Cycle” campaigns.

The ministry negotiated a contract with the Specialist Education Services, which identified targets based on the structured programme:

1. Initial contact between school and Service
2. Collection of baseline data
3. Staff training
4. School commitment to continue with the programme
5. Core group established
6. Support sessions held; Community, Parents, Teachers
7. Sessions for pupils
8. Interventions for targeted pupils
9. Collection of endpoint data
10. Evaluation review

The Service reports on progress three times a year in a series of milestone reports (February, June and October). The contract identified the schools who were to be considered for the programme as having the following criteria:

- Low decile ranking
- At risk
- Having significant difficulties

As part of the contract the Ministry agreed to carry out an evaluation which was then forwarded to the Crime Prevention Unit.

When interviewed in August 1998 a ministry spokesman said that there were no plans for continued financial support of the programme<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> The researcher interviewed Sarah McDermott at the Ministry of Education on 7th August '98 who was

#### **4.21 Evaluation of the EVMA Programme**

Moore et al of the School of Education at Auckland University conducted a formal evaluation of the programme that was published in 1997 (Moore, Adair, Lysaght & Kruiswijk, 1997). The evaluation was detailed, though narrow in its scope as only three schools were involved, two primary and one secondary.

The primary research question was “Does the programme reduce the levels of violence in schools?” A range of research tools was used to answer the question.

These included:

- A bullying questionnaire,
- Attitude to Violence scale,
- Classroom and Playground Observations
- Teacher, Pupil and parent interviews.

In the executive summary it states that:

The results clearly indicate that the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project has been associated with a reduction in both the level and severity of violence, and additionally, lower tolerance to violent behaviour at all three schools.

...pupils and teachers have gained an increased awareness of violence and a clearer understanding of the principles underlying the effective management of violence, particularly at the group and systems level.

Additional benefits have been observed with school staff in terms of improved staff relations and cohesiveness, increasingly consistent approach to discipline.

(Moore et al 1997. P: 2)

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responsible for overseeing the contract between the Ministry and the Specialist Education Service.

The report is less positive on other aspects of the programme:

The programme has been less successful in teaching pupils specific skills at the individual level for the management of their own anger, and in the development of pro-social alternatives to violent behaviour.

There has been little evidence of any impact on parents or community.

(Ibid. p: 2)

The research also identified a number of important limitations of the research:

The integrity of programme presentation has been limited both with respect to the difference between the designed programme and that delivered, and with the respect to the amount of time expended at each of the three schools.

(Ibid. p: 2)

Two of the three schools were described as having an '*environment of stress and organisation change present*'. These schools were under abnormal stress, two had received negative ERO reports accompanied by intense media coverage during the evaluation. The conclusions were also possibly confusing because other initiatives had also been used (i.e. Kia Kaha and Cool Schools') so the effect these had had may have also contributed to the overall anti-violence attitudes. However there was clear evidence that the programme was meeting parts of the stated objectives:

...in all three schools an expanded appreciation of the meaning of violence, and a heightened awareness amongst both staff and pupils of the pervasiveness and impact of violence was apparent' (Objective a)<sup>30</sup>. Teachers and pupils obtained a clearer understanding of the principles

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<sup>30</sup> Heighten awareness of the pervasiveness and impact of violence in schools and community.

underlying the effective management of violence, particularly at the group and systems level (Objective b)<sup>31</sup>, and exposure to the programme clearly helped teachers to provide an environment in which pupils felt safer and more welcome at school (Objective e)<sup>32</sup>.

(Ibid. p: 100)

The report notes that the schools had developed policies on violence and procedures for dealing with it and that pupils had noticed an improvement in the school culture and tone.

### **Subsequent developments; The 1998 EV Programme**

By 1998 the programme has undergone a number of revisions and, with the major personnel changes, the focus and direction has evolved. In discussions with the present team and using their notes, working papers and comments the following observations can be made. I met with the Eliminating Violence team at their office in Papatoetoe<sup>33</sup>, where they explained that the programme has a strong philosophical base that emphasises: “*A whole school, system based, prevention focused approach.*”

It was explained that the programme aims to identify and modify values, systems, structure and practice which may be supporting and / or encouraging

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<sup>31</sup> Teach parents, teachers and pupils the principles underlying the effective management of violence at a number of levels, e.g.: individual, group, systems and community.

<sup>32</sup> Help teachers to provide an environment where pupils feel safe, welcome and respected at school.

<sup>33</sup> My involvement with the EV team stemmed from contact I had had with one of the programme developers, Fenella Gill who had attended a course I ran at the Waikato In-service Centre in June 1996. Fenella then arranged for me to run a similar course, later that year, for SES personnel and interested teachers at the EV offices. In 1997 I produced a draft of a pupil advice pamphlet for the EV team. I also participated in Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Secondary School Working Party held at the Manukau office on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998.

violent behaviours. This goal is clearly stated in the programme's Vision Statement:

*To promote the development of a pro-social school ethos as an effective means of working towards eliminating violence and managing anger in schools.*

They indicated that they viewed a school ethos as consisting of a number of inter-related strands. For example: Academic, Relationship, Cultural, Arts and Sport.

The Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger project aimed to achieve its goal by helping schools to identify their current 'ethos' and to facilitate their development of a pro-social ethos. (Refer to [Appendix 8](#) for further details).

Initially the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project focused on definitions and concepts derived from the literature on domestic violence. It provided a programme based on discrete modules connected to one another by the theme of violence and based on the dynamics of domestic violence. A growing awareness that this approach, while developing a generic understanding of the issues of violence, generated few strategies relevant to schools led the team to move away from the earlier programme definitions and concepts.

Programme developments since mid-1997 have seen the articulation of a "new" definition of "**school violence**" which attempts to describe the reality of what actually occurs in schools.

**The definition of violence now includes:**

- Bullying
- Hurtful behaviour
- Out of control behaviour

Each element is further defined:



## **Bullying**

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

(Unpublished EVMA field notes 1998)

## **Hurtful behaviour**

- Often characterised by the inter-changeability of the roles between those who are hurting other and those who are being hurt.
- Often spontaneous and opportunist.
- May involve many children/pupils
- Hurt others by words or actions
- The hurt is often not obvious to adults
- Often considered acceptable behaviours.

## **Out of control Behaviour**

- Refers to unacceptable behaviour that is perpetrated by one individual
- Affects all those with whom the individual interacts- staff and pupils
- Often occurs in children/pupils who are significant behavioural (often-psychological) problems.

Four forces are said to impact on each of these three elements; *Pupils, Staff, Parents, and Systems.*

(Unpublished EVMA field notes 1998)

The indirect role of colluders and bystanders is also recognised and addressed.

Implicit in this definition is the fundamental belief that understanding the dynamics of the violence that occurs in schools is necessary to facilitating the cultural change required to bring about a reduction of violence.

## **EVMA Process:**

When a school enrolls in the project, a presentation is made to the staff and BOT

who are then balloted (secret) to see if they wish to participate in the project.

When there is a clear expression interest (i.e. 90% approval for participation), data is gathered on violence in the school. This involves several distinct components:

1. Pupil questionnaire
2. Teacher questionnaire
3. Classroom observations
4. Playground observation

Specialist Education Services (S.E.S.) uses trained observers and administers all the survey tools. This information is then made available to the school during the initial two-day staff training sessions.

The data collection and facilitation of the programme is the key role of the Specialist Education Services and beyond that there are, in the opinion of the team, two key elements in the success of the programme. These are school leadership and the composition of the Core Group.

### 1 School Leadership

The role of the principal is a vital cog in the successful transmission of the programme. There is much written about the influence the principal has in determining the culture of the school. The enthusiasm for and active participation in the project by the school leader is an essential element. When the leader is absent from the staff training session, it is taken as read by the rest of the staff, that the programme does not have her/his support. The success of the programme will be the availability of ongoing resources, which will be dependent on the commitment of the principal.

The second recommendation of the Secondary School Working Party (to be discussed next) reinforces this point:

*In the initial negotiation, there is a requirement for the Principal to make a financial commitment to the ongoing cost of implementing the programme.*

## 2 The Core Planning Group.

There was also recognition that the composition of the core group is a key element in the implementation process. The group must have power and must have status so that the changes planned actually happen. The administration team must ensure that the group meets regularly and be seen to support its function.

One of the interesting components of the data gathering section of the programme is that in most cases the reported (i.e. using the questionnaires) rates of violence *increase* while the observations reveal quite dramatic reductions in the targeted behaviour. The raised awareness of the pupils is a plausible explanation. They have a much clearer understanding and definition of violence and abuse and now always *recognise* it. Previously, they will have dismissed many incidents, not seeing them as bullying. Once the programme has raised awareness these incidents would be easily identified as bullying.

## **Results**

The team gave me access to two examples of post data summaries, one from a private boys' primary school, the other from a state primary school. Both sets of results show dramatic declines in the levels of observed violence.

**School one** (private boys' primary). There was an observed 83% reduction in playground violence, with a 100% reduction in classroom violence. There was also a noticeable reduction in negative comments as a ratio to positive comments (improved from 1.5:1 to 6:1). The team suggest there is a relationship between this and the improvement pupil behaviour.

**School two.** There was a 91% reduction in playground and classroom violence. (It is worth noting that in the second school where there was a very marked reduction in observed violence, but that pupils reported in the bullying questionnaire that they were being hurt more often than in the pre-intervention questionnaire.)

### **Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project Secondary Working Party**

One of the main concerns with the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project has been its inability to be effectively used in secondary schools. This prompted Specialist Education Service to convene a one-day working party on this issue.

The recommendations highlight some of the important issues for the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project in secondary schools. These include:

- Maintaining the integrity of the programme while being flexible and adaptable to the school structures.
- That the Principal makes a financial commitment to the full implementation of the programme.
- Pupil interviews are included in the data collection.
- Restructuring of the two-day workshop to ensure key actions are undertaken early.
- Increased pupil involvement and participation.
- The use of professional performance groups to enhance the message.
- The development of a secondary resource pack.
- That the EVMA team provides ongoing long-term support.

(Eliminating Violence Managing Anger handout 1998)

#### **4.23 Individual school case studies**

The researcher, in an effort to gain a greater understanding of the programme, visited three secondary schools that had participated in the Eliminating Violence Project.

**School one:**

School one is a large, well-established coeducational secondary school. Ms S has been Principal since 1986. In 1994 the school was part of a pilot trial of the Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme at the secondary level.

The motivation for participating in the trial came from what Ms S describes as her concern over the 'futility' of school suspensions. The school was aware that when confronted with violent incidents there was no real alternative other than suspension, which really made no difference to the 'violent offender'. The suspension process was a disappointment to a school that prided itself on its strong guidance emphasis. This resulted in a search for another way, that did not condone or accept violence, but sought to make a real difference.

Ms S heard an address by Christine Hilton-Jones of Manukau North Specialist Education Services, on the Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme, that had been operating in primary schools. Disappointed on hearing that there was no secondary version, Ms S was pleased when approached later that year and asked to participate in the pilot.

The staff agreed to participate in the pilot after a thoughtful presentation followed by a secret ballot. There followed a period of data gathering and the formation of a planning group that developed the two-day full staff training. At the end of 1994, during senior examination leave, two separate two-day training sessions were held. These were, in the principal's words, 'really positive' with a great staff response. Comments such as "the best professional development ever" were made. The training, while challenging some values and practices,

had a unifying team-building impact. There was a high level of commitment to the programme from the staff as a result of the programme.

The principal's speech to the prize giving at the end of 1994 addressed the theme of violence and the ideas behind the adoption of the programme were outlined to the community. In it she states:

The answer is not to bring back the gallows and return the cane to the classroom. That puts the power in the hands of only some people - and true power is what comes from within - when people have a commitment to change. That is what needs to happen.

(Principal, School 1, 1994)

Later in the speech she mentions a sociological research paper entitled *Teachers as Agents for Global Change* where claims are made that today's schools are the only places with enough talent and enough influence to provide peaceful settings and to teach peaceful ways of existence. Specifically, she identified five areas of importance:

- Schools must be safe places for all children.
- Learning must be fairly and freely available to all children
- The curriculum must include the area of responsible citizenship, with an emphasis on tolerance, equality, multiculturalism, diversity and parenting skills.
- Teaching styles need to be based on co-operative learning.
- Effecting appropriate behaviour, especially amongst boys.

(Principal, School 1, 1994)

She then introduced a sixth and crucial consideration;

There must be both a will and a way to make a difference.

She further comments that the staff training '*which was attended by all our staff, not only teachers but all our support staff as well, was truly the most positive professional learning experience in the lives of many of us....*'

In the months to come we will be putting in place the strategies that we have learned and we will be asking you, our parents, to give us your understanding and your involvement and you, our remaining pupils, to commit yourselves to working with us so that with this programme and with our new system of vertical forming, the school can show other secondary schools throughout the country, what a non-violent school can be.

(Principal, School 1, 1994)

Perhaps the spirit and enthusiasm is best measured in Ms S's final comment directed to the pupils leaving the college:

Pupils who are leaving you may well be moving into a world, which is more competitive in mode and more unequal than anything you have ever yet experienced. You may follow paths that lead you to a more incipient violence than anything you have known in your home or your school. Take with you peaceful ways, find kind and gracious words to turn anger aside; be generous in thought and spirit; seek mediation instead of confrontation and may all the happiness and laughter you have experienced here along with the free and liberating spirit of Pegasus, travel with you into a peaceful and harmonious future.

(Principal, School 1, 1994)

The data gathered by the Specialist Education Service team, was presented to the staff. This showed that while there were low levels of physical violence in the school, there was evidence of considerable verbal nastiness.

The most tangible signs of the programme in the school in 1995 was the appearance of posters in every room, which clearly identified what was not acceptable behaviour. This typified a raised awareness of 'violence' and the impact was, in Ms Principal, School 1's words '*really tremendous, the small*

*things were recognised and dealt with. There was a realisation that these unchallenged, led onto other bigger, more overtly violent behaviours’.*

The eliminating violence message was reinforced in the health curriculum and at school and house assemblies. Messages of tolerance, how to treat others, what’s important and the importance the school places on everyone were constantly repeated at appropriate forums. Sexual harassment procedures were developed and put in place.

The adoption of a vertical form structure supplemented the programme. The school is divided into several houses (six in 1998) within which there are form classes with membership from all levels in the school. Each house has developed its own ‘spirit’ and has within it support mechanisms to ensure that all pupils receive individual care and attention when needed.

All teachers new to the college participate in a two-day Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme course run by Specialist Education Services staff. There are plans for a full staff refresher in order to refocus attention and to maintain the momentum of the programme.

The lasting impact of the school’s involvement in the programme has been that the pupils feel safer. There is a perception that the school is a safe place, largely free from violence in all its forms. The underlying values of the programme are constantly placed in front of the school community in assemblies and in classroom practices. The ‘Cool Schools’ (discussed later in this Chapter) peer mediation programme now operates within the campus.

Ms S identified teacher-pupil conflict as an area of improvement, though did comment that for a few teachers (no more than four or five), confrontation is still a style that they fall back on. In these cases, practice has not kept pace with knowledge.



The overall impact of the programme has been the creation of a much more positive climate.

**School two:**

School two is a decile 8 state coeducational secondary school with a 1997 roll of 1450. The roll is increasing. The college enjoys a reputation as being innovative and has been a pioneer in the field of educating overseas fee paying pupils.

In 1995, on its own initiative, the school decided to develop a Safe School Policy, with the one specific aim being to reduce violence. The head of the guidance network was asked to co-ordinate the development of the policy. As part of the development of the policy, it was recognised (a SWOT analysis) that the staff needed some specific training. The Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme was investigated and on the recommendation of the EV team a group of teaching staff from School Two visited School One to discuss their experiences with the programme. They were impressed by the enthusiasm of the School One staff and decided to undertake the programme. At that stage they anticipated the cost of delivery to be in the range of \$4-5,000 and the initiative had the active support of the school principal.

The 1996 government budget allocations in support of the Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme resulted in the school not needing to pay for the delivery as the cost was met by the government. A presentation was made to the full staff during 1996 and the initiative gained the support of the vast majority in a secret ballot. A two-day training session was held for all staff near the end of the year, one being a teacher-only day and the other when the seniors had left.

The training was well received and involved the presentation of data.

In 1997, a core group was established to oversee the Safe School Policy. The

group included the Principal, one Deputy Principal, the Head of Guidance and nine other volunteers. There has been a conscious effort to have each of the faculties represented. The group meets three times a year and makes a real effort to keep all elements of the school community well informed of the issues it is dealing with. The policy aims to have a profile in the weekly staff newsletter and staff are updated on progress and activities at each staff meeting.

The Safe School Policy is a comprehensive, umbrella document and includes the areas of racial and sexual harassment, crisis management, health and safety, and discipline. There is no specific mention of bullying, though this is implicit.

Initiatives in 1997 included the development of *codes of conduct* during form-times, supported by posters and other art work, the introduction of a peer mediation and the close identification of the Principal in the drive for a safer environment. The peer mediation training was delivered in-house.

An initiative currently being investigated is one that has come from a pupil concept. Called "*Trial by Peers*", the details have yet to be fleshed out. Pupils who, by their actions, endanger other pupils will be made accountable to their peers, who will impose punishments. These may include some form of community service; working with the caretaker. A senior pupil, who is also involved in the pupil radio, is driving this initiative.

The success of the Safe School Policy has been evident in an increase in reporting. Pupils appear to understand that talking will solve issues. Victims are more willing to seek help and the mediation service has resulted in more talking.

### **School three:**

**School three** is a very large state secondary co-educational school on

Auckland's North Shore. The school has been growing rapidly, is oversubscribed and draws on an affluent, expanding suburban area. It had a 1997 roll of 1949 and has over 2000 pupils in 1998. It has a decile rating of 10.

The motivation for this successful, school of choice, to address the issue of violence/bullying is rooted in changes to the school ethnic composition during the early 1990s. The environment had altered and it was evident that there was racial tension that occasionally spilled into physical conflict. The various ethnic groups tended to group together and there was an air of mutual suspicion and antagonism.

In 1996, a six member group including the Associate Principal, one Deputy Principal and the fourth form dean met to review current 'safe school' policies and address the specific issue of racial harassment.

The planning group was aware that there was a need to gain the support and commitment of all the teaching staff if any initiative was to be successful. The planning group visited School One and was impressed by the way School One staff talked about the Specialist Education Services Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme that they had piloted in 1995/6.

After an initial enquiry to Specialist Education Services Manukau North, the school was offered a training slot at the end of 1996. After a presentation to the full staff of the ideas behind the programme and a unanimous vote in support of becoming involved the school agreed to participate. The Specialist Education Services team then came into the school and collected data on levels of violence in the school.

The staff (including all ancillary staff) was divided into two groups, (faculties were split) and they were trained over two separate days. The first day was generally well received, though a significant minority of men found some of the

ideas (the use of rugby analogies and examples) a bit threatening. Some of the video footage used was clearly outdated and not relevant. The second day was more universally approved, with the presentation of data provoking good discussion. This led to more school-focused discussion on real situations.

The data collection showed that despite the fears there were very low levels of violence in the school.

In 1997 a core group was established made up of faculty representatives, deans and other guidance personnel. Their first task was to analyse the feedback from the two-day training sessions and to implement as many suggestions as possible. These included:

- Have staff in pairs for duty.
- Have the year eleven pupils design and develop a poster based on the theme '*At School Three you cannot...Spit, use 'put downs'*'. These were given to all teachers to display in their classrooms.
- Staff Professional Development sessions on how to handle issues such as 'name calling, racist comments etc.
- The message to all staff was that while we may not be able to change the pupils' thinking, we can change their doing.
- Pupil leaders were recruited from each of the main ethnic groups (eight) who received leadership training and are used to welcome new arrivals at the college.
- The deans have established informal networks of pupils within each community who are able to help mediate etc.
- An International Club has been established under the leadership of the ESOL and Guidance departments.
- Philosophy sessions for all pupils using University of Auckland personnel to discuss important issues.
- Special presentations have been made to all year ten pupils on *racism, violence and work habits*.

- Issues of racism are all discussed at year eleven.
- The weekly staff newsletter has a “How to handle” column that is generated from faculty discussion and based on real practice.
- Peer mediation has been introduced.
- Each form class has two trained sexual harassment 'officers'. The guidance counsellor trains these pupils at the beginning of each year.
- Two other pupils are also asked to keep an eye on the ‘officers’ to make sure they are doing their job and are available.
- A seventh form leadership programme has been developed.
- Peer Support is supported.
- A third form “Top Town” style day, run by the Peer Support leaders, is held early in term 1 to encourage team building.
- A real effort is made to use senior ‘role models’ on public occasions such as assembly.
- Lunchtime has been reduced to forty-five minutes.
- “Thought for the day” on notices generated by Peer Support Leaders.
- Information Packs have been prepared in a range of languages to assist pupils and parents new to the school and country.
- A new teachers information pack “All you wanted to know about School Three”.

The result is that there is heightened awareness from both staff and pupils. Staff are more involved in these issues. There is a much greater awareness of the little things that lead to more violent harassment and the staff now is more conscious of the way pupils enter and leave rooms.

During 1996 the school administered a bullying survey and this was repeated at the end of 1997. This showed a 30-40% reduction in bullying. The pupils reported few major issues. Detentions have been surveyed for ethnic and gender bias, with no significant issues arising.

#### **4.24 Discussion of the effectiveness of the EV programme**

The Eliminating Violence and Managing Anger Project is effective and does reduce school bullying. It is recognisable as an anti-bullying programme with its strong whole school approach and desire to go beyond a curriculum intervention. Where it differs is in the scope and scale of its aims. In endeavouring to eliminate violence and manage anger it is far more ambitious than most anti-bullying programme and it lacks the simplicity and clarity of other approaches. By failing to provide a concise target the programme has the potential to attempt too much. Its heavy reliance on outside facilitation makes it a prohibitively and unnecessarily expensive option.

The case studies clearly show that the Eliminating Violence programme can be a very successful catalyst for schools developing safe environments. The project contains many of the elements of the whole school approach and the results of the comprehensive programme survey show that while it does if not eliminate violence, it certainly significantly reduces it. The programme does unfortunately require significant commitment of resources from the outside and the present structure is dependent on Specialist Education Service staff being able to run the school project. At current rates of delivery it would take in excess of 100 years for all schools in New Zealand to have the programme. There is an urgent need for the programme to be redesigned so that schools use it with a minimum of input from the Specialist Education Service. One barrier to this would be the loss of the very valuable data collection, which is a vital component in gaining a good understanding of the reality of violence in the school.

The initiative is effective, as is illustrated by the Specialist Education Services own information, the University of Auckland evaluative study (Moore et al. 1997) and from the case study material provided. It has been effectively employed by many primary schools in New Zealand and some secondary schools. The bulk of these schools have opted into the programme with the support of the money gained from the 1996 Crime Prevention strategy budget

allowance. It is difficult to imagine schools being prepared to commit the significant funds needed to run the programme out of their own operational grants.

It is worth noting however that in their formal evaluation, (Moore et al 1997) conclude that the programme has been less effective in “*teaching pupils specific skills at the individual level*” (Objective c and d)<sup>34</sup>. It further states that “*despite the expenditure of considerable time and effort...there is little evidence of any impact upon parents or the community in general*”. Another major concern was that it did not address the multiethnic issues effectively. Clearly the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger Project is worth supporting, but to advocate its use as the main anti-bullying tool would be an expensive and unnecessary action.

### ***4.3 Cool Schools Peer Mediation***

#### **Background**

The Foundation for Peace Studies Aotearoa /New Zealand<sup>35</sup> developed their “Cool Schools” Peer Mediation Programme in 1991 largely through the work of Yvonne Duncan. Formerly part of STEP (Pupils and Teachers Educating for Peace), Duncan became the National Co-ordinator and Trainer of the Cool Schools programme for the Foundation in 1994. Since the programme was first offered, five hundred schools have had at least one teacher attend a session. While there is no clear evidence of how many schools are operating the programme, the training is still in very high demand.

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<sup>34</sup> Teach pupils and other how to overcome their own and others anger and channel such anger positively. Enskill parents, teachers and pupils in prosocial alternatives to violent behaviours.

<sup>35</sup> Formed in 1975 the foundation is ‘committed to promoting harmonious relationships among all people at all levels, through education and research’. It has produced a number of resources for schools over the years.

## Description

The programme is designed to train pupils to become 'third party mediators' who are available to their peers who are caught up in conflict and want to find a resolution. The foundation stresses that the most effective way to introduce the concept is to train the whole staff who will, in turn, set up training sessions for the pupils who will become mediators.

In their promotion material the foundation argues that whole staff training is '*the best way to implement Cool Schools*' because:

Pupils at all levels can learn appropriate conflict resolution skills.

All staff and pupils understand and support the programme.

(Cool Schools Publicity pamphlet)

The training programme establishes:

- A six-step process for teaching mediation skills to children.
- The outlines of the seven-session programme with key skills, which empower children to resolve their own conflicts.
- How to gain the support of staff and community.
- Where the programme fits into the formal curriculum.
- How it will support a better learning environment.
- That the programme teaches important life-skills and useful work skills to all children.

(Cool Schools Publicity pamphlet)

The programme is well structured and supported by staff manuals that guide the teacher in charge of the mediators through the seven session training programme that precedes the introduction of the mediation service.

Once trained, the mediators take turns at being available to mediate with their peers. Mediators are given specific times that they are 'on duty'. During this



time they wear distinctive clothing (T-shirt, hat etc.) so they are clearly visible. They need to be asked to intervene and are told that they cannot force pupils to work with them.

They report any mediation to the teacher in-charge as part of the ongoing supervision of the programme.

#### **4.31 Evaluation**

There have been two small research projects on the effectiveness of the Cool Schools project and one formal evaluation carried out by a group of commercial researchers.

Both of the research projects (Whitham, 1994, O'Meara, 1996) report that the programme is successful.

The first concluded that where the programme was effectively introduced (full-staff training is the 'optimum'), the following resulted:

- Improvement in pupil behaviour
- Children able to work more co-operatively
- Valuable problem-solving learned.
- More able to share feelings.
- Pressure on staff-members reduced.
- Increase in teaching time.
- Children learning life-skills to cope with conflict

(Whitham, 1994 P : 72-3)

The second project found that:

Cools Schools peer mediation works to reduce playground conflict in our school. The positive behavioural trends and the skills and social attitudes being taught show an overwhelming preference for the positive aspects in the pupil survey results.

(O'Meara, 1996 P : 40)

The evaluation produced by the Radford Group in 1996, was based on 188 telephone interviews and ten face-to-face interviews with educators and was more broadly focussed on the work of the foundation, but was still able to comment on the programme per se. It concluded that:

- Cool schools was the most mentioned effective means of dealing with conflict and violence by a substantial margin.
- People familiar with the Cool Schools programme were almost unanimous in rating it as effective.
- There was high agreement that the Cool Schools programme had many effective features
- There was high disagreement about possible negative features of the Cool Schools programme.

(Radford Group, 1996 P: 3)

The evaluation shows that schools, which had used the Cool Schools programme, were significantly less likely to deny the existence of problems of conflict and violence in their schools. *“...this may suggest that those at Cools Schools are more aware of and sensitive to, incidents of conflict and violence than those at non-Cool Schools”*  
(Radford Group, 1996 P: 7).

The research found that staff at schools that had not been trained in the Cool Schools approach were significantly less likely to acknowledge the existence of:

- Verbally aggressive behaviour
- Teasing and verbal disrespect
- Bullying and fighting.

(Ibid. P: 7)

A further finding was that only 2% of those who were familiar with the Cool Schools programme felt it was ineffective.

(Ibid. P: 12)

In terms of effectiveness, there was strong agreement regarding the

positive features of the programme. This was particularly so for the programme's ability to help children deal with conflict for life. Although still high, there was less agreement about the programme's effectiveness as a means of reducing bullying and fewer agreed that Cool Schools provided a more positive teaching environment.

(Ibid. P: 12)

While these evaluations provide positive feedback on the whole mediation programme, it is important to note that North American research has been less positive about mediation programmes being effective in stopping aggressive behaviour (Sherman et al 1997). From an anti-bullying perspective, mediation is claimed to be important only in that it raises the awareness of many of the members of the community as to effective ways of countering hostile or aggressive actions of others. They argue that because bullying behaviour is a form of abuse it is unrealistic to expect the victim to seek mediation and even less realistic to expect the abuser to accept intervention.

#### ***4.4 Mental Health Foundation:***

##### **Mental Health Matters, Mentally Healthy Schools**

The Mentally Healthy Schools project grew out a Mental Health Foundation (MHF) initiative to develop a school resource based on Mental Health. This led to the writing of 'Mental Health Matters' a kit aimed at the junior secondary school and launched in May 1997.

The MHF, along with the Christchurch College of Education, was contracted by the Joint Health Funding Authorities to deliver Mental Health Matters to two hundred and forty schools by December 1998.

The Mentally Healthy Schools project is an extension of this receiving extra funding from North Health. Schools were selected for the intensive intervention

following a 'needs' assessment

### **Programme**

The process begins with a representative of the MHF meeting with the principal and outlining the basic concepts of the 'Mentally Healthy School', what the role of the MHF would be and the support and training available. A full day meeting of a core group that includes one member of the senior management team, the guidance counsellor, the health co-ordinator and one other interested person then follows this up. These two meetings are used as a catalyst to identify the objectives of the programme that is firmly fixed within the context of the school health curriculum.

The next stage is for the project to have a 'whole school' focus. The school climate is targeted with the hope of developing a concept that the health of the school is a shared responsibility.

### **Data Gathering**

With a focus on mental health issues, the Injury Prevention Unit attached to the University of Auckland Medical School undertakes a whole school survey. This is based on a pupil and staff questionnaire.

### **Delivery**

A one-day teacher workshop is used to introduce the underlying concepts of the programme to the staff. The day begins by focusing on the core values and beliefs of the staff. Several focusing questions are presented and used in a post-box activity to help establish a view of what's going on and to generate possible directions for the project. These include:

- ✓ Who are schools for?
- ✓ How could the environment be improved?
- ✓ What's good about being here?  
-What makes that good?

- ✓ What don't I like about here?  
-Why isn't that good?

The responses are used to identify the attitudes and perceptions of the staff and to identify what the issues are for the teachers.

This is followed by the development of some achievable objectives that form the basis of milestone reporting points in the contract.

### **Roadblocks**

The MHF have found it difficult to work within the schools timelines and timetables, which they find inflexible and constraining. They have identified the need for schools to actively review their policy development structures to be more compatible with the initiative directions. In particular, discipline structures and the place of a rehabilitation process need reviewing.

### **Study of two schools involved in Mentally Healthy Schools project:**

#### **School A:**

The decile two secondary school has been actively involved in the project in 1998. There has been a reorganisation of the pastoral structures where all pupils are in vertical 'mentor groups' (average 18 pupils per group). Each mentor group is aligned to one of four *Punga* (houses). The groups select the mentor<sup>36</sup> and they meet together every morning for twenty-five minutes plus an extra hour period each week. There is a whole school programme available for the mentor time that was developed by the staff at the beginning of the year. This began with a two-week focus on the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community. Four rights and parallel responsibilities were developed in a collaborative exercise and after much discussion were presented in a final

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<sup>36</sup> The groups will nominate teachers they would like as their mentor.

classroom version.

Each mentor has made contact with the homes of all members of the group and have worked closely with each pupil in developing self-review and goal setting exercises. Using this information personal educational profiles are developed for each pupil.

This has generated a considerable amount of work for the teachers and is an issue with the staff.

The core group or driving force of the initiative is a pupil-based group, *O Ranga* that is made up of forty-two pupils and four staff members. This forum is made up of a representative from each mentor group and includes the school prefects. Members are given a badge of office and must be committed to non-violence principles and are expected to model positive behaviour at all times. The badges will be removed if a member's behaviour is seen to be outside the principles.

### **School B:**

A decile 7 intermediate school with a 1997 roll of 761 (making it the second largest intermediate in the country) has a strong anti-bullying ethos that it has developed over the last two years. A key catalyst in the development of the anti-bullying programme was involvement in the Mentally Healthy Schools Project.

The first stage in what has been a Whole School Approach was a parent meeting where the aims of the project were outlined: '*The programme works with the school and the local community to help make the school a more supportive and healthy place for pupils and staff.*' (Interview, Deputy Principal)

As part of the initiative 623 pupils completed a questionnaire about mental health issues for young people. The questionnaire '*aimed to identify health concerns*

*and other important issues for young people attending school five*'. The Injury Prevention Research Unit, Department of Community health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, University of Auckland are evaluating the initiative.

The school-based action began with the establishment of a lead group within the school, involving the MHF and facilitated by the school's Health Co-ordinator. The group began by establishing programmes that would make it a healthy school. These include:

- **Reaching Out** (has been used for several years)
- **Cool School's Peer Mediation**
- **No Blame Approach to Bullying**
- **The Day 1 to 5 programme**

**Reaching Out and Cool School's Peer Mediation:**

Yvonne Duncan of the Aotearoa/New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies trained a group of staff in the Cool School's Peer Mediation process. Pupil mediators were then appointed for both the classroom and the playground. Distinctive tee shirts and badges identify them. There is a Reaching Out module on mediation, which is used to give the pupils knowledge of the Cool School mediators.

**No Blame Approach to Bullying:** As part of a desire to develop a "telling environment" it was decided that the No Blame Approach<sup>37</sup> to bullying be investigated. The Deputy Principal presented the approach to the full staff, using a copy of the video. The staff was attracted to the approach and it has been used enthusiastically for the last two years.

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<sup>37</sup>Maines and Robinson, (1992) *Michael's Story, The No Blame Approach to Bullying* Lame Duck Publishing, Bristol 1994

**The Day 1 to 5 Programme** As part of ensuring that the school was a safe environment, the staff has adopted this “Time Out” strategy. Essentially it is part of the discipline procedures of the school whereby pupils who behave in an unsafe way are isolated from their peer group, during lunchtime, for up to five days. Day 1 involves the pupil writing a letter home describing the behaviour that has led to them being on the programme. They then accompany the duty DP around the school. A range of other activities take place on the next three days with the final day including a discussion about safety, self-esteem and ways to avoid the behaviour.

As part of their involvement with the school the Mental Health Foundation undertook a comprehensive survey of safety issues at the school. The survey found that:

Very few pupils reported that they found it difficult to learn to cope or handle their problems. It would also seem that the pupils have high self-esteem, although a high proportion reported experiencing more than one episode of verbal teasing. Approximately 15-20% have also experienced tough situations. Many of the health issues for young people came from worrying about being an adult. The Mentally Healthy Schools initiative aims to address key health issues for young people, and to make positive improvements to their feelings of well-being. The information will also help schools and communities to provide young people with the skills to make positive decisions about their lifestyle choices.

(Research Report, Injury Prevention Research Report, 1998)

The school has obviously adopted a broad range of strategies in their determination to provide a safe environment. The survey detected low levels of bullying.



#### **4.41 Discussion of the Mental Health Foundation initiative**

The Mental Health Foundation is clearly effective and has an energising impact on schools who wish to address school safety issues. Its success illustrates once again that the key ingredient to combating bullying is the whole school approach. This initiative clearly follows this overall approach and successfully works with the school community to identify actions that need to be addressed.

#### ***4.5 Other Initiatives combating violence and bullying***

##### **4.51 School Trustee Association Task Force on Solutions to Violence in Schools**

The National Council of the New Zealand School Trustees Association established the task force to '*look at practical solutions to the problems of violence in schools*'. The decision to set up the taskforce was prompted by awareness that violence appeared to be increasing and a desire to investigate successful practices in New Zealand schools and other agencies in order to provide schools with options for dealing with the problem.

The task force produced a report in May 1993.

Violence was defined as covering both verbal and physical intimidation and activities that disrupt and / or threaten others. (STA, 1993). The taskforce consulted widely (158 organisation or individuals approached, extensive surveys of primary and secondary schools) and received 1200 submissions.

In making its first two recommendations (of twelve) the report notes:

Solutions to violence must be proactive, and encompass a commitment to dealing with all the issues affecting the child/pupil in a co-ordinated holistic way.

(Ibid. p :2)

The next three recommendations stemmed from their observation that "*solutions may involve a change to the school 'culture' and curriculum, and to the way*

*teachers teach*".(STA, 1993:3)

Boards of trustees [are to] be encouraged to adopt policies which foster an attitude of non-violence within the school. To enable this development to occur boards may establish a self-review process, which examines the school culture they are hoping to create.

Boards of trustees [are to] be encouraged within the *Healthy Schools* concepts to promote a curriculum accessible to all children in the school which includes negotiation and mediation skills, conflict resolution, and anger management.

Teacher training providers [are to] be urged to recognise these changes in focus within the training of teachers in teaching/learning methodology.

(Ibid. p: 4)

In discussing discipline the taskforce concluded that legislative changes would be required if the next two recommendations were to be adopted. The first: *"The Government be asked to review with all urgency the legislation relating to board discretion over school hours, terms and holidays"*.

This recommendation was the result of awareness that schools needed to be more responsive to the needs of children and be more flexible in their opening hours. The next recommendation: *"The role and responsibilities of discipline committees be reviewed"* is the result of the contradiction the taskforce felt between the policy making and legalistic function the BOT has when acting on discipline matters.

Recommendations eight to ten deal with the involvement of the community and the need for the school to reflect that community:

8. Boards of trustees take into account the need to foster and adopt policies and programmes that reflect ‘ownership’ and self-determination by the community, particularly so that the needs and aspirations of the Maori community are respected.

9. Boards of trustees be encouraged to work with parents and support agencies, through all stages of schooling, to develop parent support programmes at schools involving participation from parents, pupils and staff.

10. The Family Proceedings Act be amended to ensure that all members of a dysfunctional family can receive counselling and support.

(Ibid. p: 6)

The final two recommendations are specifically directed at issues to do with resources:

Boards of trustees and principals be provided with a list of available programmes compiled by the Task Force, and be encouraged to utilise approaches that are consistent with the *Healthy Schools* concept.

Specialist care and backup services and facilities for the ‘out of control’ child be given attention in the implementation of special education, police and welfare policies.

(Ibid. p: 6)

There is little to suggest that the Healthy Schools concept has gained a great deal of support in schools. Efforts to contact the Trustee Association to ascertain the current status of the project drew a complete blank. While the initiative aims were laudable it is clear that very little has come from the efforts of the report writers. This lack of action clearly demonstrates the need for clear leadership from the key government agencies.

#### **4.51 South Canterbury Principals’ Association Initiative**

As part of their innovative “Focus on Children” initiative, the South Canterbury Principals’ Association (SCPA) arranged for two formal evening seminars on the topic of bullying during 1997. At the first seminar they issued a bullying survey to all school in the area. While the data collected was for use within each school a follow up telephone survey by the SCPA of all the schools involved produced some interesting results.

In a SCPA newsletter some general observations were made about the survey and on the way the area is dealing with bullying:

### **Initiative for pupils**

- \* Many schools have chosen to implement new programmes since our seminars – Cool Schools, Kia Kaha, etc.
- \* Children’s level of awareness as to their right to be free of hassles had been increased.
- \* Some schools have implemented formalised Behaviour Management plans for the classroom / playground as a result

### **Initiative for staff**

- \* Staff in all sizes of school have reported a more consistent approach to behaviour management.
- \* There has been lots of discussion within staffs as to what constitutes unacceptable behaviour.
- \* In some schools better procedures for recording unacceptable behaviour have been implemented.

### **Initiatives for Parents**

- \* Schools have tried to communicate the changes in policy and procedures to their parent communities.
- \* Many schools are attempting to ensure parents are clear about expectations when enrolling their children.

- \* Schools are involving parents more when children behave unacceptably

### **Surveys**

- \* All but one school implemented the survey. Most used it as a tool to confirm things they already knew or suspected.

### **Strategies still to be implemented**

- \* Almost all schools are still working on ideas generated by the seminars or ideas they already had, that the seminars raised the profile of e.g. introduction of new programmes, further work on policy / procedures. Only one school felt no further changes were needed.

### **Knowing whether strategies were working**

- \* Many schools felt there was an improvement in children's ability to deal with inappropriate behaviour, or willingness to ask for help had increased because of the changes in the schools' procedures.
- \* Most schools felt it was too soon to be sure of long term gain.

### **What else could be done to support you?**

- \* Schools felt the profile of the issue should be kept high. Some mentioned the beauty of the group as a whole doing this instead of a particular school speaking out and perhaps being labelled.
- \* Some schools expressed interest in further seminars with speakers on related topics.

(Hoani, L. 1998)

The actions of the association need to be commended. They identified a real need and have sought a solution. It is interesting to note that many of the schools in the area now recognise the need to use Kia Kaha across the school and for it to be supported by other school-wide actions and a policy.

#### **4.52 Auckland Safe School Association**

The Auckland Safe Schools Association was established in November-December 1994 and based on the Canadian Safe Schools Association. Ken Havill (Deputy Principal of Western Springs College, Auckland) had applied to the Prime Minister's Crime Prevention Unit (CPU), seeking funding support to attend the Canadian Safe Schools' Association conference in Toronto in November 1994. He received support on the condition that on his return he would follow through with a genuine effort to communicate knowledge and findings gained from the conference.

The association, described in its 1995 Annual Report, as a 'Collective, comprising educators from the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, representatives from New Zealand Parent Teacher Association, and from the Foundation for Peace Studies', quickly formed a management committee, established a charter and developed a constitution. They then applied for and gained a \$5,000 establishment grant from the CPU and the Ministry of Education.

An operating cycle was established that includes a monthly management committee meeting with three events each year, with the second having a Peer Mediation emphasis.

All Auckland schools were advised of the association and its aims in a mail out announcing the first seminar. Included in the mail out was a survey that asked schools to prioritise 'safe school needs'.

The seminar in March of 1995 began with Fenella Gill and Christine Hilton-Jones of the Specialist Education Services, presenting the Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme. Attended by ninety people representing 45 schools the presentation was followed by a panel discussion led by

administrators and teachers from schools that had piloted the programme.

This was followed, in the second term of 1995, by two seminars that focused on developing Peer Mediation Programmes in secondary schools. The first a half-day session for teachers, counsellors and administrators was attended by 24 Auckland schools. A second workshop aimed at co-ordinators, colleagues and pupils wishing to train pupils and staff in their own schools. Led by Yvonne Duncan of the Foundation for Peace Studies, and Margaret Stanners, Guidance Counsellor at Mt Roskill Grammar School was restricted to thirty participants and was able to cater for eight schools. Because of the interest and success of the programme the Association holds this training annually.

The initial safe schools survey identified that the top priority for respondents was coping with bullying behaviour. This prompted the association to arrange for the writer to present a seminar based on his studies on how schools in the United Kingdom have developed and maintained effective anti-bullying policies and programmes.

The association followed this up with a March 1996 workshop to review progress and has developed a resource bank.

1998 events include a Race Relations seminar in June with the usual mediation training in July. There is also a school competition to design a logo for the association. The Mental Health Foundation holds the resources.

#### **4.53 Telecom/Police 'Stop Bullying' Programme**

The Police have received financial support from Telecom for several years as part of a “Youth in Focus” partnership<sup>38</sup>. In their main Internet website, Telecom

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<sup>38</sup> The following statement is contained on the home page of the ‘Stop Bullying internet site, <http://www.nobully.org.nz/> : “Telecom is the major sponsor of Police programmes which help young New

discuss this sponsorship this way:

### **Keeping our youth safe**

Telecom is the major sponsor of the NZ Police's Youth in Focus programme, which aims to provide young people with the skills to keep safe and make responsible decisions. Telecom has committed over \$2 million in cash, advertising support, products, services and staff assistance to the programme over three years. If someone you know would benefit from the Youth in Focus programme or you would like to offer your support, contact your local Police Education Officer or D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Support Committee.

(Telecom website 1998)

In 1996 Telecom agreed to become involved in a Police initiative to reduce levels of bullying in New Zealand. Bullying had already been a theme developed by Telecom in their television advertising campaign using their 'mascot' Spot.

Led by Police Inspector Morris Cheer co-ordinator of the Youth in Focus project, a meeting of interested parties was held at Police National Headquarters in Wellington in March 1997. Ways of co-ordinating anti-bullying action in New Zealand were discussed. Representatives present were from, Ministry of Education, Crime Prevention Unit, Telecom, Police Youth Education Services, Youth Aid Services, Children and Young Persons Service, Specialist Education Services, Victoria University of Wellington academics, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and a number of interested individuals.

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Zealanders to avoid becoming offenders or victims of crime. The programmes encourage children and young people to act safely and confidently to protect themselves and their property, and avoid drug abuse.

Telecom supports the Police because we recognise it is the responsibility of all New Zealanders to allow our children and young people to grow up in a safe and healthy environment".



The result was a desire by the NZ Police to:

‘launch a campaign that will ‘stimulate public debate; change community attitudes and behaviours towards bullying; make all forms of bullying unacceptable throughout the community; and identify appropriate Police action when dealing with bullying incidents’.

(Cheer, 1997)

From this developed the “Stop Bullying Campaign” that took shape over 1997 and was formally launched by the Minister of Youth Affairs, Deborah Morris on 31 July 1997.

Principally an awareness raising initiative the campaign comprised of the following elements:

- ◆ Advice pamphlets for caregivers and pupils
- ◆ 0800 NO BULLY info-line.
- ◆ The NO BULLY Internet site.
- ◆ A short story competition
- ◆ Stop Bullying video and associated posters featuring Michael Jones
- ◆ A national series of teacher training workshops
- ◆ The developments of an information booklet

The campaign was designed to:

...fundamentally recognise Telecom’s substantial sponsorship and the need to provide public recognition of Telecom’s commitment to youth issues. It is solution-based with a variety of options for parents, caregivers and young people to adopt to help them deal with bullying.

(Lee, 1998)

### **Key Elements of the Stop Bullying Campaign**

Information/advice brochures for parents, caregivers and young people are

available from the Police and many support agencies. Approximately 1.3 million caregiver pamphlets were mailed to New Zealand households at the start of the campaign with Telecom phone accounts. Copies of the advice for young people were sent to schools throughout the country.

**00800 NO BULLY info-line**

A pre-recorded advice free-phone advice service. Callers are able to select “real person” assistance and are then connected to a counselling service. The service offers support and solutions for bullying victim, offenders and parents. From its inception through to March 1998 (less than six months) the 0800 line had received more than 7000 calls.

**NO BULLY Internet site**

The professionally developed site ([www.nobully.org.nz](http://www.nobully.org.nz)), contains all the information from the advice brochures, a number of bullying scenarios, games, referral and help agencies available to assist both victim and offender as well as links to a range of international anti-bullying sites. The site averages 1000 hits per week.

**A school based Internet quiz and short story competition was conducted during February and March of 1998 and was considered to be successful.**

### **Stop Bullying Video**

Professionally produced for the campaign by the Communicado Group the video is fronted by the All Black sporting great Michael Jones. It is aimed at providing a stimulus so that parents and young people can open up discussion on bullying. The video shows young people sharing their views on bullying what they think and feel. It is not about adults telling young people what to think. It is available nationally, to be borrowed at no charge, in 350 commercial video outlets as well as through Police Youth Aid officers, Police Youth Education officers, Police Iwi Liaison officers and many schools.

### **Stop Bullying Video Posters**

Two and a half thousand posters featuring Michael Jones and the message “Stop Bullying” were distributed to schools, libraries and police stations nationally.

### **Print Ads**

A series of full-page newspaper advertisements were run in a national Sunday newspaper in October/November of 1997. The series of three ads highlighted a different type of bullying and gave advice and suggestions for victims and bullies on how to seek help.

### **Teacher Workshops**

A total of eighteen workshops addressing more than 1000 participants were held at various locations through the country in February and March 1998. The workshops were aimed at teachers from both primary and secondary schools and aimed at raising awareness and promoting workable strategies. The workshops were in big demand with many applicants missing out. The writer presented all but one of the workshops. The evaluation of the workshop demonstrated that they were positively received. ([Appendix 9](#)).

### **Speaking programme**

The proposed speaking programme has been less popular with only two service groups asking for the services of a speaker.

The campaign has been successful from the Police point of view. They report '*a groundswell of interest in, and support for, the 'Stop Bullying' campaign*'.

Several hundred letters have been sent to Telecom and the Police supporting the project and this when measured against the frequency of use of both the Internet site and the 0800 NOBULLY info-line suggests the campaign was appropriately targeted. Video agencies report the video is proving to be popular and there has been widespread media interest in a variety of aspects of the campaign.

The teacher workshop success has led to the workshop facilitator being commissioned to write a brief guideline handbook for schools, which will be supported in greater detail on the Internet<sup>39</sup>. (Cleary, 1998)

At the time of writing the intention of the campaign was to continue to maintain both the Internet site and the 0800 number.

The campaign has certainly raised the general public awareness of bullying. As a result of the success of the campaign the Kia Kaha programme has been rewritten. The recommendations of the programme evaluation (Sullivan, 1998b) have been adopted and the programme is much more curriculum based than previously. The 'one-size fits all' programme has been replaced by several year level specific programmes. A new video accompanies the programme and school that wish to use the material have to give an undertaking that it will be followed through in its entirety. This addresses a major concern identified in Bell's evaluation (1997). It is pleasing to see such resources being developed and it is hoped that it is well used.

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<sup>39</sup> The guidelines are now available on the No Bully web site and include forms and templates that can be downloaded for use by individual schools. ([www.nobully.org.nz/](http://www.nobully.org.nz/))

#### ***4.6 Review: The New Zealand approach to school bullying.***

Despite the overwhelming international evidence that targeted anti-bullying programmes work, and apart from *Kia Kaha*, there have not been any national programmes or initiatives that specifically target bullying in our schools. Despite this, bullying has obviously a significantly higher profile amongst both the general and educational communities within New Zealand than was the case a decade ago. The quantitative work of Adair and Maxwell and Carroll-Lind have received some significant media attention as did O'Reilly's report on St Andrew's and the Review Office reports on St Stephen's and more recently Otago Boys'. The Telecom/Police 'Stop Bullying' initiative has also been important in this raising of public awareness with the high profile pamphlet, 0800 free-phone line and video.

In terms of assisting schools to deal with the problem, the *Kia Kaha* resource, despite its shortcomings, has been the most accessible. This has more to do with the failure to provide schools and teachers with the knowledge and understandings of bullying and successful actions that have been developed elsewhere.

The other, more generic, initiatives have been successful. The Aotearoa/New Zealand Cool Schools' Peer Mediation approach appears to have been enthusiastically adopted by many primary and an increasing number of secondary school, though it is difficult to access if this approach will directly reduce bullying behaviour. Specialist Education Service's Eliminating Violence and Managing Anger Programme is strongly supported by schools who have used it and this support appears to be well warranted from both the internal and external audits of the programme. The programme does reduce violence and bullying (in some cases dramatically). Despite this its continued success is very much in the hands of individual schools trustees who must decide if they can

afford the programme now that government money is no longer available. It is an unnecessarily expensive option.

Schools increasingly seeking support in implementing the new Health and Physical Education Curriculum that is currently being introduced into all New Zealand schools have welcomed the Mental Health Foundation's 'Mental Health Matters' resource material. The more comprehensive Mentally Healthy Schools intervention in a number of schools in Auckland and Northland is also promising and is well supported by those schools involved.

Unfortunately, very few schools have accessed the programmes that have specific anti-bullying elements and fit the Olweus whole school approach, (Eliminating Violence and Mentally Healthy Schools)<sup>40</sup>. The heightened awareness of school bullying has not been effectively translated into school-based action. There has been a systematic failure to take cognisance of the international research and practice.

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<sup>40</sup> The Eliminating Violence Managing Anger Programme has been delivered to just over seventy schools and the Mentally Healthy Schools programme has been used by fewer than ten schools.

## **Chapter 5: The Secondary School Case Study**

The next two chapters focus on the secondary school where I developed my understandings of bullying behaviour through an ongoing process of implementation, evaluation, reflection and action. This process has been primarily driven, at least initially, by a professional desire to improve pupil learning by reducing or eliminating the barriers presented by bullying behaviour. This endeavour evolved into a more academic activity when I began to work with others out of the school setting. I moved from practical school based work to advisory work as I shared my experiences with other practitioners. The desire to gain a theoretical comprehension of the behaviour to give greater substance to my thinking led me to seek the support, advice and understandings of academics. However, in all this, the school remained my base, and the pupils and the complexity of their relationships, the key focus of my work. An essential element in this work has been shared ownership of the various projects by all the teaching staff in the secondary school I work in.

The central purpose of chapter five is to share and explain the development of my thinking and approach to school bullying by detailing how the school has challenged bullying and has, over the last seven years, adopted and developed an anti-bullying ethos. This ethos is one that has developed naturally from the base inclusive philosophy that has been a foundation and hallmark of the school for at least the last decade. The anti-bullying approach is strongly intertwined within a wider school approach that is strongly focused on individual pupil needs, rather than being exclusively academically, focussed. This chapter begins with a description of the school, providing a brief demographic overview. This is followed by a summary of the school's involvement in a Ministry of Education professional development programme. This programme gave the school both the knowledge and experience to use a whole school approach (Poskitt, 1992), an opportunity that proved invaluable in accepting this type of approach in our initial anti-bullying programme, *Kia Kaha*.

The use of this programme is then detailed and the impact of it on the pupils and the school is quantified. The lingering frustration with an inability to effectively intervene in specific cases of identified bullying despite the apparently successful impact of whole school approach embodied in Kia Kaha, become the focus of the next section of the chapter. This awareness, combined with the reflection resulting from the writers Nuffield Travel Bursary to Britain, led to the adoption of several other anti-bullying strategies and approaches being adopted by the school. By providing details of these initiatives, it is hoped that the reflective practice and critical thinking can be shared.

As well as providing an overview of the various trailed programmes, the associated processes are described using several case studies. These individual vignettes are intended to combine to provide a comprehensive, fleshed out picture of the impact bullying was still having and to show the breadth and diversity of both the behaviour and the interventions.

These smaller scenes then lead onto a much more comprehensive and compelling case study that is intended to demonstrate the development of the ideas that underpin the study. Within a supportive, ‘whole schooled’ environment bullying was able not only to develop, it was able to thrive. Despite the development of a well-planned and implemented anti-bullying intervention programme, a ‘secret society’ was able to grow. In many ways this seminal case study provides a powerful message about the need for anti-bullying initiatives to go beyond merely adopting an anti-bullying policy it is more about the school being aware of its dynamics and the lived experiences of its micro-cultures.

### ***5.1 School Description***

The high school under study is middle sized urban co-educational secondary school in a small New Zealand city. Established in 1959, it was the city’s only co-educational school until the opening of two others in 1972 and 1975. The roll has progressively dropped from a high 1200+ in the early 1970s to its current roll



of 580. Approximately 30% of the pupils are Maori with approximately 3% being Asian or Pacific Islanders, with the rest of the pupils being *pakeha* (European).

The school has had a specific focus on bullying since 1993 when the *Kia Kaha* programme was introduced and was seen as having a successful impact in the reduction of the amount of bullying. Since then, with the subsequent development of a specific school bullying policy, a number of other initiatives have been introduced in a search to further comply with the desire and charter obligation, (refer to Section 3.1, p96) to ‘provide a safe physical and emotional environment’. These initiatives have included the use of the No Blame Approach to deal with bullying incidents, adoption of the Dare to Make Change (DMC) programme, bullying awareness days, the re-introduction of a peer support programme and the development of a civics programme that involved elements of providing senior mentors to support bullied pupils.

## ***5.2 The development of an anti-bullying ethos***

Immediately prior to the anti-bullying interventions begun in 1993, the school was already in ‘problem solving mode’ in for a variety of reasons. The pressure of a falling roll had encouraged reflection on our practice and our involvement in a 1991 Ministry of Education (MOE) funded professional development trial project, provided an excellent self-review model. (The school was one of four local schools selected to participate in the Massey University monitored Ministry of Education study that was investigating the effectiveness of school-based professional development (Poskitt, 1992)). This project was an important precursor to our adoption of a whole school approach to bullying.

### **5.21 Focus project**

The MoE project provided each school with a generous budget<sup>41</sup> and a facilitator

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<sup>41</sup> \$10,000

who liaised with the school based planning team, providing advice, support and arranging for training opportunities. The schools were each asked to identify one of their charter aims as a target for school development and were then to plan a programme of school and staff development. Rather than pursue a narrowly focused development, the school chose to work in the area of community involvement and pupil motivation. An appropriate charter objective (2.3 *To ensure the curriculum is contextual with day to day living and meets the needs of the school's community*) was selected to give the project a focus.

Because of the growth in the school's outdoor education programme and the presence of staff with outdoors experience and expertise the project has a strong contextual flavour.

The result was the development of a third form (year nine) programme with a key aim of keeping pupils in the system for as long as possible by developing their self-esteem. Named "Focus" the programme was based on integrated curriculum units that included community-based activities. All third form teachers were trained in new assessment techniques (achievement based), and the junior curriculum was reorganised into six six-week modules. These were intended to provide more appropriate short-term goals supported by regular assessment and reporting. The catch cry of "*you're here for five*" was adopted to reflect the belief held by the planning group that the longer pupils stayed within the system the more likely they were to be successful.

The programme used community-based resources and placed the pupils in a range of situations that intended to make them more confident and resilient members of the community. During the programme, pupils were challenged in both individual and group situations. During a kayaking module they were expected to overcome an individual challenge while at the class camp were expected to work co-operatively in a group and to develop team skills. They interviewed and entertained the residents of our neighbouring retirement

complex, spent an evening and two nights at a local *marae* and developed orienteering skills in the immediate neighbourhood.

The project was important from a variety of viewpoints. From a staff professional development perspective it was a successful project with members of the planning group, in particular, enjoying the ability to plan the whole project on a needs basis. Courses were provided when appropriate and when needed, rather than when scheduled. Staff learning was evident and there were several fundamental changes to the delivery, assessment and reporting of the junior curriculum. The place of outdoor education was enhanced and the "focus programme" became embedded in the junior course. One of the key premises that underpinned the programme was an acceptance that the longer our pupils stayed at school the greater the chance was of being successful. One of the success criteria that we identified for the project was an improvement in our retention rate (i.e. more pupils staying at school for five years.) One significant longitudinal measurement of the retention rate indicates that the programme was successful. Pupils moving from year 12 to year 13 (form 7) for the first year group to undergo the programme was the highest ever experienced at the school in 1996, with the year 13 enrolments representing 86% of the 1992 year 9 intake. While it is difficult to conclusively link the improved retention rate to the programme, the statistical meeting of one of the key success criteria was in the school's view, significant.

While the main purpose of the programme for the MOE was to trial a school-based professional development model, a key purpose for the school was to target the under achieving pupils who had traditionally failed to stay at school for a full five year secondary education. Clearly traditional approaches were failing these pupils and the hope was that a more contextual approach would assist in engaging their attention.

However, there is an awareness that many of these 'at risk' pupils who were one

of the main targets of the intervention, do not participate in key elements of the programme. It is extremely frustrating to see year after year, pupils with the greatest need to develop self-esteem do not attend the activities and instead opt out. While we do work at drawing these pupils into the programme there is also an obvious reluctance (by the form-teachers) to chase these pupils too hard, as they are often the most disruptive and their absence enhances the success of the activity. Essentially the programme works well. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in an innovative programme that aims to develop resilience and self-esteem.

The project was significant for the later development of an anti-bullying approach in that the school developed a feeling for and appreciation of the importance of a whole school approach to tackling an issues or developing a school-wide focus. We gained skills and confidence in approaching an issue from within the school rather than relying on outside 'expert' intervention. The project also sharply focused our attention onto some of the barriers to pupil achievement and, with its sharp social focus, made us much more aware of issues such as bullying.

### ***5.3 Our Whole School Approach: Using Kia Kaha***

#### **5.31 The first steps**

In early 1993 after hearing a news item on the radio, the year nine dean attended the launch of *Kia Kaha*, the police anti-bullying initiative. She was impressed with what she saw and after she had presented the programme outline to the guidance team, the school decided to try out the programme. It appeared to be a useful programme that could offer a solution to the already identified 'relationship problems' that were evident in the junior school. The Focus Project has forced a sharp reflection on our junior school and as a consequence there was a clearly stated desire to be on the lookout for factors that we hindering pupils advancing successfully through the junior school. We were growing aware that the social interactions amongst pupils were a significant factor affecting

academic progress. In our discussions of *Kia Kaha* and its aims, it was obvious that the programme's objectives were compatible with ours.

### **5.32 Planning**

I agreed to lead in the planning and implementation of the project, intending that it be part of a research project for an extramural qualification (Cleary, 1993), and consequently decided to track the programme implementation. In order to get a better understanding of bullying I carried out a limited literature search review of other contemporary anti-bullying programmes.

The most accessible information came in the form of SET articles (O'Rourke, 1987, Dickinson, 1992, and Smith & Ahmad, 1990) and the Scottish Council Research in Education's (SCRE) "Action Against Bullying" package, (Johnson et al 1992). From these we were able to move outside the *Kia Kaha* framework.

In particular, the SCRE kit placed a much greater emphasis on the development of a school policy and the need to involve the whole school community than did *Kia Kaha*. While the New Zealand kit does indicate that both of these steps are essential, it was also obvious that the easiest path was to implement it as a curriculum intervention, the fact that the Scottish material placed a great deal of emphasis on these features steered us in that direction. This is a key departure to the way the kit has been used by the majority of schools as detailed in Bell's research (detailed in chapter 4, (Bell, 1997). While the research (Sullivan) (1998), Bell, 1997) notes that the intention of the programme is to be a whole school approach, the findings suggest that the way the kit has been used has not fitted that model. Because I was using the programme's implementation as an action research project and was exposed to some of the initial United Kingdom research (see above), the programme was implemented as a genuine whole school approach. As this initiative was coupled with the whole-school training associated with the Focus programme, it has the possibility of enhancing our particular offering of *Kia Kaha*.

### 5.33 Implementation

In order to raise staff awareness and to generate a sense of ownership, bullying and in particular the *Kia Kaha* initiative were discussed at a full staff meeting near the end of term one of 1993. As a result of the meeting and discussion, the teaching staff was enthusiastic about tackling the issue. In order to gauge the level of bullying in the school this meeting was followed up with a questionnaire based on an Australian version of the Olweus survey (Dickinson, 1992) being conducted at the school. It was aimed at all of the pupils in their first three years of secondary schooling ([Appendix 9](#)). The results were presented to the staff at a subsequent meeting and the *Kia Kaha* programme was discussed in more detail ([Appendix 10](#)). To the delight of the planning group, there was a clear message from the staff that the interventions needed to be school-wide and not the preserve of one or two subject areas. There was a strong desire that the pupils could see that we were united in taking the problem seriously and that we all wanted to do something about it.

The intervention was organised so that one 'subject line' on the timetable was targeted and a teacher would deliver the programme to the class they would normally have at that time. This ensured that every pupil in forms 3-5 was involved and that the vast majority of staff was seen to be working on the issue.

While most staff were confident of their ability to deliver the programme, a small number found the interactive approach difficult and even threatening.

Consequently, to make the programme more accessible to all staff as part of the training programme, teachers were 'buddied' up in pairs and supplied with all the necessary resources. They were also given a time frame within which to teach the topic. The training sessions were voluntary and involved one member of the planning group leading a discussion on the various sections of the *Kia Kaha* programme.

Because of the scale of the exercise, a number of extra resources needed to be developed and made available. A parent involved in film production made several extra copies of the video thus allowing for multiple showing. The librarian tracked down the short stories recommended in the kit and class sets were photocopied. A timetable was devised to ensure that everyone was able to have access to video players and the class sets. The cardboard cut outs required for the making of the mobiles and the 'bully' cut-out were created in a joint venture between the woodwork and art departments.

The classroom programme was supplemented by an assembly role-play, a parent information evening involving the local Police Youth Aid and the display of specially developed posters on the *Kia Kaha* theme. The programme used followed the *Kia Kaha* model closely and was generally well received by both the staff and the pupils.

### **5.34 Evaluation of *Kia Kaha***

Being interested in the attitudes and perceptions of the pupils, prior to the programme being taught, a simple 'attitudes' survey was carried out ([Appendix 11](#)). On completion of the teaching programme (which varied from 3 to 8 periods in length depending on the individual teacher), the survey was repeated.

Staff were asked to complete an evaluation of the programme as well. As is made clear in the next section, the pupils' findings gave a clear indication that the programme was effective in changing attitudes and more pupils now felt that they could have an impact on bullying behaviour.

#### **5.34.1 Survey Results**

The information gathered from the pre and post intervention survey ([Appendix 11](#)) indicated:

**Awareness:** After the intervention more pupils were aware of intimidation (bullying) with a decrease in the number of pupils having little or no problem with intimidation and with a significant increase

(55% to 71%) in the number who were more aware of others being intimidated after the intervention.

**Readiness:** A significant majority (73%) felt they knew how to deal with bullying and intimidation directed towards them, before the programme. This increased to 87% after the programme.

**Assisting others:** A little more than a third of the pupils felt that they could influence and help others being bullied (35%) before the programme. This increased to 50% after the intervention.

(Cleary, 1993)

Other indicators such as detention records and guidance minutes also indicated the programme had been effective.

During term one 1993 (before the Kia Kaha programme), there were 28 detentions issued for offences that could be specifically identified as involving intimidation. In the remaining two terms only 12 could be identified. From the guidance minutes, there were seven references to intimidation after the programme, compared to thirteen previously.

(Ibid.)

The conclusions written as part of my 1993 evaluation of the project are worth reprinting:

The less objective indicators (detention books, guidance minutes, teacher and tutor comment) suggests **the programme has had a significant impact on** the level of **intimidation** at the school, by reducing the reported incidents of intimidation.

The more rigorous survey supports this in a more qualified way.

**Clearly the programme heightened the awareness of the participating pupils.** The responses to questions one and two clearly show that after the programme more pupils were aware of the problem



of intimidation. **The results indicate that the programme**, perhaps by heightening awareness of intimidation and by developing assertive strategies, **actually caused pupils to admit to having a problem with intimidation.** (62% in the 1-5 categories in the post survey up from 30%) Recognition that they have a problem is the first step to resolving the problem. The fact that the problem is not a major one does not necessarily diminish.

**The programme gave the pupils confidence and increased their awareness of strategies in dealing with intimidation.** The results of question three are the most crucial to assessing the success of the programme. It was here that there was the greatest change in position as a result of the programme. The survey showed that after the survey 51% were confident that they now possessed the strategies to handle a bullying situation. This was up from a pre programme 38%. The change is even more marked if the figures are grouped. Before the programmes 73% were in the 1-3 area, (i.e. they leant towards knowing how to handle intimidation), after the survey 91% were in that group. If nothing else, this result endorses the adoption of the programme.

Questions four and five show that the pupils were aware that while they and the school could support each other in the end the successful strategies for overcoming intimidation lie with the victim.

All the measured indicators affirm that the actions taken to tackle intimidation were successful. The Kia Kaha programme, implemented and taught carefully and supported by a school wide commitment resulted in a marked decrease in intimidation. The programme successfully built on the skills already learnt by the Colenso High School pupils in the "Focus" programme that aims to develop complimentary self-esteem/confidence skills.

### **5.35 Discussion of the *Kia Kaha* intervention**

The intervention had clearly been successful using the limited measurement tools used. This crude success measurement was supplemented by a general consensus amongst the staff (both teaching and administration) that the third term 1993 was a very quiet one. There were certainly reduced levels of harassment and there was a noticeable reduction in cases of petty theft being reported to the deans and other involved with discipline. An almost total absence of fighting was also noted, though this sort of behaviour had been rare prior to the intervention. It must be noted that this perception of a reduction of bullying is based on subjective data, and because there was not corroborative observational studies it is difficult to be absolutely sure of this information. However the survey clearly showed that the pupil's attitude towards bullying had changed. The other measures suggest that there was a greater degree of tolerance around the school.

In light of the detailed evaluations of the Whole School Approach (Olweus, 1993, Smith and Sharpe, 1994), the successes measured in our intervention using essentially what is a similar approach are not surprising. The school's awareness of the issue of bullying was raised and the pupils were given a clear definition of what bullying was and that it was not acceptable. The programme worked at that level and was important in reducing the behaviour. However, as other international studies have shown, to successfully sustain action against bullying more is needed (Rigby, 1996, Robinson and Maines, 1997).

### **5.4 Further developments**

In 1995, as a result of research undertaken by the writer as part of a Nuffield Travel Bursary to Britain, a number of other initiatives were introduced to the school. Despite the relative success of the *Kaha Kaha* programme as introduced to the school (clearly a "Whole School Approach") adopted in 1993, the guidance group was aware that, while we seemed to have reduced bullying and

were more aware of the problem, we did not seem to have consistent strategies to deal with the inevitable cases of bullying. There were a number of significant initiatives trailed. These fall into three main categories; adaptations to the curriculum programme, the use of older pupils as peer supporters or helpers and introduction of the No-Blame Approach.

#### **5.41 Adaptations to the curriculum programme**

The anti-bullying programme was repeated in 1994 and 1995 with little alteration though with seemingly less impact. Fewer teachers wanted to be involved, individual teachers devoted less time to the programme and there was no formal evaluation of the impact or effect of the programme. In 1996 in an effort to revitalise the programme, and as a result of the writer's study tour findings, a number of different approaches were adopted including taking a whole day out of the programme for a third form anti-bullying training session. It was at this stage that the Strathclyde Triangle Model (McLean, 1994) ([Appendix 1](#)) was introduced along with the No Blame Approach as part of pupil information during the curriculum programme.

In 1997, the *Kia Kaha* programme was integrated into the third form health programme as it was in 1998, although a visiting speaker was introduced to work with each third form.

The key components of the curriculum programme have remained largely unchanged despite yearly review and the availability of other programmes.

##### **5.41.1 Strathclyde Triangle Model**

As part of a review of our anti-bullying curriculum intervention programme upon my return in 1995, we discussed the need to explain and gain pupil understanding of No Blame approach. I decided to trial the use of the Strathclyde Triangle Model as a tool to explain the complex relationship dynamics that are operating in bullying situations. From my experiences at both

the launch of the Strathclyde *Building Better Relationships* and the Bristol based No Blame training and reflection on the No Blame process, I had found the diagram proved a coherent explanation of bullying. During the telecom teacher seminars, the triangle had provoked much positive discussion. Clearly teachers responded to a diagrammatic representation of bullying.

I also used the Strathclyde triangle to explain how the No Blame approach also worked in teaching situations. It provided an opportunity for the pupils to reflect on the important terms used discussing bullying such as assertive, passive, aggressive etc. It also helped explain why it is difficult to stand up to bullies and how it is a much more complex situation that is usually presented.

One of the most powerful aspects of the diagram is the use of the two continuum lines and the clear suggestion that is the aggressive pupils who have the most change needed to move from aggressive to assertive. The diagram is explanatory rather than blaming. It provides powerful suggestions for change and clearly suggests that it is an inclusive process rather than exclusive.

The diagram remains a key component in the way the school explains No Blame.

#### **5.42 Using Peers**

One of the most important personal experiences during my time in Britain was to experience the active participation of senior pupils in anti-bullying initiatives. In virtually every secondary school I visited I met with and was impressed by seniors who were active participants in a range of programmes ranging from the formal Peer Counsellors (Cowie et al, 1994) I met in Bristol, to the “Pwyllor Bwlio” (bully watch) team at the Welsh language school outside Cowbridge. On my return I was determined to make use of this huge resource.

##### **5.42.1 Duty/Games Room**

The heightened awareness in the school of bullying as a result of these

interventions and an understanding of the victim isolation that results from it, led to a review of staff supervision and the provision of safe places at the school during break times.

Early in term 2 of 1995, 'playground duty'<sup>42</sup> was discussed at a routine staff meeting. A summary of a research article on the issue (duty) was presented (O'Rourke, 1989) and it was agreed that we would attempt to revise our approach/philosophy to duty. It was agreed to encourage staff to be out and involved with pupil activities during break-times. We decided that 'public' sports practices would count as a duty for those involved and that we would increase the supervision of 'safe places'. As our understanding of the isolating nature of bullying had developed, we were increasingly aware of how vulnerable pupils who were being bullied by their peers were. Not only were the actions of their peer group causing them to be feel left out, the fact that they were on their own made them easy targets of the few malicious pupils who are looking for a little bit of fun. To better support these pupils we agreed to provide special safe areas that were well supervised and would be havens for pupils who for what ever reason felt the need to that type of support.

As well as the library, a special 'games room' was commissioned and the computer rooms were staffed during lunch times. While this presented administrative difficulties and increased significantly the amount of duty that was required from each staff member it did ensure that all pupils could be guaranteed a safe place if they felt vulnerable or were in the midst of a bullying situation.

#### **5.42.2 Civics- and Re-introduction of Peer Support**

One aspect that had impressed me during my visits to 'successful' schools in

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<sup>42</sup> The formal supervision of pupils before and after school and during interval and lunch times. Staff are assigned to specific areas and times to ensure that the pupils are adequately looked after at all times.

Britain was the participation of senior pupils in anti-bullying actions. In many of the schools, pupils in their last years of school were actively involved in working in various anti-bullying initiatives. These ranged from formal programmes based on the Peer Counselling Programme (Cowie et al.1994) to having designated senior pupils assisting in games and duty. Having had considerable personal experience with the Peer Support programme<sup>43</sup> (I had introduced and organised the programme at my previous school) I was very interested in this use of senior pupils. A planning group was established to investigate ways of utilising senior pupils to improve the experiences of junior pupils. One of the first decisions made was to re-introduce the Peer Support Programme that had thrived at the school before it became a casualty of the failed introduction of vertical forms in the late 1980s. (A full account of the introduction of the Civics programme is in [\(Appendix 13\)](#)).

Despite a great deal of effort, the Civics programme failed to take hold. While the number of senior pupils involved in the Peer Support programme and in Peer Tutoring increased the majority of pupils failed to get involved fully. An inability to gain easy recognition of the achievement of the pupils involved, combined with a lack of ongoing teacher enthusiasm, meant that the programme failed to live up to its potential.

Pupils did, however, become involved in assisting in the ‘Games Room’. The Pupil Council spent \$200 buying games for all the pupils to use and volunteers spent lunchtime once a week being involved with the games. Their support proved to be invaluable as the room and the senior pupil supervision provided a very safe haven for pupils who were vulnerable or being bullied. By using the

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<sup>43</sup> Peer Support was introduced into New Zealand in the 1980s. It is an Australian programme, which was developed by Elizabeth Campbell from Sydney. Its introduction to New Zealand was supported by a large number of local Rotary clubs. The programme is very structured and uses specially trained senior pupils to work with groups of six Year 9s to facilitate orientation and socialisation.

senior pupils the burden of this extra duty did not fall on staff and there was also a clear message that the provision of a safe place was part of the responsibility of all members of the school community.

### **5.42.3 Peer Helpers**

In 1997, the Civics programme ran on a much lower level again with peer support and peer tutoring being the most popular options. While the school was keen to involve the senior pupils to a greater degree it was clear that the senior pupils were too busy to adopt new 'jobs'.

In July 1997 a small group of year 13 (form 7) pupils approached me asking if there was any way they could help the younger sister of one of the group. The sister was having 'relationship difficulties' with a group of her classmates and these pupils wanted to help. I lent them the Peer Counselling video (Cowie et al.1994) and they asked if they could look at setting up a similar group.

As I was aware of the need to support the programme with quality training and adequate supervision, I decided, in consultation with the school counsellor, to opt for a modified training package. Working closely with the pupil volunteers we established some aims for the initiative. These formed the basis of the training.

Given the constraints of time and good access to resources, I searched for appropriate training programmes that were available through the Massey University extra mural library service. The *Peer helper training course*, a programme developed in California (Sturkie, J. and Phillips, M. 1995) was the only programme that appeared to fit the bill at such short notice. Using the programme and the experience of the counsellor we endeavoured to help the senior pupils develop some basic counselling skills as a way of preparing them for support work

We arranged for several training sessions and sought extra volunteers from years 12 and 13. Eighteen pupils expressed an interest in participating in the training sessions, which were held during lunchtimes and included a one-day holiday session. Outside counsellors and social workers were involved in the training.

By the beginning of the fourth term they were ready to begin. The senior pupils each choose lunchtime to be available in the 'games room' (two on each day) and another day to be available around the grounds to 'pick up on' isolated junior pupils.

Despite the academic pressures of the fourth term, the pupils diligently took part. They had very few 'clients' which was either indicates that there were few pupils who needed sanctuary or that those who did need the support were unwilling to use the room.

#### **5.42.4 Using Senior Pupils. Some Conclusions**

Clearly programmes that make use of senior pupils have a huge potential to help a school provide a bully-free environment. However my experience suggests that such programmes demand considerable supervision and are reliant on a motivated and committed staff member. Among the many advantages is that the senior pupils are chronologically closer to the more vulnerable pupils and that they are more likely to have time and energy to spare. By being involved with junior pupils they effectively dilute the concentration of pupils of one age and make them less vulnerable to the peer pressures of early adolescence. However for these programmes to work there needs to be well-organised and taught training sessions and ongoing supervision.

#### **5.43 Using the No-Blame Approach**

The issue that kept returning in my reflection on the various anti-bullying interventions was the difficulty in intervening once a bullying relationship had



developed.

As I had participated in a one day No Blame Approach training workshop run by the developers of the programme, George Robinson and Barbara Maines, I started to use the approach as a way of resolving relationship difficulties. It is the most important intervention introduced to the school. This non-punitive methodology has been successful in changing bullying relationships. I have kept careful notes of the first times I used the approach; (these were later used as brief case studies in a book that examines the No Blame Approach in practice (Robinson & Maines, 1997)). Several of these experiences are detailed in the following case studies.

### ***5.5 Individual Case Studies***

What was a key component in developing my skills as a reflective practitioner and an essential part in developing an understanding of bullying I built up a file of bullying related case studies. The process of documenting and reflecting allowed me to search for solutions to bullying behaviour. The information was gathered through creating field notes based on observations and by interviewing those involved.

I have selected five studies to illustrate the complexity of situations that occur and also to show how through reflective practice and using tools available to me, solutions to these problems were sought. The studies include a situation where the main protagonist appears to have had a long-term impact on a number of members of the year group (case study one) to one that illustrates the first use of the No-Blame Approach in early 1995. The third was a short-term incident that had the potential for disaster while the fourth study is one that clearly demonstrates the power of group dynamics and bullying. The fifth and final study shows how the strategy used in the No-Blame Approach can be usefully modified to help support pupils who are isolated by the actions of their peers.

### **5.51 Case Study One: The Bully Leader**

**1994.** In November, the parent of one boy (N) visited the school concerned about her son's unhappiness. He had been hit during class the day before, and because the school had contacted the mother about the incident, he had to talk to her about the incident. While talking, N opened up and mentioned that he, along with several other boys, that had been bullied by T (another pupil) all year. The assault was the first example of any physical abuse and, while happy with the way the school had dealt with the incident, the parent (also a secondary teacher and aware that we were proactive about bullying) was keen to see something happen about the ongoing intimidation. N was very unhappy that his mother was getting involved and had not wanted her to come into the school.

As a result of the mother's visit and by discussing the hitting incident with a number of pupils, it was established that while this was only the second time that T had hit another pupil, he was seen as being powerful, manipulative and disruptive within the class.

While T was immediately punished for the hitting by being placed on a three-day Internal Suspension<sup>44</sup> and his father was called in for an interview with the Deputy Principal. It was clear that T accepted no responsibility for his action and blamed N for getting him into trouble.

The punitive action did not change the dynamics and rather than being

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<sup>44</sup> Internal Suspension is a discipline measure commonly used by secondary schools in New Zealand. Pupils who, because of their behaviour or actions, could be formally suspended under the disciplinary measures contained in the Education Act (1989) are removed from classes and placed under supervision completing set work. Part of the punishment is that the pupil has different lunch and break times. During the period of suspension the pupil spends time with the school counsellor or deputy principal discussing the issues that lead to the suspension and formulating alternative strategies to avoid future problems. Parents have the option of not accepting the internal suspension and can instead choose to go before the Board of Trustees disciplinary committee. This form of suspension is used because for many pupils formal school suspensions are little more than days off school.

supportive of N, the other boys (who had also been bullied by T) continued to hang around T. N was unhappy and isolated. Both the school and the parents were concerned, even though N did not complain. He refused to discuss the situation with either his mother or the form-teacher.

Careful observation by the form teacher and another parental complaint confirmed that T was continuing to manipulate the group of boys.

Unfortunately, there was nothing concrete to act on in a disciplinary fashion.

During a discussion between the Dean, Deputy Principal and the form teacher it was decided that the best way to support the boys would be to move T into another form class where we hoped he would be unable to further harass N and the other boys.

The move aggrieved T and rather than lessen his power, the move appeared to give him greater exposure within the year group. He felt he had been harshly treated and certainly did not accept any blame for the incidents that precipitated the move. During the next two years despite being a capable pupil, T became increasingly disruptive and alienated. He continued to come to the attention of the Guidance Department and was frequently punished for being disruptive, for general disobedience and failure to complete his work. Despite all this he remained popular with his peer group, he was clearly a natural leader. He was articulate and while not a physically dominant boy, he always seemed to be able to gather around him two or three other pupils who were physically imposing.

T remained at school until halfway through his fourth year when, with attendance problems and facing academic failure, he left school and joined a work scheme. He appeared to have been slowly left behind by his companions and during his last months at school it was clear from observations that he was no longer the 'leader' of the boys. He lasted only a short time on the scheme and is currently unemployed.

Observations made by K, a member of N and T's original class, during an interview are interesting as it helps build an understanding of the particular bullying dynamic and how powerful it was. K, like N, was one of the five boys who were bullied and manipulated by T.

In the interview he expresses guilt for having participated in the bullying of the other four boys. Such was T's power that he was able to include and exclude at will. K talks about how T would one-day call him over to look at something, such as a magazine, then when N came to look, T would deliberately not let him look. The others, feeling included, did not want to jeopardise their inclusion and did nothing to challenge this manipulation. This no doubt left them, like K, uncomfortable with their lack of support for the victim and still not prepared to act. They acted this way despite the fact that they knew that the next day it could be them that was on the outer.

### **Discussion: Case Study 1**

Clearly, the whole process was very demeaning for those who were witnesses, but the manipulative skills of T allowed his bullying to go largely undetected and unchecked. While the school had developed a firm anti-bullying ethos it was obvious that when confronted with a case of on going manipulation and bullying we found it very difficult to act in an effective manner. The pupils involved were loath to complain and felt (correctly) that there was little the school could do to stop T's bullying tactics. T was a very popular and charismatic member of the class, his energetic personality made him fun to be with if you were not the target of his manipulation.

Our actions in moving him merely extended the number of pupils that fell into his orbit. At no stage were we able to effectively make him accept the consequences of his action or provide any reason for him to change. The message he was receiving from the peer group was almost always positive. His 'relationship style' was producing friends and supporters; he was popular and

fun to be with. Our attempts to punish him were ineffective and were not seen by those pupils who were affected by his actions as being helpful.

The inability to act effectively in this case, to either support those boys who were being manipulated by T or to help T avoid eventual academic and social failure, was felt strongly by those of us who had helped develop the schools anti-bullying initiative. It was important illustration of the power of the bully leader and the huge waste in potential to the whole group involved, when the behaviour cannot be changed.

In light of recent experience in dealing with bullies and in particular the use of more inclusive approaches, it was clearly a mistake to move T from the class; indeed for everyone's sake it was most important that the issues surrounding the bullying were explored and better solutions be found. The No-Blame Approach would have been a safe and effective way of allowing the members of the peer group successfully to challenge T's behaviour.

### **5.52 Case Study two: The first use of No-Blame.**

**1995:** Z was a relatively new pupil to the school having joined 4XX (the subject of a later case study) during the second week of term one. By the second week of term two she reported having been intimidated by several of the girls in her form class and was referred to me by the Dean. It was clear that she was being excluded by the girls who were using the existence of a letter that Z had apparently written in which she had called the other girls 'sluts' and in which she had expressed interest in one of the girl's boyfriend.

In my discussion with Z she denied writing any such letter. She was clearly very miserable and unhappy. As this was the first case of bullying I had encountered since returning from my British Nuffield Study (refer to the introduction and section 2.52), I decided to use the No-Blame Approach as a way

of ending the bullying. As it was my first use of the procedure I endeavoured to keep to the structure as outlined by Robinson and Maines (1992). As part of the first step, I began by explaining to Z what the No-Blame Approach involved and gaining her permission decided to try it out for the first time.

This first stage also involved asking Z to briefly write about how the exclusion was making her feel. I stressed that she needed to avoid mentioning specifics or details that could become points that the other girls could grab hold of and argue about.

Z had already identified the girls who were involved and, following the second step, I met with the form teacher to double check on who should be present. As a third step I convened a brief meeting with the six girls nominated using the No-Blame Approach. As this was the first time it had been used at the school and with the pupils having no prior knowledge of the approach, it was a difficult and tentative meeting.

As Z was not present, I paraphrased her writing, the suggested fourth step, and began the discussion with the statement that 'we' have a problem, that Z was feeling miserable and I don't know what to do to help her. I asked for suggestions from the girls but there was little feedback. Few of the girls commented, apart from denying any harassment beyond what they felt she deserved. We unfortunately strayed onto the 'letter' and almost became embroiled in an argument over the accuracy of the contents. With difficulty I was able to steer the discussion away from its contents. We were unable to develop any cohesive feeling of group responsibility (stage five).

At the conclusion of the unsatisfactory discussion, I was unable to gain any positive undertakings from the girls over ways we could help Z to feel better. They were at the best non-committal. The meeting ended with seemingly no progress and in my judgement there had been no special insights developed and

certainly no empathetic response to Z's plight.

Feeling dejected, I was ready to give up on the No-Blame Approach. However, in my follow up to the meeting I became aware that from that time Z was quietly assimilated into the group. She reported that from the next day everyone was pleasant to her and that the letter and its contents were ignored.

### **Discussion: Case Study 2**

The key point must be that despite the meeting not 'feeling' right the intervention had resulted with not only the intimidation ending but with Z being accepted into the peer group. My role was clearly that of a facilitator not the problem solver and even when from my perspective the approach had failed, in fact the messages had been communicated non-verbally. While I had failed to elicit expressions of support from those taking part in the meeting they did obviously act.

As a result of the difficulties I encountered during the discussion when using the approach from then on I always made a point of ensuring the group was made up of a wider more representative group with bystanders and other positive pupils included as well as the main 'bully' group. In my notes given to staff at the school for using the approach, I stress the need for there to be a cross representation of the peer group. I have found subsequent meetings using the approach have been much more productive when not all are directly involved in the bullying incident and where some influential non-participant class members are able to contribute.

### **5.53 Case Study three: The devastation of a single incident**

**1995** G is a very talented young man. An exceptional musician, actor and sportsman he has always been identified as a 'top' pupil. He is an outgoing person with a wide range of supportive friends. G was the type of pupil that every school wishes to have.

The first signal that something was wrong came when G, then in year 9, was late to a small group extension class I was teaching. When I asked where he was, one of the group said something about him being unhappy. I asked why and they said he was being hassled in typing. I arranged for G to see me in my office after the class and after some prodding he revealed that a girl in typing had hit him. The typing class was a mixture of several classes and he didn't know the girl involved. Apparently, he had been sitting at a typewriter at the beginning of the class when the girl had walked in and punched him on his arm saying that he was in her chair. He apologised and the others nearby had laughed. Embarrassed he had moved and was feeling very isolated. This had happened again the next day and he was feeling really low.

I explained the No-Blame Approach and asked him to write a short piece for me that would explain how he felt. He agreed and returned the next day with a powerful piece of writing:

*“I am not wanted. I hate myself for it being me.  
I want to kill myself, but that would be just as bad.  
Why can't I just choose? I can't eat properly, drink, sleep.  
I'm just too scared. Too scared.  
I don't know why I'm writing.  
The people in Bosnia are killing each other  
People all over the world are starving.  
BUT I'M SCARED!  
Just leave me alone. Please leave me alone.  
For whatever I did to you, sorry”*

Feeling out of my depth and fearing the worst, I sought supervision from the Guidance Counsellor and contacted the boy's mother. We decided to initially tackle the immediate problem, the bullying and to assess G's progress.



Using the No-Blame approach for a second time, I called together a small group who were all in the typing class. This included the girl involved, a couple of her friends as well as G's friends. In this case I did not read out all that G had written rather relied on a less powerful version that explained how bad the girl's actions had made him feel. The group was genuinely surprised and shocked when they realised how bad the 'minor' (in their eyes) incidents had made G feel and everyone was quick to come up with simple and realistic actions that would quickly re-include G into the group. These suggestions included commitments from his friends to go out of their way to be with him at break time and to ensure that he was sitting with them during typing. Another who lived close by went out of his way to cycle home with G and to touch base in the evening.

This happened, and in subsequent contacts with G (now year 13) he reflected on what had happened, describing the isolated incident as a strange aberration. During one recent conversation he commented that the whole thing had been like falling into a black hole.

### **Discussion: Case Study 3**

The incident that led to G's distress was perhaps the result of genuine misunderstanding. Certainly, the girl involved did not mean to humiliate G and she was genuinely surprised at the extent of his humiliation. The incident illustrates powerfully how, in even the most balanced and successful people, feelings of isolation can build up. The use of the No-Blame approach gave everyone a chance to openly talk and understand each other's points of view. Although G was not present, his 'friends' were given the opportunity to support him without needing to take sides or stand up to the girls.

### **5.54 Case Study four: From bullying to conflict**

During the first term of 1997 I was made aware of some 'Computer Graffiti' that

appeared on the desktop of one of the class computers. One pupil was named (H) and amongst other abusive comments was a death threat.

The culprit was quickly identified (the computer file properties told us when it had been created and the relief teacher remembered who had been seated at that terminal). He claimed it was just a joke and that H was his mate. While quick disciplinary action was taken, I was also keen that H had the opportunity of support. I spoke with him several times and at each meeting he assured me that things were fine and that he could handle what was going on.

Though I was uncomfortable with what had been happening, I chose not to intervene without H's permission.

About a month later H came to see me in his office. "I have had enough" he said and asked if I could do something about the two boys that were hassling him. We talked and he explained that while things had gone well the year before in Year 9 (third form) but that his best friend left at the end of the year. He then felt as though he had no friends in the form class apart from the two who were now harassing him. He explained that most of the time it was fun to be with them but that lately it was getting too much.

I explained to him that I would like to use the No-Blame Approach and he agreed. Although he remembered the approach being explained during the bullying training day the year before, I needed to give him more details. He was happy to go along with the process and the next day arrived with the following statement:

**I feel really crappy when Bill and John abuse me and beat me up. They say it's just 'play-fighting' but they are wrong. It makes me feel really bad about myself and I think it's my fault.**

**I can't concentrate on work and I dread coming to school each day because**

**I know the abuse is coming. When I am with them I don't say much because they don't care about my opinion or want to know me.**

**I realised they don't like me near now but whenever one of the group is gone they are cool. It makes me want to feel sorry for myself and ask, Why me?**

**I don't have anyone to talk to so I just put up with it. It makes me feel really bad some of the comments they make, because some of them I ignore but some just suck. I hate it how they think I suck and that they are better than me.**

The carefully selected group of six classmates met the period before lunchtime in the school seminar room<sup>45</sup>. The boys identified by H in his writing and four others from the class attended. As had become the pattern when using the approach, I carefully talked through the class dynamics with the form teacher and others who taught the class. We deliberately choose the two most assertive 'bullyproof' boys in the group as well as two others that we felt would be possible friends of H. (The form teacher, Dean and I spent some time compiling the group. We included two assertive boys who could easily befriend H given the opportunity, the two protagonists and two others who could easily side with either H or the bullies).

All the pupils in their year level were well aware of the No-Blame Approach as I had visited each class during the first term as part of the bullying awareness programme and had explained how the approach worked. The Strathclyde triangle ([Appendix 1](#)) was used to explain how the process operated (McLean, 1994).

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<sup>45</sup> I always try and work with groups during school time and immediately before a break.

At the meeting I presented the problem to the group in a manner that had become almost scripted:

“Thanks for coming to this meeting. I have a problem and I need your help to solve it. H is feeling miserable and very unhappy. He came to see me yesterday and...”

At this stage, as inevitably happens, I was interrupted by one of the two boys named as the bullies by H:

“That’s not true. We haven’t done anything to H. He’s just a wimp.”

After this outburst, I quickly said:

“Look I’m not here to blame anyone. I’m here to try to sort out this problem. H has not blamed anyone. Look at this. [Pointing to H's piece of writing]. He’s really unhappy, lonely and feels really left out. What I want to know is what can we do about it?”

The bullies then keep quiet realising that by speaking out they have almost admitted bullying the victim.

We moved on and talked about H. The four bystanders were genuinely surprised at how miserable he was, though in discussion admitted they had heard him being abused in class but had thought that because H still used to hang around with the 'abusers' he didn’t mind. Once they realised he did mind and that I was asking for their help, they began to offer some constructive ideas.

At this stage I asked each of them for ways they could support H.

As a result a number of the other boys in the class made a real effort to befriend

H and include him in their activities. This was very successful and H found he was able to interact with his peers in a positive and normal way.

An interesting offshoot of this particular case was the fact that the bullies did not alter their attitude towards H but their ability to manipulate him was removed by the support H received from the other class members who rejected the behaviour. In fact, the bullying escalated into conflict, as several other members of the year group became over assertive in their support of H. This led to open hostility between H's new friends and the bullies. While this was undesirable, it was at the very least in the open and could not be ignored. Once conflict was present it was clear that bullying, essentially a secretive abuse, was no longer a feature of the behaviour and we were able to apply a range of conflict resolution strategies to put an end to the dispute. This involved a number of mediated meetings where the participants were forced to articulate and justify what they were doing. The secrecy and power had been taken away. This conflict resolution was not easy and finally after an episode of out of school conflict, a very productive parent meeting was called. The parents and boys involved in the hostilities met and their actions were examined and discussed by the whole group. After the meeting the conflict disappeared from view.

Two years on, H is quite independent of the bullies who had, by the end of that year become a powerless and isolated duo. In a move precipitated mainly by his at home behaviour, the principal offender was removed from the school by his parents at the end of the year. He is currently at a boarding school in another city.

#### **Discussion: Case Study 4**

This case illustrates several key elements that are often present in school bullying scenarios.

Firstly, H became a victim as a result of his perception that he had little choice other than to 'hang around' with the two boys who eventually became the bullies. The relationship between the three boys was complex. H was drawn to them because they were in the same class, his old friend had left, and the 'bullies' disruptive antics seemed like fun and they initially welcomed him. To H, the other boys in the class had seemed aloof and unapproachable. He lacked the skills or confidence to believe that they would want to befriend him, so he didn't try to join in. From his viewpoint these feelings were borne out when they did not intervene to help him when his new friends abused him.

The successful use of the No-Blame intervention clearly shows that H misread the situation; when asked, the others were supportive and were willing to befriend him. I believe that it is important that we recognise the attraction many of the pupils who bully have to vulnerable peers. They are often doing outrageous and risky things. They appear to be confident and assertive and will welcome people into their group. They offer an excitement that is often missing from the lives of those who are lacking confidence and who are feeling useless and unhappy.

Secondly, H took some time to admit that what was happening was bullying. Despite being offered help after the computer incident, he continued to deny that what was happening was anything other than play-fighting. For concerned parents and teachers it is important that even when initial enquiries fail, continued opportunities to tell are available.

The final point is that there is clearly a marked difference between conflict and bullying. H was being abused (his own words) by his so-called friends. He was powerless to deal with, stand up to or challenge their behaviour. It was only when he gained the support of a new group of peers that he was able to challenge them. It was then, when some equality of power was established, that conflict between H, his new friends, and the bullies began. Many schools feel that

having conflict resolution strategies will help defeat bullying. This case study demonstrates that conflict resolution and mediation, while effective in dealing with conflict will be ineffective in identifying or ending bullying.

### **5.55 Case Study five: Supporting pupils with disabilities**

A is a pupil who suffers from Aspergers Syndrome<sup>46</sup>. As a result he has always found it difficult to relate to others, especially his own peer group. According to his parents he had had a miserable time at intermediate school and on enrolment his parent's were desperate that he regained some of his lost academic ground. His teachers were told of his condition and supplied with background notes by the parents on the syndrome<sup>47</sup>. While his academic progress was very limited during his first year, he was, according to his parents much happier and was less harassed than previously. He participated fully in a number of sports and, while socially isolated, was content and seemingly unaware of what would normally be seen as a lonely existence. He learnt quickly that if he was the subject of ridicule from other pupils he could gain support from staff members who took his complaints seriously and acted on the information provided. These incidents were few and usually were the result of one or two pupils who had previously bullied him at his intermediate school and were attempting to do the same. These attacks usually began with name-calling and A responded immediately by seeking assistance. His behaviour was often unusual and he easily attracted attention. In his third form year, he brought a teddy bear to school and swam with it when the class went to the pools for physical education. The other members of the class found this behaviour worth commenting on.

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<sup>46</sup> Aspergers Syndrome is a mild form of autism. The syndrome manifests itself by preventing the sufferer from developing normal social skills. They appear unaware of the impact their actions have on others and are often very self contained and withdrawn. (Klin 2000)

<sup>47</sup> The parents are members of the Autism Society and the notes given were prepared by the Society.

During the second term of 1997, A became further isolated from his peer group. A pupil new to the school started picking on him. He was assaulted in the gym one lunchtime and a new teacher, unaware of his condition, minimised the incident and took no action. A physically deteriorated, developing a large rash over his body and he began drawing extensively on his arms.

When spoken to he was unwilling to say what was going on and his classmates, who had up until then been tolerant, began actively rejecting him resulting in the disruption of some lessons. These incidents combined with a growing self-awareness that he should be able to deal with these situations caused A to withdraw and become morose. The form teacher and Dean both spoke to the class about A and told the class not to maltreat him, but there appeared to be no improvement.

After consultation with the parents, it was agreed that we would try a variation of the No-Blame Approach to regain the support of the class. I called a meeting with all the boys in the class. At this meeting instead of using A's writing, Aspergers syndrome was carefully explained to the pupils. We explained how it was almost impossible for A to change and how miserable he was becoming as a result of the active rejection he was receiving from them.

The boys showed real interest and asked many questions in a very open and mature discussion of Aspergers, isolation and bullying. Using the usual No-Blame approach at the end of the discussion they were asked for suggestions on how they could help A. They developed some strategies and we agreed to review things a week later. These included asking A to join in their usual lunchtime activities (handball), protecting him from abuse from non-class members and generally looking after him.

The change was dramatic. Within two weeks A was back to his old self. He was still very much on his own but aware that the rest of his classmates were willing



to support him if he was harassed. They became quite protective and tried to include him in various activities. There were no further incidents involving his class members that year. He was verbally harassed at the end of year on a bus trip but this was by boys who were in a different class and none of A's classmates were there. He was quite willing to immediately report the incident and it was easily dealt with.

### **Discussion: Case Study 5**

The successful use of the No-Blame approach in this case illustrates an important element in bullying. The problem and the solution usually lie in the behaviour of the other pupils and not the victim. In this case A, because of his medical condition, was unable to change his behaviour and yet the bullying stopped after the intervention. This was because the approach allows for effective and honest discussions that rarely happen informally. Careful facilitation enables individuals to respond positively to a genuine request for help. The discussion alters the existing power structures and the action of asking for help is an important element that helps in this change. The individuals feel free to express the sympathetic feelings they have and are pleasantly surprised when their peers make similar comments.

### **5.6 Discussion**

For a period of five years (1993-8) the school studied strove to reduce levels of bullying. Under the umbrella of the 'whole-school approach' a variety of approaches were undertaken. These ranged from the curriculum intervention under the guise of *Kia Kaha*, to the various peer based programmes, and to specific interventions aimed at resolving actual cases of bullying. While there is little empirical evidence that could conclusively point to the success of the 'campaign', anecdotal evidence (pupil and teacher comments) suggests that it has been successful.

The key to the campaign was the adoption of a comprehensive school wide focus

on bullying. The *Kia Kaha* programme was used to raise the school's awareness of the problem, though the catalyst for the broad approach came from the Scottish material published by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (Johnson et. al. 1992). The limited quantitative measurement that accompanied the initial project (Cleary 1993) suggests that there was a reduction in bullying behaviour and an increase in the awareness of both staff and pupils of bullying. The findings suggest that the majority of teachers and pupils were not only more aware of the impact of bullying; but that they were also understood they had a responsibility to take action.

The next stage in the school's development of an anti-bullying ethos was the introduction of specific measures aimed at stopping bullying once it was established or attempted. As in other schools that had used the approach to target bullying, the whole school focus did not eliminate it (Arora & Thompson 1987, Olweus 1993, Smith & Sharp 1994). The school was acutely aware of the need to have strategies that would support pupils in:

- a) Supporting targets of bullying behaviour
- b) Stopping the bullying
- c) Helping pupils avoid bullies
- d) Encourage bystanders to intervene

The range of interventions adopted varied both in their acceptance and effectiveness. All involved a high level of staff and pupil volunteer commitment and in most cases, training. The establishment of a safer playground environment was relatively straightforward and successful. Duty was reorganised and the active participation of adults in and around the grounds was encouraged and supported, while the formalisation of the safe areas such as the games and computer rooms, was equally uncomplicated. These initiatives are easily adopted and transferred to other settings. While the adoption of the 'No-Blame Approach' was effective and supported by the deans, there was a

hesitation on their part to use the approach and a reliance on the deputy principal (me). Cases were referred on. Bullying became my issue and the reluctance of other guidance staff to use it was a disappointment.

Considerable time and energy was put into establishing programmes that would involve senior pupils in ameliorating the impact of bullying. The programmes chosen and the training were obviously sound and had been effective. The seniors were willing participants and were positive and motivated. However the failure of these initiatives had much to do with the need for at least one staff member to drive the programmes. This relative failure emphasises the importance of using the immediate peer group rather than relying on older pupils.

The five individual case studies are important in illustrating instances where young people have been profoundly affected by bullying but where direct intervention was able to alleviate the problem. In each case, the approach taken had not had as a focus the changing of the victim's behaviour (indeed even when a deficit can be identified in the target's behaviour, it is essential that the group develop the capacity to work with that child). Remedial work with the target child can take place later but will often only be effective when the child feels safe within the wider group context. The ability to blame others and use this as an excuse for behaving badly is destructive and will ultimately lead to the break up of the group as an effective learning community. Bullies whose behaviour is unchallenged, will, in my experience, often seek refuge by the blaming of others.

The four cases where the No-Blame Approach was used were resolved successfully to the benefit of everyone involved. The process enabled an honest evaluation of what had been going on and gave the individuals an opportunity to express how they actually felt about the situation using the comments of the victim and the request for help from the facilitator.

Bullying thrives when there is misunderstanding and poor communication. The victim, isolated by the actions of the bullies and desperate to 'fit in', sends out few signals that there is a problem. They are very aware that they should be able to deal with the situation and that on their own are not able to 'handle' the attentions of the bullies. They try very hard to look as though they are not worried by the actions of the bully. Public humiliation, followed by private, silent torment, is the norm for many pupils who are subjected to bullying behaviour (Department for Education 1994). (This is especially so in the case of adolescents who in the process of developing resilience and independence.)

The school can clearly demonstrate that it takes the issues of bullying seriously. There exists a clear policy statement on the behaviour, which contains a commitment to reducing the incidence of the behaviour. There is an undertaking to ensure that there is a yearly awareness raising programme in the junior school and the staff have a good understanding of the bullying process and are generally alert to sign of it. Bullying has not been eliminated, however there is, in my opinion, a school wide rejection of bullying and a strong understanding that something can be done if it happens.

## **Chapter 6 Major Group Case Study**

### ***The Class that went nowhere***

#### ***6.1 Background***

My initial intention had been to use the individual case studies outlined in the previous chapter as the central illustrations of our efforts to combat bullying using the whole school approach. The stories provided a depth of rich information and the success of the interventions suggested at one level that the approach had been successful. Clearly the holistic approach had provided opportunities to combat bullying. However, as I compiled and analysed the field data, it became clear that another significant theme was unfolding and could not be ignored. Despite the school-wide anti-bullying focus, one class had developed and sustained a hidden bullying culture. There was evidence that this had had a negative impact on the class. Of concern was that this abuse had been hidden and was undetected.

Dealing with school bullying is a complex matter. The individual case studies suggested that the whole school approach had been effective in raising awareness and providing workable interventions, however the new data discussed in this chapter suggests that to really challenge the behaviour there is a need to develop deeper understandings of the complexity of the behaviour. Unless the social dynamic operating within each peer group is healthy, bullying behaviour will, despite whole-school approaches, remain unchallenged.

This chapter will use the experiences of the pupils in the target class to describe the impact of a bullying culture on the whole peer group. School data, including assessment and attendance information, will be used to provide a profile of the pupils. When this is combined with individual interviews and a focus group meeting, an understanding of the class culture can be constructed. These understandings will then be further explored in light of the accepted definitions of bullying. The chapter will then conclude with a suggested approach, that in

our experience should help us to identify bullying cultures as they form and provide a way of inhibiting them becoming grounded in the peer groups behaviour.

The fieldwork for chapter five involved interviewing and talking with a number of pupils and teachers in order to identify the five most appropriate cases to use to illustrate the school's anti-bullying approach. While preparing for these interviews, I had a chance conversation with a year 13 pupil, F. From my knowledge of the cohort gained from five years contact I had been aware that F was a powerful and influential member of the year group. He had been a promising pupil who had become alienated during his third year at the school. One or two teachers had suggested that he had been peripherally involved in some bullying incidents during his first two years at school. During this informal conversation about peer relationships and bullying, F said enough to convince me a further discussion might be worth while. I set up a taped interview with F.

During this interview it became apparent that what F was describing was a class where bullying had become established within the group's culture. I was personally uncomfortable with the knowledge, as the story F was telling appeared, on the surface at least, to indicate that the school's anti-bullying approach had been unsuccessful in ameliorating the behaviour in his immediate peer group.

I became aware that an investigation of the class might provide worthwhile examples of the impact that bullying can have on a group. The further I read, talked and thought about the class, the more convinced I became that a detailed investigation of the class could add to a general understanding of the bullying dynamic as it affects a class group of adolescent pupils. Both concerned and intrigued, I decided to examine the peer group's relations further.

My first action was to collate the class's school attendance data, examination and other records to establish a class profile and to provide a demographic description of the class. This data was then crosschecked with similar information for the whole cohort. A disturbing pattern of very low achievement across a number of indicators became evident. Of most concern was the high level of pupils moving from the school, and the high drop out rate.

I decided to carry out a focus group discussion with class members still at school (excluding F) but before this I conducted two videotaped interviews with F and one other class member who was unable to participate in the focus-group discussion.

I then carried out a focus-group session with four class members.

The purpose of these two approaches was to gain an insight into the class from both an individual and a group perspective.

I also decided to interview the 1994 year nine dean, who had had a pastoral responsibility for the cohort during their first year at the school and who had maintained excellent records. She was also able to provide an additional and important viewpoint.

My final investigation involved discussions with staff members who had had involvement with the group, particularly those who had taught the class in their first two years at the high school.

## ***6.2 Description of 3XX***

3XX was one of five classes that began their secondary schooling in February 1994. Made up of twenty-seven pupils, the class appeared to be a representative

cross section of that year's intake. (Pupils had been carefully placed into their class groups by the year 9 dean, who stated that she had spent considerable time ensuring that this was the case.) Placement decisions were based on a consideration of academic, social, behavioural elements as well as ensuring that each class had representative number of girls and boys, and Maori and Pakeha (New Zealand European). These decisions were also influenced by;

- i) consultation with the contributing schools,
- ii) interviews with the pupils,
- iii) discussions with parents and,
- iv) using the information supplied on the pupil's blue cards<sup>48</sup> and enrolment forms.

Further to these considerations, the dean placed pupils who were from smaller contributing schools with another pupil from that school.

### **6.21 Initial Class Profile**

3XX was made up of twelve girls (44%) and fifteen boys (56%). Seven pupils identified as Maori (26%) and the rest were Pakeha (74%). One class member had identified special educational needs (Section 9<sup>49</sup>) and was placed in the school's attached Work Experience Unit for part of his programme. The class was largely representative of the cohort as a whole.<sup>50</sup>

### **6.22 Changes during the first year**

During the 1994 school year, there were significant changes to the class

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<sup>48</sup> Primary and Intermediate school maintain record cards for individual pupils. These blue cards contain information on the achievements of the pupils and indicate academic and social competencies.

<sup>49</sup> A section 9 agreement is one between the Ministry of Education and the pupil's parents where it is agreed that the pupil will receive special treatment to support their identified disability.

<sup>50</sup> While it may appear that the gender balance is slightly out of kilter, it is a minor difference of only one (i.e. one boy being replaced by one girl would have accurately reflected the cohort balance- 52% boys, 48% girls). There were also proportionally slightly more Maori pupils than in the cohort (24%).



composition caused by some pupils leaving with new pupils replacing them. Six of the original group left at some stage during the year and they were replaced by six new arrivals. Four of these new arrivals left before the end of the year.

Consequently, by the end of 1994 there were only twenty-three pupils left in the class with fifteen boys (65%) outnumbering the eight girls (35%). There were now eight Maori pupils (35%) and fifteen Pakeha (65%). (Twenty-one were from the original group).

(A detailed discussion of the reasons for each of these pupils leaving is presented later in the chapter.)

### **6.23 Changes during 1995**

During the 1995 school year, eight new pupils joined the group, (four of whom were Maori the other four Pakeha) and comprising of six girls and two boys. By the end of the year a further ten pupils had left the group including two of the original group. The other eight leavers included the remaining two pupils who joined the class during 1994.

Thus, by the end of the second year only eighteen of the original group of twenty-seven were still enrolled at the school. Only two of the fourteen who had joined the class since 1994 remained. The twenty-one remaining pupils was comprised of ten girls (48%) and eleven boys (52%), sixteen of the pupils were Pakeha (76%) with five identifying as Maori (24%).

Over the two years when the class was together there had been significant changes to the composition of the group. In all there were forty-one pupils who had been members, at one stage or other, of the year 9 or 10 form group during 1994 and 1995.

The purpose of tracing this migration of 3XX cum 4XX is to show the inordinate

amount of movement out of this class and that such movement seemed very unusual.

#### **6.24 Subsequent changes**

By the end of 1996 a further seven pupils had left though only one of these left during the year. The remaining fourteen was made up of six girls (43%) and eight boys (57%), eleven were Pakeha (78%) and three Maori (22%). Only twelve (44%) of the originals were still at the school after three years.

During the 1997 school year five more pupils left school, these included the two that had joined the group.

#### **6.25 Situation in October 1998**

In October 1998 there were three girls and four boys still at the school who had been members of 3XX. The same proportion of boys left as did girls and more Maori left than Pakeha (reflecting the pattern across the cohort).

Of the forty-one pupils who were at some stage in 3XX or 4XX during 1994/5, ten (24%) were still attending a school, twenty-six had left school and five are untraceable. The ten still attending school were from the original group that started school in February 1994 (37%) and only three (11%) were enrolled a full bursary course (i.e. an academic pre-tertiary study). In all, forty-one pupils spent some time in 3XX or 4XX, twenty-one of whom had left by the end of the second year at secondary school.

The purpose of tracing this migration of 3XX cum 4XX is to show the inordinate amount of movement out of this class. Such movement seem unusual.

### ***6.3 Comparison with the rest of the cohort***

By way of comparison, I gathered information on the whole cohort that began school in 1994.

### 6.31 Retention

Using the March 1 Ministry of Education Statistical returns, the original cohort which enrolled as year 9 pupils in 1994 numbered 130. This had fallen to 126 year 10 pupils by 1995. There were still 126 year 11s in 1996, dropping to 115 in year 12 1997 and 90 in 1998.

It is impossible to track how many of these pupils were originally enrolled at the school in 1994.

The retention rates (see below) based on numbers and not taking into account arrivals and departures:

	Whole Cohort		3XX	
	On '94	Year	On '94	Year
Y9 → Y10	<b>97%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Y10 → Y11	<b>97%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>78%</b>
Y11 → Y12	<b>88%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Y12 → Y13	<b>69%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>64%</b>

A further eleven pupils left during 1998.

Thus, of the original 130, who started at the school in January 1994, 49 pupils completed five years at the secondary school.

The chart shows that there were marked differences between the retention of pupils in the studied class. At every year change there were proportionally more pupils leaving from this class than from the cohort.

### 6.32 Academic patterns

In the 1998 University Bursary Examinations (the final school examination in

New Zealand), thirty pupils from the school entered in four or more subjects. Only one of these was from 3XX. Analysis against historical school-based data indicates that this figure of 23% of the year nine cohort presenting for bursary in four plus subject is average (1996, 22%, 1997, 24%, 1998, 23% 1999, 20%).

In August of 1998, I surveyed all the pupils in the school who had been part of the 1994 cohort and traced back what their original form class had been. I then analysed their current courses and worked out how many from each of the original form class had progressed into academic or mixed vocational and academic course.

What is clearly a concern for 3XX is that only three pupils out of an expected seven were engaged in serious study, and only one of these three entered for four or more bursary subjects. This suggests that if they were in line with other seventh formers, at least five other pupils from this class would have been expected to be achieving at this level; they were not.

Only 11% of the 3XX pupils were involved in an academic course, easily the smallest proportion of the cohort. While one other class (3WW) had an equally low retention to year 13, they had twice as many pupils in an academic course. While it would be simplistic to suggest that one factor, (in this case having become members of 3XX), will provide the key explanation to the lack of academic achievement, I would suggest however, that the pupils' style of peer relationships do provide a powerful indication of future success and that there is a strong possibility (although I cannot prove it) that was a major factor in the low achievement of 3XX. There is a growing body of international research that indicates the importance of these social attributes. I would argue that the increasingly influential psychosocial developmental theory of Erik Erikson (1985), the work of Michael Jessor (1987, 1998) and the New Zealand based work of David Ferguson and Michael Lynskey (1996) support my feelings about this.

The results are very interesting and give quite a variation:

Courses+ studied by 1994 cohort in their final year of secondary schooling						
1998	3YY	3ZZ	3UU	3XX	3WW	Total
13Pk*	8	9	7	3	6	33
13Kp*	2	1	0	1	0	4
13Pw* (Skill pathway)	2	2	4	3	1	12
<b>Total</b>	12	12	11	7	7	49
Share all classes	24%	24%	22%	14%	14%	100%
Academic share	27%	27%	19%	11%	16%	100%
'Skills' share	17%	17%	33%	25%	8%	100%
<b>Total Year 13 in October 1998 is 62 (13 joined since Feb. 1994)</b>						

*\*13 Pk and 13 Kp are both general classes with a mixture of fully bursary pupils and others working at a range of y11-13 qualification courses. 13Pw is a transition class where the pupils spend at least half their time in work experience and the rest undertaking vocational qualifications.*

What is factual is that a number of 3XX pupils who were identified in 1994 as having academic potential had failed to realise this by the end of their secondary schooling career. Only one pupil from the class sat a full bursary course. Based on evidence from previous years and when compared with the rest of the cohort, the expectation was that at least four others from 3XX would be completing such a course. The low retention rate and consequent cessation of formal education also are powerful indicators that the pupils of 3XX somehow lost out academically.

### 6.33 Other factors

A special feature of the school's junior programme is that during year nine, pupils who have excelled are invited to participate in a special extension programme called Journey. Similar to the bursary examination scenario it is

worth noting that the class was also under-represented in this innovative programme<sup>51</sup>. They did however participate fully in the Focus programme (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, section 5.21 p 211). They completed the anti-bullying Kia Kaha programme taught by their Social Studies teacher (also Form Teacher) during the third form and, like the other classes, had a special intensive life-skills programme for six weeks during their fourth form year.

In terms of the teaching staff, over the two years in the junior school 3-4XX had a broad cross section of teachers, as had the other classes in the cohort. In terms of attendance, detention or suspension figures (usually good indicators of social dysfunction) pupils from the class were not over represented. This information was gained by the use of a summary of the Dean's diary, detention figure and the Guidance Group minutes. What is more analysis of this information shows that fewer members of 3XX and 4XX came to the dean's attention than pupils in other classes. There was nothing then from these sources of information that would suggest that there were problems within the class.

### **6.34 External Qualifications**

In 1995, four of the group were invited to and accepted the opportunity to sit School Certificate (a year 11 national examination) geography in their second year at school; all were successful gaining marks 69, 68, 61 and 58. This is normally an indicator that these pupils will follow an academic rather than a vocational programme and will probably be successful.

In 1996, only twelve (63%) of the nineteen pupils who had been in either 3 or 4XX sat a total of fifty-eight papers in School Certificate passing in thirty-six papers (62% pass for those who sat). Only seven pupils sat five or more

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<sup>51</sup> 'Journey' is a programme designed to give pupils who show potential and have worked conscientiously an adventure based learning challenge. It is worth noting that of the twenty-four pupils who were selected in 1994, only three (13%) were from the class studied. (3YY: 7, 3Zz:4, 3Uu:5, 3Ww:5)

subjects. Numerically the class made up 17% of the cohort but the papers they sat only represented 11%. Academically they were performing below the mean.

## ***6.4 Questions***

This retrospective information begged a number of important questions. Why did a greater number the pupils leave this particular class? What was the class environment like? Was there a correlation between this environment and the relatively poor academic performance? Why had the school administration or pastoral care network not had forewarning of the failure that these indicators were suggesting?

In the course of the data gathering, I attempted to find answers to these questions. My main source of information was talking to the pupils who remained at the school and the teachers who had been involved with the class.

### **6.41 Why did all these pupils leave?**

It is very difficult to be sure of the reasons for individual pupils leaving the school. Specifically, in my early investigations, I could only establish two cases where a pupil had left because of the bullying behaviour of his or her peers. However, in the interviews with both the individual pupils and with the focus group a clearer and sinister picture started to emerge. This class had in fact developed a culture of bullying and the pupils stated that many of the pupils who left had been targets of bullying. What also emerged was that the secret and the hidden nature of behaviour obscured the causes at the time and for unknown reasons many of the victims of the bullying had given other plausible reasons for their departure.

#### **6.41.1 Pupils who left the class during 1994**

What follows is a brief synopsis of why individual class members left the school. In most cases, the reasons were not given at the time. The information had been

gathered from the individual pupil records and through discussion with teachers involved and during the focus-group and individual interviews.

**JM left March 1994.** Family reasons stated on clearance form. There is no evidence anywhere to suggest she had been bullied.

**SC left end of March 1994.** The reason given to the school was that he went to live with his father in Wellington. He had reported being unhappy at the school but it was felt that this was more to do with the home situation. The focus group discussion identified that SC had been teased about being fat. At one stage in the discussion LE recalled an incident during a Maths class when a calculator went missing. Much to amusement of the class, someone had jokingly said that SC had eaten it.

**LE:** SC ... [A] big guy got hassled about being fat. We said that he ate a calculator in Maths that went missing.

3XX Transcript (2)

This is an example that demonstrates how SC was treated more generally.

**JN left April 1994.** This pupil had been moved into the class 3XX for pastoral reasons. She had twice been suspended for theft before the move and failed to settle in before her family sent her to family in Wellington. She had stolen from her classmates and was not popular.

**MP left on suspension April 1994.** This pupil had been involved in a drug incident at school. As a result of a Board of Trustee disciplinary hearing, she was expelled and later enrolled at the local Catholic girls' school.

**TN left June 1994.** This pupil moved with his family to Christchurch after his father had to move for employment reasons. While this is clearly not related to the class dynamic, the members of the focus groups remembered him being



teased:

LO: He was a bastard that guy [TN] was, as far as I know...

LE: is that right?

DO: and he had big ears and everyone teased him about them

RH: He hung round with B and yeah I think he got picked on by B and

M. But he hung around

3XX Transcript (6)

**JM2 arrived and left July 1994.** In a case that should have been identified by the school at the time JM2 was only at the school for four days. Clearly, he was the victim of hostile verbal and physical harassment. This was commented on by both F in his interview and by the focus group:

What happened with JM2?

LE: F actually set him up...[someone put] tampons in his bag

DO: Just sticking up [out of J's bag] so that [everyone could see] them

LE: Then F pretended to see them; [and said]

'Say what have you got in your bag?

Why have you got them?

He [JM2] started blubbering then...

3XX Transcript (10)

**LB left August 1994.** A very diligent and capable pupil, she left to attend the local state secondary school for girls. Her father had contacted the school in June with concerns about general class disruption and this was the reason that he gave to the Principal for making the change when the pupil finally moved. The focus group comments made it clear that she was being teased and singled out because of her positive attitude to her work:

LE: [L she was] really brainy

DO: Really good goody two shoes sort of thing... She'd get to class five minutes early just in case the bell went early or something and people would pick on her.

3XX Transcript (4)

**ZM left October 1994.** She left the school for unspecified family reasons. There was no indication that bullying was involved. She had been suspended for three days in March for involvement with drugs (along with MP). She had found it difficult to settle into academic work and had been unsettled all year.

**MR arrived July,** and then left in November 1994. She moved to a school in a neighbouring city. Again family reasons were given for the change.

LE: F picked on her [MR] too. He called her 'M--- Paepae<sup>52</sup>'

3XX Transcript (2)

**NG arrived July,** and then left in December 1994. She left when her family moved to Auckland. There is no evidence to suggest any targeted harassment and the focus group could not remember any specific incidents.

#### **6.41.2 Pupils who left the class during 1995**

**RF enrolled February 1995,** but was removed from roll in March 1995. He was a chronic truant who rarely attended school. Had been suspended from previous

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<sup>52</sup> *Paepae* is a Maori word to describe the line up of local people who welcome visitors on a *Marae* in a formal ceremony. When questioned about this name F was unsure of why he used it other than hinting that he thought she was fat like the old women, who greet people when they arrive at a marae, and who in his mind are usually fat. It is also possible that he is referring to 'peepee' as is suggested later for G who F accused of peeing herself.

school for disobedience and poor attendance. He caused no disruption when present. There is no record of any bullying or other disruptive behaviour ... (Recently RF was imprisoned for five years for trying to run over another youth with a car).

**QM arrived in November** of 1994, and left in April 1995. This pupil was suspended indefinitely for violence. No references to bullying are present on his file nor is there any mention of this in the interviews. QM was part of the school's Work Experience Unit. Here pupils of limited ability are given opportunities to work in the community.

**SW arrived in February** 1995 and left in May 1995. He left this school to go to another secondary school in a nearby city. While there is no written record of him having been bullied, during the focus group interview it was suggested that he had been bullied for being effeminate and possibly gay:

LE: S wasn't thing [a bully, tough] at all he was real quiet.

DO: He was quiet but...

LE: People hassled him. For being gay basically

LE: He'd wear a white skivvy, the girls were supposed to wear the white skivvy and they look real feminine and...

LE: He had a real quiet voice, I think it was him that...everyone used to [mimics S's voice] remember? That was the main thing that F used to say to him all the time. He'd put on his little voice and mimic him really [awful]...

3XX Transcript (6)

**ME arrived in February 1995** and officially left in May of that same year. She was removed from the roll after continual truancy. She came to the school with a history of chronic truancy and the school was unable to break the pattern. As

the school was unable to contact her family (the address space on the enrolment form was not filled in), she was removed from the roll after twenty continuous days absence. The school received an enrolment enquiry about her from another college in 1996. In the interviews there was no mention that she had been a bully or had been bullied. The focus group could not recall any incident that involved her.

**GR** was an original member of the class and she left in June 1995. He went to a college in a rural district after a period of chronic poor attendance and school refusal. He had been a pupil with special educational needs and had been involved in a work experience programme. There was no indication that he had been bullied.

**GM** was also an original class member and she left in July 1995 to attend the local Catholic girls' school during her fourth form year. Her mother was concerned with her lack of progress and felt that G was unhappy. The interviewed pupils stated that she had been a victim of harassment and that G had, in fact, been tormented by most of the class:

DO: She's [G] had a kid

LE: She got hassled about peeing herself. She wet herself in class.

LE: That was G's time for being hassled. Social Studies it was always G being hassled.

3XX Transcript (10)

DO: It [the bullying] was constant for her everyday. G did the best thing by leaving. I saw her a couple of months ago. She has heaps of friends [now] whereas here she didn't feel happy.

3XX Transcript (12)

LE: Yeah. The minute he [F] walked into a class, he'd basically look

around and see the person he wanted to hassle. Then [he'd] sit near them and hassle them...At the end of every class with G he'd, like, go smell her chair:

'It smells of pee. She's peed herself. She's peed herself' [He'd say].

And [other] people did do it [too]. People went up to her chair and said:

'Yeah it does smell of it. It does'.

### **Would teachers ignore that?**

LE: The teacher didn't really know what was going on...with that it was you know whisper, whisper between the crowd it slowly spread around I think at one stage even G heard it

DO: She did. She knew....

3XX Transcript (14)

LE: L left...S [as well]...Let's blame it on the teacher. She was slack

DO: M left. She went to PN

DO: G left G...

LE: Ha ha. Everyone teased [her].

LE: I heard she's pregnant

3XX Transcript (2)

**RB arrived in October** 1994 and left in August the next year. He moved for family reasons and there is no reference to him having had been bullied or harassed. He was not mentioned in any of the interviews.

**SW arrived April** 1995, and then left August 1995. She returned to Masterton with the family. Again there is no evidence of her having been involved in any bullying or having been specifically targeted.

**JF arrived in May** 1995 left in November that year. J was a difficult pupil who had been on correspondence for 1994 after having been expelled from an

intermediate school. She worked on a specially supervised programme and was frequently absent. She was suspended in November and received dispensation to attend a training course on leaving. She does not feature as having been involved in any bullying.

**SL arrived June** 1995 and she returned to her family in Australia December 1995.

### **6.41.3 Overview of why pupils left**

In the first year ten pupils left the class. From the data gathering it is fair to say that of these there is clear evidence that five had been the targets of bullying behaviour. Only twice was bullying given as the prime reason for leaving. Six gave family reasons for leaving, and one was expelled.

During the second year, only two of those that left can be linked to bullying. However, another three were chronic truants and as this factor is recognised by the leading experts as a symptom of bullying (Olweus, 1994, Rigby, 1996) and must be seen as being significant, although we can't say for sure that this was so in these cases. Four left for family reasons.

Clearly, the class had become a revolving door. It seems that pupils unhappy with the negative environment leave or are forced to leave thus creating room for the next unsuspecting new entrant who then became fair game for those who are the bullying leaders. It is difficult, of course, to quantify or to corroborate this connection and at best it must remain speculation.

### **6.42 Focus Group Interview**

In order to gain a better understanding and to build up a clear picture of the social environment, a number of comments from the focus group will be reported. The focus group of four pupils, who were original members of 3XX were involved an hour-long discussion. I deliberately excluded F from the

discussion and attempted to have all the remaining members of the 1994 3XX cohort participate. I discussed the project with each individual pupil and asked him or her to think about their availability in the discussion. All five returned their consent forms and agreed to take part in the videotaped discussion. I had prepared a set of discussion starters though found that they needed little prompting.

A range of topics were covered, each of which helped to develop important insights into the way that the class had functioned. This session was complemented by a prior interview with F who was clearly identified in the group discussion as the main bullying offender. The input from this earlier interview gave me plenty of potential discussion initiators.

#### **6.43 The Pupils' Perception of the environment**

The general view of the group was that the bullying was the result of the make up of the class. When asked at one stage why they thought there had been so much bullying in 3XX they indicated that they felt they had been saddled with too many bullies:

DO: We had all of them. We had more than our fair share of the bullies, I suppose.

LE: Basically because the main bullies, verbal ‘assaulters [sic]’, were in our class.

The year nine dean stated that the 1994 intake had contained a larger number of problematic pupils and that there were quite a few pupils who were identified as being potentially more problematic than pupils assigned to 3XX. Analysis of detention lists, records of suspensions and the Dean’s diaries suggests that the class did not have more than a normal ‘share’ of difficult pupils. Clearly, this information was not adequate to inform the school of the nature of 3XX.

#### **6.44 How the bullying started**

From those interviewed no one was able to identify why the bullying had started. Both the Dean, the form-teacher and staff who participated in the 'Focus' camp report that the class had begun well and, in their words, the class appeared to have 'gelled'.

Unfortunately, as is clear from the focus group comments, below the surface things were not so positive:

LE: At the start you'd go around and find out what was what. [What] they are good at...

LE: Yeah, I remember the first day I came to school F said something to me about B, [about] his thick glasses or something...

Lo: B wouldn't take any shit. That was why [he didn't continue to be bullied].

LE: From [then on], you picked who you were going to take sides with, and since F. was doing more of the firing of all the, you know, insults and all that, everyone just followed him. If he was on [your side you were safe]... He was the main arguer and he could win most of the arguments. So pick his side and you win.

LO: It was continuous at the start.

LE: Yeah. Just to make a statement to people, you know, basically don't pick on me. I've got these mates that stick up for me and they'll pick on you in return.

3XX Transcript.

Clearly the peer groups were establishing what the rules were and who was and wasn't 'bullyable'. This beginning of the year checking out the peer group boundaries should be considered a normal part of the group process. Sullivan (2000a, 36-38) provides a detailed discussion of this process that corroborates the comments made in the discussion.

#### **6.45 The bullying environment**



During the course of the discussion, the participants identified that at least eleven fellow pupils had been bullied at some stage. They also agreed that this bullying had led to at least three pupils leaving the class and the school. What is more, they seemed almost proud of this, as if it was an achievement. Some of their comments provide a chilling insight into the nature of school bullying; demonstrating the how and why some children are bullied:

LE: We made heaps of people leave.

LE: Setting new people for a hellish start.

DO: You can't blame them for leaving.

LO: Yeah. But some didn't have mates.

LE: Yeah. They [those without friends] got hassled the most ... That's why the new people tended to get hassled the most. People just gang[ed] up on them.

DO: Easy prey!

LE: And the other people in the class didn't care. They just sort of laughed along and [made] you feel good about it.

The group then began to justify or explain their actions:

RH: But everyone kind of like did similar picking on people and also was picked on.<sup>53</sup>

DO: Sure as long as it wasn't you, you didn't really care.

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<sup>53</sup> This is an interesting comment from RH. It can be interpreted as justifying the behaviour. RH who takes very little part in the discussion is mentioned during every individual interview with other class members as having been one of F's main targets. They all felt that he was a real victim and had suffered much abuse. Over the five years at school many teachers had talked with and offered to support RH but on each occasion he denied that there was a problem and that things were okay. We frequently contacted the home and while his parents felt they had a good relationship with RH he did not mention the bullying to them either.

LE: I did [talk about what was going on] a couple of times with F about people we made leave...I suppose in a way we were sort of proud of it.

DO: Yeah

LO: Joking about it!

LE: Yeah we've made such and such leave our class

This individualistic attitude was again justified:

LE: Because of what we had originally had to go through in the first place. Maybe? Because it was...like if you went through that [being bullied] you don't want to go back [to it]. So you're not going [to do anything to start it again].

Do: We went through that so why shouldn't they sort of thing.

LE: If you tried to stop it you'd get picked on

DO: It was a way of life

LE: You might as well go with it

LE: Everyone got hassled at one stage. I went through that stage as well.

It is clear from these comments and those that follow in the next section, that the pupils accepted the behaviour and justified their personal inaction. Being involved in the behaviour became a tactic to be included. The pupils were drawn into the behaviour seeing it as a way of ensuring they were not the next target. This was also based on have previously been bullied and wishing to avoid a repeat. It can be supposed that this action legitimated the bullying. Without outside intervention, the majority of the pupils were drawn into the culture, firstly to protect themselves, and then secondly to justify their collusion. The effect of this was to validate the bullying and to secure the position of power that F occupied.

#### **6.46 The Nature and impact of the bullying**

In many ways, these comments also give insight into the nature of the bullying -a divisive and destructive force:

LE: It was actually okay as long as you were on the teasing side of things.

LO: It wasn't too bad. It wasn't any different.

DO: Nah it wasn't too bad.

LE: There weren't any fighting bullies or such.

LO: It was all verbal assault.

LE: Those who had defects, like fat people and [those with] glasses. They'd just be hassled...

LE: You put up with it for the plain reason... You don't know anything else.

LE: You don't know any better.

LE: The people who were doing the picking on were basically the loud-mouthed ones. The people being picked on were the quiet shy ones. They were too scared to say stop that or else they'd be hassled [even more].

At one stage in the discussion RH (see footnote 41) made some more telling comments on the impact of the behaviour:

DO: It's made you tougher.

LE: Heaps more independent.

DO: Well I used to feel like this quiet, shy little person...

LE: Yeah you were as shy as [a bullied person is named].

DO: Yeah I wouldn't say a word...I used to be really smart ...You look at my marks now. I'm failing most of my subjects now.

I suppose I've lost my motivation...I used to be quite bright.

LE: I wanted to try so hard in the fourth and fifth form but you just

couldn't in the environment like [that]. I'd be like with F and he'd like want to wag and you think: You've got no other mates in the class so [if you stayed] you'd be sitting in that class by yourself

DO: So you'd wag.

These comments strengthen the argument that the behaviour had become embedded in the culture of the class. They accepted the bullying and became fully involved in order to survive and also adopted F's attitudes, lost their pro-academic motivation and ended up not only supporting a bullying culture but also failing. Creating sides was part of creating this culture.

'it was okay as long as you were on the teasing side of things'.

Those being targeted were at fault;

'Those who had defects, like fat people and [those with] glasses... The people being picked on were the quiet shy ones.'

There was also justification for the actions,

'It's made you tougher... Heaps more independent.'

However even when this excuse was being offered, DO started off to say that she used to be shy.

'Well I used to feel like this quiet, shy little person... I wouldn't say a word...

The expectation was that she would then say that she had toughened up from the experience, instead she provided an insightful comment that sums up the impact of the bullying:

'I used to be really smart ... You look at my marks now. I'm failing most of my subjects now. I suppose I've lost my motivation... I used to be quite bright.'

DO's perceptions bear out the actual experience of the class. The culture had a debilitating and negative social and educational impact on the class.

#### **6.47 Who led the behaviour?**

The influence of the main bully F was discussed at length. He was obviously a powerful individual who was able to control the situation effectively and apparently in a calculated manner:

LE: The main ringleader of the hassling was F. He was the main [perpetrator].

DO: the initiator.

LE: He put the first word in and everyone just followed and added their little [bit in]

DO: People are like sheep, sure.

DO: F was very deliberate

LE: But my first impression of F was...He was, you know, kind, quiet and wanted to work. But then once you actually got to know him...You were already his mate so you didn't want to just leave him. You'd just mingle in and slowly [join in].

LE: Yeah. The minute he walked into a class, he'd basically look around and see the person he wanted to hassle. Then [he'd] sit near them and hassle them...Like at the end of every class with G. [Quote already used where G is accused of wetting herself.]

Clearly, F was in control of the bullying culture and the others knew their places.

LE: I think it was for attention. He liked the attention because he always had that little smirk on his face after he'd hassled someone...It was more of an attention thing.

LE: He [was] the mouth of the group. I suppose I [must have been] just

a back up...

LO: You [were] quick to back up! You're quick as well.

LE: Yeah. I'd be more threaten[ing]...With my fists and more harsher words.

LO: You'd have quick words.

Although F's high school career was marked by poor performance, he stayed for the full five years. His performance has since improved and involving tertiary study where he has been involved in drama and media studies. Although he failed to gain any significant academic qualifications while at the school, his peer group saw him in his last year at school as a leader. He had a strong outgoing personality and was active in singing and drama. He had a difficult period at school in his third and fourth year when he was frequently truanting, non-compliant (refusing to complete impositions and detentions) and did not complete even minimal course and homework. During this two-year period, he eventually became isolated from the peer group, however, by his last year he had become more integrated into the school and was once again popular. At this point he became more engaged academically, although in the secondary school context he never fully regained the ground lost. F appeared to adults to be a well-adjusted outgoing young adult.

During the interview with F, he reported that he had been bullied at his first primary school. He described the bullying he experienced as being mainly physical. The school he went to was in a low socio-economic community and in response to the bullying, his parents moved him to the local Catholic primary for years seven and eight. In his own words he 'put in practice what he had learnt at the first school.' This time he was the perpetrator not the victim. When questioned about this, F replied that the pupils in the new school were not as 'tough' as in his previous school and that as a result, he was able to dominate them with his tongue and fists. He says he quickly established a following, which he enjoyed. The teachers did not identify him as a bully and so he got

away with this anti-social behaviour unchallenged.

As is evident in the earlier discussion, F was able to continue with this behaviour on his arrival at secondary school. It is important to note that he was not a physically intimidating person and this could account for his meanness not being detected. He led and used verbal skills and ability to set people up to show his dominance. While the others expressed reservations about him, they admitted that they were attracted to him. From an educator's point of view, it is important to recognise that pupils who bully will often be attractive and thus be harder to recognise by peers and teachers, (see Sullivan, 1997) as they do not fit the usual 'thug-like' profile. This will also make detection much more difficult. F's bullying was often subtle and carefully thought out. His pleasant persona belied the power he possessed.

#### **6.48 Why was the bullying tolerated?**

When questioned as to why they had not tried to seek help the answers are illuminating:

Do: No-one would have said anything. You would have been too scared [about what would happen to you as a consequence of telling].

LE: You wouldn't say "F picks on someone", because the next day he would have got you ...

LE: When we had those talks [when either the dean, form teacher discussed what was going on] it was like... "No we don't do that. We don't do this." As soon as its over we go back to doing it.

Both international (McLean, 1994) and New Zealand research (Adair et al

1999) suggests that pupils are very reluctant to report bullying<sup>54</sup>. The collusion with the bullying was pervasive and the pupils were obviously feeling locked into the culture of the group.

LE: You need[ed] more than one of you to make a stand...[You needed to] start a new group.

DO: Not really. It was something you just lived with.

LE: You were always constantly listening to the background. To see what was being said about people and prepare for it [the bullying].

This sense of entrapment is well illustrated in the comments made by LE, who by his own admissions and the comments of the others was the principal supporter of F, the dominant bully. When discussing how the abuse could have been stopped he comments:

LE: We were taken out of class [on our own] to talk to people. I think if you went out in pairs...then you're with someone else and you['d] hear their ideas and see how they feel...Then you can...go back out of there on each others side.

Later he commented on how he had tried to stop the bullying:

LE: Sometimes I'd decide not to [bully the others] because they'd been okay to me earlier. So you really wouldn't want [to bully them]...So I'd just step back a bit and just watch it [the bullying, and] not say stop, or don't do it. But also [I wouldn't say] not go [on] with it.

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<sup>54</sup> In the Strathclyde (McLean 1994) survey it was found that only 40% of pupils who had been bullied had reported this to a teacher. In Adair (1999) work in Auckland secondary schools even fewer bullied pupils reported (20%). The Scottish study included primary pupils who are more likely to tell.



LE: Yeah. Well that's why I had a fall out with F. I got picked on because I stood up for [a victim].

DO: Because you guys split up.

LO: I got shot down like that [clicks his fingers].

LE: Cause I stopped him picking on someone and said something and he didn't like that at all. He went on the defensive and threatened to [harm me as a result]. That was a long argument as we could both argue and it went on...

LE: I could do that because I came from [Intermediate School]. That was a hard school to get through, so you learned all the tricks of the trade. [How] to stand up for yourself and defend yourself.

LE: That's why I left the group and went around the school looking for other groups. Because you knew at some stage they'd [F and co.] turn on you. So it was just a case of finding another group that could support you.

When this failed he attempted to change classes. He approached the dean to arrange the change:

LE: And they said nah, I couldn't change. That was my way of asking for help. Basically to get out of that class and start again in another class. But they denied me and said that you can't do that. No other class had space.

#### **6.49 The role of the teaching staff**

None of the teachers involved could recall the time when LE asked to change class. There was no record of the request on his file and it was not mentioned in the guidance meeting minutes. The dean is convinced that she would have remembered LE's request if he had mentioned the reasons of wanting the change.

Unfortunately, [if LE was telling the truth] one of the few opportunities to gain an awareness of the bullying environment was lost. There are at least three possibilities; 1) LE did make the request and it was ignored or 2) He wanted to change and thought about it but failed to make the request; 3) He was lying where he stated that he wanted to change classes.

If he did request the move and this was ignored, for whatever reasons, then this could be judged to be a poor decision. (However, even if this was true it is hard to trace things back to see if there were other reasons that justified not moving him). The school was loath to move a pupil without good cause, this was justified on the grounds of curriculum coverage and administration difficulty. Movements between classes were rare (though as is explained in case study 1, these did happen occasionally). The guidelines for class change request are certainly more responsive and permissive now, and we identify requests for movement as a potential indicator of relationship difficulties in the class and investigate much more closely.

One pupil T did try to ‘stand up for himself’. This was unsuccessful:

LE: He put up with it, kept it to himself. At one stage he got very violent though...

He wasn't very quiet. Like he'd threaten back...

RH: He tried to get in and stop himself getting bullied.

LE: But then we'd sort of laugh at him.

RH: Yeah.

LE: And we'd [say] “Hey. What are you going to do T”?

T, after having achieved well in School Certificate, left the school during the sixth form to take up a trade apprenticeship. While we can speculate that the bullying had made him uncomfortable at school it is difficult to know whether his decision to leave was inordinately affected by his having been bullied.

The pupils discussed the role of teachers in the situation. They identified their form teacher as having failed to be able to change the situation.

DO: Mrs X didn't help

DO: She joined in. She didn't help.

LE: As long as she looked good to the other teachers.

RH: Yeah. But Mrs X didn't really do...

DO: She did nothing.

RH: If maybe you had another teacher in there other than her.

DO: Someone strong.

They accepted that she had tried to support them, but also felt that she had been selective in her support:

RH: It might have helped a wee bit [if she had intervened but she didn't].

DO: I think she tried to be sort of [ignore it so it would go away]

LE: [She adopted a] Motherly role.

DO: She's more like your best friend. But only to those that [she] liked.

LE: She choose to be nice.

DO: If she don't like you then ...

LE: She didn't like you.

DO: It would show up. She sort of had that attitude that said; "You had to live with it" ...If you went to her she'd go to the people and say that [you] said this. It'd come back on you. They'd say why did you nark on us?

It appears that if the pupils' recollections are accurate that the role and approach that X (a mature beginning teacher) adopted with the class, wasn't supportive of pupils who were being bullied. While she had used a 'motherly' approach this

did not provide the support the pupils in the class wanted and their attitude to her verged on the contemptuous. Their perception was that she condoned the behaviour and was unprepared, or more likely, unable to stop it happening.

The following episode clearly shows that those who control a bullying culture can seize any opportunity that might arise. In another classroom situation, even with a very competent and experienced teacher, the bullying persisted. The teacher was often called out of class, this meant that his absence indirectly allowed the bullying culture to thrive.

When I suggested that he (the experienced teacher) would have provided a safe classroom, LE commented:

Nah but he'd [the teacher] be out of class quite a bit of the time and that's when I started getting picked on... when he started leaving the class.... At that stage I just wanted to walk up to him [F] and deck him. But I thought I'd better not get expelled just for cracking [hitting] him [F].

It is unclear whether this was just retrospective bravado because LE did not deck F and he certainly had a long time to choose his moment when they were at school together.

The interviewees spoke very positively about the influence of their science teacher:

LE: She'd take into consideration how you felt. Actually listen to you rather than just say: "We'll talk about it later." If you wanted to talk [about an important issue] she'd basically let you talk.

DO: She wasn't afraid of anybody. She wasn't intimidated by anyone.

LO: Step out of line and your name would go up on the board. That was enough to keep us going.

DO: People listened to her.

DO: She was good.

LE: She was strict but she was kind.

LE: She was only strict if need be...If they're [teachers] always strict you don't like it.

RH: You could go and see her and whatever and she...

DO: It was confidential.

LE: She'd listen and not go "yep yep" [insincere].

The teacher in question does not have a reputation amongst the staff as being either firm or a disciplinarian. She is viewed by the majority as being a very soft, caring and gentle person. There is an interesting discrepancy here between staff and pupil perceptions. When I discussed the case study with Mrs B she was also surprised. She told me that 3XX was her first junior science class for many years (she normally teaches other subjects) and she had found the whole experience very demanding. She had found the class a challenge but remembered them as being responsive. She stated that she was aware of RH being the target of some minor bullying and had spoken to him several times but she had also been unable to get to the bottom of it.

During the classes year 10, she had taught a five-week 'Healthy Relationships' to all the year 10 classes. F remembers this well and said that it had been the first time he had the opportunity to think about the dynamics of bullying and says he commented that this type of programme and the ensuing discussion were the most effective way of dealing with bullying. The other pupils interviewed did not mention the health module in the discussions.

These positive comments led onto a broader discussion on what style of teaching promoted a safe environment:

LE: Sure it's bad but you need strict [teachers].

And what was not so good: We moved on to discuss different teaching styles. In particular new teachers:

LE: Yeah. With the new teachers we could get away with more. They didn't know us. Didn't know what we were like.

We could push him [a relieving maths teacher] to his limits...See how far we could stretch him.

Or authoritarian teachers who are perceived as being uncaring:

DO: Like they walk into a room and say sit down and shut up sort of thing and you've got to rebel against that.

## ***6.5 Discussion***

### **6.51 Who were the bullies?**

During the interviews it became clear that in the situation of 3XX, the bullying was almost exclusively from a handful of boys and was directed towards any boy or girl who was perceived as being vulnerable. This may have been because of a perceived physical weakness (SW, GM), the fact that the pupil was new and therefore had not yet established a support network (JM2, SC, RF) or was diligent in their approach to school work (LB). Not everyone was involved in the bullying, in fact the three pupils who were identified as being physically the 'strongest' did not participate in the bullying (neither did they intervene). The focus group clearly identified F as the protagonist and catalyst for the bullying, though it is obvious from the comments that others, such as LE, ably supported him. Despite the fact that most of the individuals recognised the destructive

nature of the behaviour, their desire to be part of the action ensured that it was maintained. The bullying of newcomers was accepted and, from comments in the focus group, almost a source of pride: “We made heaps of people leave.” ... “Yeah. But some didn’t have mates” “And the other people in the class didn’t care. They just sort of laughed and [made] you feel good about it.” (P259).

### **6.52 Who could have stopped the behaviour from within?**

During his interview F identified one girl, A, as being the one who was prepared to challenge him. She had done this by confronting him when he was teasing others. While he reported being surprised by her actions in challenging his behaviour, F did not ever consider taking up her challenge. In his comments he made it clear that he would only target those pupils who were vulnerable. This mirrors the observations made by Tulloch (Tulloch, 1995) who noted that bullies pick on children who are perceived as being emotionally, psychologically and/or physically weak.

For 3XX, there seems to have been an abdication of their responsibility to the safety of their classmates by the majority of pupils, who either lacked the positive leadership to challenge F and his acolytes or were too frightened to act or didn’t care. A had the power to challenge, but for a variety of reasons lacked the resilience, energy or leadership to galvanise the rest into rejecting the bullying. By the end of her third year at secondary school, A had become alienated from school and was diagnosed as being depressed. She left during the 1997 school year. A year later, she became pregnant and a mother. Today she has no formal qualifications and is uninterested in recommencing her education. The two physically stronger boys were never challenged by F and were content to be passive onlookers. The class appears to have lacked any assertive pupils who, according to the Strathclyde Model (refer to [section 5.41.1](#) and [Appendix 1](#)), were prepared to challenge F’s manipulation. Without any one to challenge F’s leadership, the class fell more and more under his influence and domination. The pupils became trapped in the abusive culture of the group.

### **6.53 The bullying culture**

What is clear from the study of the class is that in a school where a lot of effort has been put into dealing with bullying (refer to section 5.2-5.3 pp 209 - 225) a pervasive bullying culture was able to develop and remain hidden over a two year period. Despite the fact that individual members of the group were aware that the school was active in its opposition to bullying, the comments from the focus group suggest that they believed themselves to be individually powerless. Taking action, or talking to the teachers or a parent, was seen as being too risky. Instead they sought refuge in compliance with their peer abusers hoping that this would provide protection. Unfortunately, this passive response to the abuse had the impact of strengthening the power of the abuser. From the individual's perspective, it appeared that others not directly involved believed that the rest of the class were not concerned about what was going on. Little or no real communication took place and what did was often on the level of miscommunication. Motivated by self-protection, the bystanders allowed the abuse to continue, and because of the departures, a steady stream of potential victims (new pupils) was presented to the bullies.

#### **6.53.1 On the bus, an analogy for the class**

As I reflected on the implications of the case study, the literature search, the large number of discussions I had had with fellow practitioners and academics working in the field, I developed a new depth of understanding. This was synthesised almost accidentally when I was working with a year nine class. I was teaching an anti-bullying part of the school's health curriculum. I was using an exercise based on a worksheet in the Strathclyde anti-bullying resource (refer to [section 2.62](#)). The resource, as part of a bullying awareness-raising process, asked the pupils to read a sheet that gives some typical bullying situations and asked them to identify ones that would worry them (I had slightly adapted the sheet ([Appendix 14](#)) to give it a local flavour). I had already talked with the group about my research in 3XX and my view that the bullying had caused long-



term damage to the whole group, and while they were completing the sheet, I was thinking about the case study.

When we looked at the response, the one situation that was viewed by the most as the one that would worry them the most was:

*Kristy was called names every morning on the school bus but couldn't see any way to avoid it or tell anyone because of the threats.*

The class discussion that followed crystallised many of my random thoughts and understandings into a concise overview of bullying, and from the reaction of the class provided an excellent framework for them to understand the complexity and the dynamics of bullying. I will describe how the lesson progressed to illustrate the development of what has become a key way of building a contextualised and relevant understanding of bullying amongst pupils.

In response to the class's identification of the bullying situation, I asked them what should Kirsty do? The speed and validity of their responses staggered me:

"Tell someone!"

"Catch another bus."

"Tell a teacher."

"Tell someone at home."

"Punch the name-callers."

"Tell the name-callers to stop."

"Sit beside some-one who will help."

"Call them names back."

"Be assertive, look them in the eye and say I don't like it when you call me names because it upsets me and could you please stop."

These were only a few of the responses. They were pleased with the information and we agreed that they were on the right track, but that in all cases the onus was on Kristy to provide the solution.

I then suggested that they were unrealistic and had over simplified what was going on in the bus. To back this up I used the information from both the Strathclyde survey (McLean, 1994) and University of Auckland research (Adair et al 1999) that showed few victims of bullying actually tell anyone. Adair et al (1999) suggests that fewer than one in five (secondary aged pupils) will tell a teacher, while the Strathclyde figures are somewhat better with two in five (all ages) reporting they are bullied.

The pupil's responses suggest that they have been well taught about abuse and bullying. (I'm sure 3XX would have had the same knowledge.) They *know* what they are expected to say and do when they are confronted by a bullying. They agreed that acting on the advice was a much more daunting proposition. However, they agreed that unless Kristy was assertive her only real solution to the abuse was to get to school another way.

I then challenged them to think a bit more deeply about the bus situation. How would Kristy feel as she boarded the bus and someone calls out, abusing her? We talked through the situation adding detail and information to flesh out the scene. *"Kristy is last onto the nearly full bus, has a reputation for being conscientious and has yet to establish a group of friends."* Consequently she is not assertive and will be powerless to counter the aggression of the other pupils. (LB [refer to [Section 6.21](#)], and the other pupils who were forced out of 3XX was on my mind. The bus was becoming an analogy for 3XX.)

To reinforce this message we talked about the bus seating. Where would those calling out be most likely to sit, I asked?

"In the back seat!" They roared.

"Where could Kirsty sit?"

Probably next to the driver, if that seat's free, we all agreed.

A pivotal moment is when she steps onto the bus and the first taunt rings out.

If she responds quickly and confidently, all will be well, but if she is intimidated, lacks confidence, and/or is paralysed into inaction, the reaction of the rest of the bus will be laughter. The majority of the pupils in the bus wait for a split second to see what she'll do and if she doesn't accept the challenge inherent in the taunt, will laugh.

I asked the pupils to 'freeze' the drama in that split second and analyse what everyone is thinking and feeling:

**Kristy:** "They are all laughing at me!"  
"I'm alone, they're all hostile."  
"I'm useless, I know I should stand up for myself, but I can't think of what to say quickly enough."  
"I need to sit down and forget about this as quickly as possible."

**The Abuser:** "I'm funny"  
"Everyone is laughing with me, I'm cool"  
"I'm popular"  
"What a wimp. A good choice to give a hard time to."  
"People like me when I get smart to others."  
"This is a good way of being liked and the centre of attention."

**The Others** "Glad it's not me."  
"What a geek, can't she handle it."  
"Poor thing, I'd hate to be her."  
"It's a bit of fun to have a laugh."  
"That's really mean, but I can't help laughing."  
"I'd like to help but then they might hassle me..."  
"I don't like this but everyone else thinks it's okay, I'll laugh along"

so as not to stand out."

We then discussed the way both Kristy and the abuser had misinterpreted what the others were thinking (i.e. contempt and rejection, on one hand, and commendation and endorsement on the other). The participants misinterpret the whole scene and because there is no discussion of what is going on this misunderstanding becomes the reality. Kristy is isolated and rejected. She believes she has no support base and the longer the abuse continues, the less likely it is for the other pupils who had sympathy to intervene on her behalf. Like 3XX, a bullying culture was allowed to develop.

The pupils built up a powerful image of the bus and accepted it as a valid analogy for a classroom. The messages were then discussed and the pupils agreed that the last person able to change the situation was Kristy. Bullies tend to pick on those who will not challenge them, who will lack support and who are not powerful. The bully's antisocial behaviour is re-enforced by the reactions of the bystanders; he or she understandably interprets the laughter and lack of active resistance to their comments and actions as support.

As the discussion developed further, the role that could and should be taken by the bystanders was articulated. Clearly, if the perception of the bully and the target are to change, they need to understand that what's happening does not actually have the support of the majority. The only way this can happen is for the bystanders to take decisive action when the target, because of their lack of power, cannot.

The original question was repeated. "What should Kirsty do?" This time the answers were much different and an action plan for dealing with bullying was developed where the onus was on the bystanders to stop the behaviour. The pupils identified non-confrontational yet assertive actions they could take:

- Standing up and asking Kirsty to sit with them.
- Talking to their neighbour about what they felt and their confusion.
- Being honest when they felt uncomfortable about a situation.

The bus was clearly an analogy and a microcosm for the four destructive years that the original pupils were at school. (On the bus) a culture of bullying developed which was largely hidden from the teaching staff (the drivers) and as one passenger (pupil) left the bus, another new Kristy climbed the steps, ready for ridicule and abuse. The other passengers had found the original laughter fun and soon found it too difficult to challenge the behaviour once it became entrenched; they became inured to it and ended up defending it. They didn't talk to each other about what was going on and became active participants in the abuse.

The consequence for the whole busload was that it wasn't making much progress. So much time was spent stopping to let off passengers no longer able to cope with the abuse, and to pick up new ones, there was little distance gained (or learning undertaken).

A simple, yet powerful analogy demonstrating the damage bullying has on the whole group had been developed. This scenario has been further developed (Cleary & Sullivan, 1999, Sullivan 2000) into an action plan for 'bullyproofing' your school and classroom.

## ***6.6 Conclusions***

Several useful ideas have emerged from the events described in this chapter. First of all, the scope of the impact of the bullying on 3XX was surprising. As predicted in the literature, the victims of bullying suffered as a result and in several instances in this case study, it appears that their pro-social behaviour was undermined and several of them choose to leave school early. As a result of this bullying culture, not only those who were bullied suffered, the whole class seems

to have been affected. Second, the "On the bus" activity showed that pupils can respond positively to an activity where a deep understanding of the complexity of the bullying behaviour is developed and they can come up with useful and practical solutions. In other words, the solution to bullying can be forged through the thinking and experience of the pupil body and the possibility of an anti-bullying culture can come from the pupils.

## Chapter 7 Concluding Remarks

The goal of this study has been to provide an overview of the recent scholarship on school bullying and to then examine how bullying is dealt with in a real world context by examining practice. The results provide both an overview of school-based anti-bullying strategies and an exploration of the social dynamics that exist within school communities. The main conclusion of the study is that while anti-bullying programmes are effective, successful intervention is a complex process that demands significant changes in the perceptions and actions of all of those involved. The study also suggests that further research is needed since the amount of bullying may far surpass perceived levels. The study strongly supports anti-bullying interventions in schools, as there is indisputable evidence that current practice, even when flawed, is effective in reducing the behaviour.

On reflection it seems clear that within the school community it is the pupils who have the greatest potential to block the development of a bullying culture. For teachers and administrators to bullyproof their pupils they need to recognise that the pupils, as well as the adults, need to develop an understanding of the social dynamics that are at work when bullying is present. While secondary school pupils have been taught about and appear to have a good knowledge of bullying and what to do when confronted by it, it appears that they only have a limited understanding of the complexity of the social dynamic that bullying represents (see Adair, 1999<sup>55</sup>, Cleary & Sullivan, 1999). Teacher leadership is essential if they are to be given the skills and opportunities to use their knowledge and be able to construct action plans that will confront and eliminate the growth of a bullying culture.

It is evident that for many pupils caught in a bullying situation, the opportunity to reflect on what is happening and to consider what others are thinking is

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<sup>55</sup> Adair found that secondary pupils interviewed were able to rationalise their inaction when confronted by a bullying incident.

missing. Too often, due to the very complexity of the social dynamic operating, there is little or no dialogue between those being affected by the behaviour. This inevitably leads to misinterpretation of the situation, a lack of decisive action and the potential for the establishment of an abusive culture (Sullivan, 2000 Chapter 4). However, pupils armed with a comprehensive understanding of bullying are much more likely to recognise the behaviour for what it is and communicate their concerns to both their peers and adults, thus halting the development of a bullying culture.

The development of the study school's anti-bullying approach involved research, reflection and action. With understanding came the adoption and use of new programmes using older pupil peers. Both staff and pupils gained practical insight into how to tackle specific examples of bullying and the complex nature of the relationships that exist amongst young people in a school environment became evident.

The successful whole school approach centred on the development of a common understanding by the school community of what bullying is i.e. defining the behaviour. Unless pupils are able to name the behaviour impacting on them, they will not recognise it as bullying. Without a name for the abuse, they will blame themselves and further withdraw.

The success of pupil centred methods, such as the No-Blame approach, is clearly linked to the fact that pupils are given the opportunity to not only reflect on what has happened, but are also given the time and space to practice their reaction. The requests for help, the discussion and the controlled reflection all combine to allow individual pupils the opportunity to adapt their behaviour.

The international research has provided a wealth of material that paints detailed and clear pictures of the incidence and nature of the abuse. It has enabled a sophisticated understanding of school bullying in its variety of forms so that



generalised assumptions can be made as to the prevalence of the behaviour. This enables an understanding of the cause and the nature of the abuse and also the long-term impact it has on the individuals involved. Clearly, when an anti-bullying approach is based on developing a genuine understanding of the issues that generate and maintain bullying cultures and relationships, solutions can be found.

It is crucially important to recognise that merely to adopt the whole school approach does not automatically guarantee the development of a safe environment. The 3XX case study suggests, amongst other things, that bullying is a random force that can thrive when certain ill-defined preconditions are met. All classes are not the same, and consequently, while whole-school approaches do reduce bullying, they do not ensure that all pupils and all classes will be protected. In 3XX the behaviour left no winners and is still impacting on those who were unlucky enough to be placed in the class. Pupils are perceptive and the main case study clearly shows that despite the school having adopted a comprehensive anti-bullying ethos, one class was able to evade that ethos and develop its own uniquely negative culture. This actively enabled a bullying environment to thrive and to contribute to the failure of many of the members of that class from an academic and social perspective.

Further reflection and research is needed to examine the resistance of class groups like 3XX to anti-bullying programmes. A growth in understanding of the sophisticated social dynamic at play in the class room by pupils can ensure that the manipulation, intimidation and abuse associated with school bullying will not take hold and become the pervasive culture.

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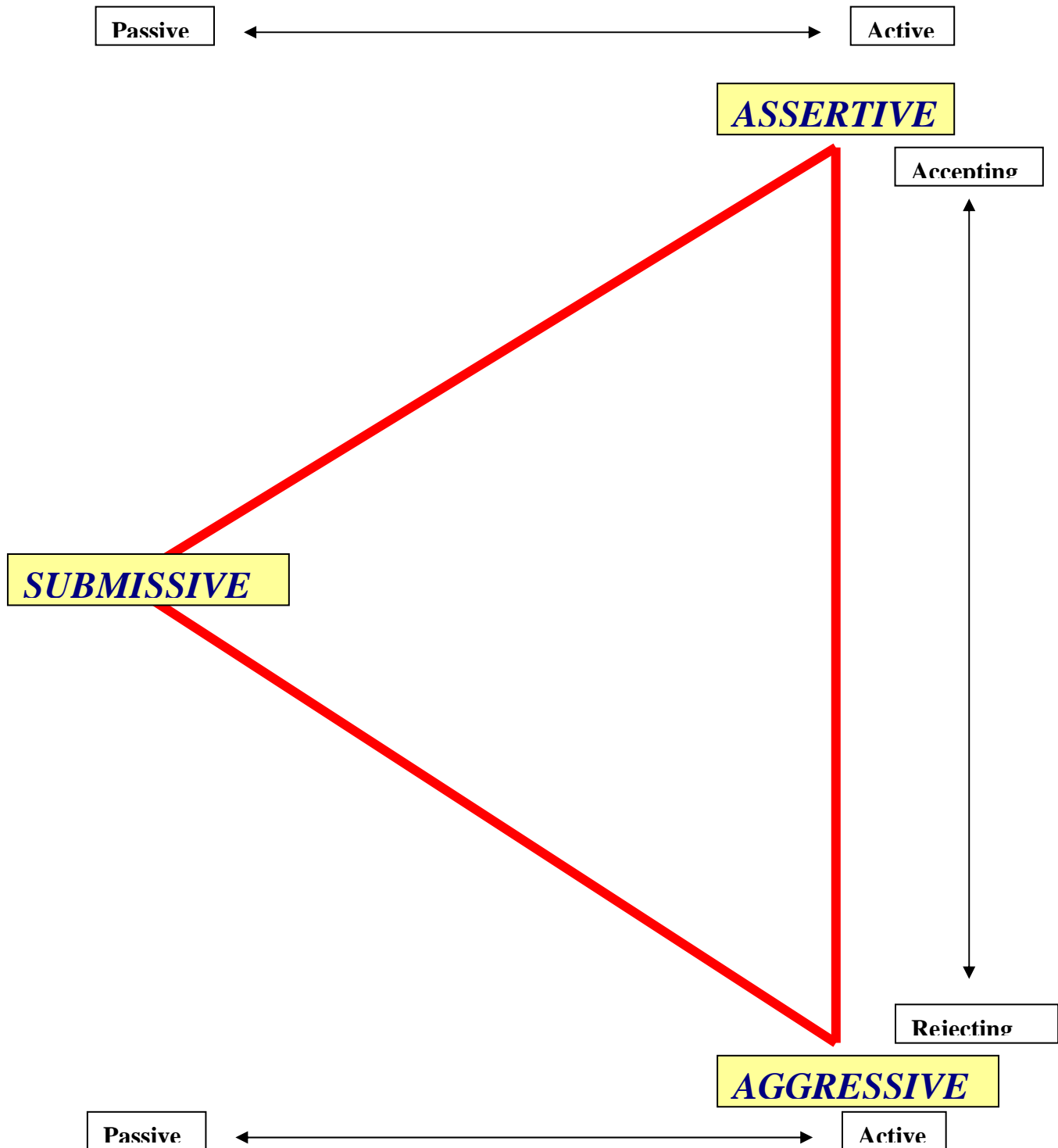
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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

Strathclyde Relationship Model (McLean, 1994)



## Appendix 2

### Peer Helper Questionnaire

These questions are to help gain an understanding of what motivates pupils to volunteer to be part of programmes such as peer helping. Please answer all questions as thoroughly as you can. The information gathered will be analysed and the results will be published only in a form whereby the contributions will be anonymous.

#### **Part One: Background information:**

1. Gender of the Peer helper: Female  Male
2. Age (years and months) years  months
3. Current school year: Year 11  Year 12  Year 13

4. I started at Case Study High School:

- |                          |                          |               |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| ➤ At the start of Form 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Secondary School(s) I attended *before* came to Case study:

6. If you changed to Case Study briefly outline the reasons for the change:

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Briefly describe why you volunteered to be part of the Peer Helper programme

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During training, several volunteers talked about their own experiences at Intermediate and Junior Secondary Schools, indicating that these experiences had motivated them to become part of the peer helper group.

7. During my time in forms 1-4,

---

*I had a good group of supportive friends.*  
Always  Usually  Sometimes  Never

*I was aware of other pupils being isolated or rejected:*

Yes  No

*If I was aware of others being hassled or intimidated I became involved trying to support the other pupil:*

Yes  No

*I was isolated or rejected by people in my class or year group:*

Always  Usually  Sometimes  Never

*I was involved in bullying (deliberately isolating, hurting or rejecting another pupil)*

Yes  No

Comment:

---

8. Please describe a case of bullying that you were either involved with or saw during you time in intermediate of junior secondary school.

Comment:

---

**1997**

13. As a result of the training you have received this year what do you think can be done around the school to make the environment a better place for junior pupils?

Comment:

---

11. What sort of support and training do you think year 12/13 pupils need to become effective Peer helpers in a school like This?

Comment:

---

12. Were you able to use any of the skills taught in the *Peer Helping* sessions working with juniors around the school?

Yes  No  Number of times:

13. If yes, how did you become involved?

I was asked to be involved by a teacher

The pupil approached me for help

I made the approach to the pupil

Another pupil told me to see the pupil


14. Describe the issue or problem the pupil had:

---

---

15. What did you do to help?

---

---

Thanks for your help

Mark Cleary

### Appendix 3

#### Research Questionnaire

These questions are to help gain an understanding of why bullying happens and to help develop better ways of stopping it. Please answer all questions as thoroughly as you can. The information gathered will be analysed and the results will be published only in a form whereby the contributions will be anonymous.

#### Part One: Background information:

1. Gender: Female  Male
2. Age (years and months)  years  months
3. Current school year: Year 11  Year 12  Year13
4. I started at Case Study High School:
- |                          |                          |               |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| ➤ At the start of Form 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of From 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ➤ At the start of Form 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | During Form 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Secondary School(s) I attended *before* came to this school:
- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|

6. If you changed to Case Study please briefly outline the reasons for the change:

---

---

Experiences at Intermediate and Junior Secondary Schools:

7. During my time in forms 1-4,  
*I had a good group of supportive friends.*
- Always  Usually  Sometimes  Never

*I was aware of other pupils being isolated or rejected:*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

---



Yes

No

***If I was aware of others being hassled or intimidated I became involved trying to support the other pupil:***

Yes

No

***I was isolated or rejected by people in my class or year group:***

Always  Usually  Sometimes  Never

***I was involved in bullying (deliberately isolating, hurting or rejecting another pupil)***

Yes

No

Comment:

---

8. Please describe a case of bullying that you were involved with during your time in junior secondary school.

8.1. Who else was involved?

---

8.2. What was happening?

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8.3. Did you tell anyone about what was going on?

No.  Go to question 8.4. Yes.  Go to question 8.5

8.4. What was the reason/reasons for not telling anyone else?

---

8.5. Who did you tell?

Parent  Friend  Teacher  Other

---

8.6. What did they do when you told what was going on?

---

8.7. Telling them: Helped a lot.  Helped a little.   
Made no difference  Made things worse:

9. School involvement

9.1. Describe what happened once the school became aware of the problem.  
What staff members were involved? What did they do?

---

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10. Do you think that there has been any lasting impact of this incident?

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Thanks for your help

Mark Cleary

## ***Appendix 4***

***Mark Cleary 18 Clyde Rd Napier*** Phone (06) 835 7932, Mobile (025) 283 9386 Fax: (06) 843 3672 E-mail: [mcleary@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mcleary@xtra.co.nz)

### **Participant Information Sheet**

As part of my study for a Masters of Arts degree in Education I am investigating how bullying is being dealt with in New Zealand Schools.

A main part of this involves investigating the way Case Study High School has been dealing with the issue of bullying over the last five years. It will be used as an example of a school attempting to deal with the issue. This will be preceded by a detailed investigation of how bullying is dealt with internationally and in other New Zealand schools.

To gain a fuller understanding of bullying I will be interviewing pupils who have, at some stage of their time at the school, been involved in a bullying relationship, have been in a class or group where bullying took place or have been involved in the Peer Helper project. Interviewees will be asked questions about any incidents of bullying they have experienced. They will also be asked questions that will deal with the response of family, peers and teachers to the incident(s).

The interviews will follow a questionnaire that will be given to the interviewee at least one day before the interview so that they have time to consider the issues before it takes place.

Any contributions will be confidential and pupils will not be identified in any subsequent report or article. Before submission of the thesis I will give participants an opportunity to read and comment on the section that results from their input. At that stage they will have the opportunity to withdraw from the project.

Dr Keith Sullivan, Director of Postgraduate Studies, School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington Box 600, Wellington (Keith.Sullivan@vuw.ac) is supervising my study.

If there are any concerns over the project please either contact Keith or me directly.

Yours sincerely  
Mark Cleary  
***Appendix 5***

***Mark Cleary 18 Clyde Rd Napier***

Phone (06) 835 7932, Mobile (025) 283 9386

Fax: (06) 843 3672 E-mail: [mcleary@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mcleary@xtra.co.nz)

## **Consent Form**

I have read the participant Information Sheet giving details of Mark Cleary's Bullying Research Project as part of his study for a Masters of Arts degree in Education and herewith consent to a videotaped interview with him.

In doing so, I understand that any information I contribute in the interview is confidential to Mr Cleary, his supervisor Dr Keith Sullivan of Victoria University and myself; that I may decline to address any issue or to answer any question which I do not wish to; that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice; and that I may request to read notes taken at this interview.

I may also request a copy of the relevant research document once it is complete.

I also understand that while my contributions will be helpful providing understanding of school bullying my contribution will remain strictly confidential and anonymous

If I have any concerns I can contact Dr Keith Sullivan, Director of Postgraduate Studies, School of Education, Victoria University of Wellington Box 600, Wellington (Keith.Sullivan@vuw.ac.nz) Phone 04 495 5175.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## *Appendix 6*

### Tony Pope's Bullying Survey

Overall 67% of children surveyed said that they had been victims of bullying at some time in their school experience.

<b>Victims of violence in last 9 weeks by pupil age and gender</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>Year 7 &amp; 8</b>
Girls	70%	63%
Boys	72%	60%
Combined	71%	61%

<b>Perpetrators of violence in last 9 weeks by pupil age and gender</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Year 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>Year 7 &amp; 8</b>
Girls	37%	39%
Boys	64%	53%
Combined	71%	61%

While both girls and boys reported similar rates of violence Pope found that males were much more likely to be perpetrators of violence than females.

Of interest is that similarity of violence rates across the socio-economic spectrum of schools.

<b>Victims of violence by school type and pupil age</b>		
<b>Schools' decile Ranking</b>	<b>Year 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>Year 7 &amp; 8</b>
1-3	74%	64%
4-6	65%	61%
7-10	71%	62%

## *Appendix 7*

### **School 1**

Large urban decile eight Canterbury school indicated that:

56% Year nine pupils had reported being bullied

57% Year ten pupils had reported being bullied

Most of these pupils reported being both verbally and physically bullied.

Few (28% Y9, 27% Y10) of the pupils had talked to a staff member about the bullying.

The survey did not provide any information on the frequency of the bullying.

### **School 2**

#### **Decile 3 Secondary North Island Provincial 1993**

Sample size 275

Overall 12% of pupils reported being bullied once a week, with a further 7% being bullied on a daily basis.

56% year nine been bullied this year,	21% weekly or more
38% year 10	21% weekly or more
36 % year 11	14% weekly or more

### **School 3**

#### **Provincial, urban Y7-13 decile 1 Co-ed school 1997. Sample size 281**

Physical abuse weekly or more often	8%
Verbal abuse weekly or more often	32%
Indirect abuse weekly or more often	6%
Belongings (pens) taken often	15%
Bullying a problem at school	54%

Friends are the most likely person victims will tell with only with less than half

the boys telling someone, while 65% of girls told.

Teaching staff was told by fewer than 20% of pupils.

#### **School 4**

##### **Large Rural South Island 9-13 co-ed.**

A survey loosely based on the “Life in Schools” survey was conducted in 1995. The figures were not broken down to year groups. The pupils were given twenty-four different statements that were all prefixed by this comment: ‘During this week another pupil.....’

The following seven items scored at a rate of 5% or more:

1.	Called me names I did not like	10 %
3	Hassled me because I am different	6.2%
13.	Physically hurt me	5.2%
16.	Shouted angrily at me	5 %
17	Tried to trip me up	11.5%
18	Made fun of me	6.5%
23	Talked about me behind my back	10 %

The pupils were asked where these ‘violent’ acts took place:

In class	48%
Grounds and elsewhere	40%

85.5% of the surveyed pupils felt safe at school, 7% did not, and 7.5% felt safe sometimes. Of the violent acts inflicted 84% of the violence on males was by males. On females 53% was by males.

#### **School 5**

##### **Rural North Island secondary school. 910 year 7-13 pupils took part in the**

survey. The pupils were surveyed using Ken Rigby's Olweus based questionnaire.

When asked if they had been bullied this year the following statistics were gathered. (A precise definition of bullying; *bullying is when a stronger person deliberately and repeatedly hurts someone who is weaker*, was provided on the questionnaire.

Year Seven	Boys (66)	Girls (63)	Total (129)
<b>At least once a week</b>	23%	6%	15%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	47%	43%	45%
<b>Never</b>	30%	49%	40%

Year Eight	Boys (62)	Girls (69)	Total (131)
<b>At least once a week</b>	19%	19%	19%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	40%	39%	40%
<b>Never</b>	37%	41%	36%

Year Nine	Boys (92)	Girls (68)	Total (160)
<b>At least once a week</b>	22%	18%	20%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	28%	43%	34%
<b>Never</b>	50%	43%	47%

Year Ten	Boys (65)	Girls (78)	Total (143)
<b>At least once a week</b>	12%	15%	14%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	42%	39%	40%
<b>Never</b>	45%	46%	45%

Year Eleven	Boys (79)	Girls (64)	Total (143)
<b>At least once a week</b>	6%	11%	8%



<b>Less that once a week</b>	42%	40%	41%
<b>Never</b>	52%	50%	51%

Year Twelve	Boys (57)	Girls (38)	Total (95)
<b>At least once a week</b>	5%	8%	6%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	21%	21%	21%
<b>Never</b>	74%	71%	72%

Year Thirteen	Boys (26)	Girls (32)	Total (58)
<b>At least once a week</b>	4%	9%	7%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	38%	16%	26%
<b>Never</b>	58%	75%	67%

Total	Boys (447)	Girls (412)	Total (859)
<b>At least once a week</b>	14%	13%	14%
<b>Less that once a week</b>	37%	37%	37%
<b>Never</b>	49%	50%	49%

So at this school, fourteen percent of the pupils were being bullied at least once a week. Approximately half the pupils had been bullied this year.

### **School 6**

The only survey that I was able to attain that dealt with primary school bullying was conducted in a South Island city in 1996.

53% of the pupils has been bullied that year with 31% reporting that it was within the last month. For 28% they had been bullied almost every day.

## *Appendix 8*

### **Eliminating Violence Field Notes**

This ethos is characterised by:

- Cohesive collegial staff support
- Open communication, consultation, participative structures and power sharing
- Inclusive practices, appreciation of diversity and valuing minorities
- Consistent policies and procedures

The programme adopts an integrated, multi-element approach to developing this pro-social school ethos.

The integrated multi-element model is made up of four distinct components:

1. Values and beliefs
2. Outcomes
3. Pro-active strategies
4. Re-active strategies

#### **Values and Beliefs**

These form the core of a school's ethos and are central to the approach adopted by the Eliminating Violence, Managing Anger programme. The value and belief system of any organisation or individual will determine action.

#### **Outcomes**

The expectation of teacher, school and pupil is significant in determining strategies that will be used in a variety of environments and situations. *'If the desired outcome is the development of enduring and transferable prosocial skills, the strategies will differ considerably from those strategies that will ensure suppression and containment.'*

### **Pro-active Strategies**

These are strategies that are preventative. They try to anticipate problems before they arise, and include *ecological/environmental considerations*<sup>56</sup> as well as *positive programming*.<sup>57</sup>

### **Re-active Strategies**

Strategies that are needed to respond to unforeseen or unexpected behavioural problems that inevitably occur. *Situational management*<sup>58</sup> and *focussed support*<sup>59</sup> are two examples of re-active strategies.

### **Programme and Processes**

The Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme follows a predetermined pattern:

#### **2 Initial contact**

- ✓ A presentation to the school staff
- ✓ Establishment of a school “Steering Group”
- ✓ Data collection (includes parent and school information)

#### **3 Two day workshop**

- ✓ Setting the scene
- ✓ Violence and anger - Values and Beliefs

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<sup>56</sup> *Ecological/environmental considerations*: Factors in the physical, educational and interpersonal environment which either encourage or inhibit violent behaviours.

<sup>57</sup> *Positive programming*: Management strategies which recognise and reinforce prosocial behaviours in order to facilitate positive social interactions.

<sup>58</sup> *Situational management*: management strategies that are appropriate in dealing with situations involving violent behaviour and requiring immediate intervention.

<sup>59</sup> *Focussed support*: Management strategies that target pupils displaying serious behavioural problems requiring long term management.

- ✓ Understanding school violence
- ✓ Strategies and Outcomes
- ✓ School Data
- ✓ School-Wide problem Solving Processes

**4 Programme Maintenance- Core groups established with responsibility for:**

- ✓ Staff training and Development
- ✓ Pupil dissemination
- ✓ Parental/ community Involvement and Participation
- ✓ School Policy Development and Implementation
- ✓ Maintaining enthusiasm

**5 Post intervention Data Collection**

**Characteristics of Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger Programme**

As identified by the team:

- The programme focuses on assisting schools to develop a pro-social school ethos characterised by:
  - Cohesive collegial staff support
  - Open communication, consultation, democratic structures and power sharing
  - Inclusive practices, appreciation of diversity and valuing minorities
  - Consistent policies and procedures
  
- Whole School involvement
  - Focus on school-wide systems and processes
  - Acceptance of broad definition of violence; including force, fear, intimidation and manipulation
  - A wide recognition that before school staff can address issues of violence and anger in pupils they may need to address those same issues in school structures and/or themselves

- Collection of school data to assist in the identification of areas for action, setting priorities and monitoring progress
  - A commitment by schools involved to implement the programme over a period of at least twelve months
  - Adaptation to the particular needs of individual schools while retaining programme integrity
  - A developmental approach allowing for an on-going modification and development in the light of experience and/or new knowledge
- **Core Values and Beliefs:**
- A commitment to non-violence
  - Individuals are responsible for their own behaviour. Every individual's behaviour impacts on others
  - Pro-social behaviour is affirmed and recognised for everyone
  - Intervene early, support those who are hurt, and ensure training and consequences for those that hurt others
  - Identify target groups and provide more intensive programming or support
  - Environment, policies, attitudes and behaviours
  - On-going evaluation of systems to ensure commitment to non-violence is reflected
- **Key ideas and Understandings:**
- Violence is a set of behaviours used to control the behaviour of others by fear, force, intimidation or manipulation
  - Violence is always an abuse of power in unequal relationships
  - Violence is always disrespectful of the person
  - Violence is always disempowering
  - Violence may also be a part of systems and structures
  - Violence is not/never OK
  - Violence is learned and can be unlearned
  - To be aware of violence and do nothing is to collude in that violence

- Anger is an emotion caused by an interpretation of a neutral event
- Anger is a chemical response producing a high energy for action
- Anger and conflict are aspects of everyday life
- Anger can be managed and channelled positively
- When angry, we have choices. It is an individual's responsibility to eliminate their own violence and manage their anger
- Every individual is responsible for the choices they make
- We work to eliminate violence and manage anger. Violence is a behaviour and anger is an emotion.
- Before we can address issues of anger and/or violence in others we must address them in ourselves
- Commitment to non-violence is above gender, ethnicity and ability
- A commitment to non-violence requires that we practice it with those we live and work with
- Children are persons in their own right
- Every child has a right to be treated respectfully, made welcome, included and to be safe in homes and schools
- It's OK to tell
- Pro-social behaviour should be taught, trained and reinforced
- Appropriate assertive responses should be taught and reinforced
- The most effective programmes involve a consistent, system based, whole school commitment to the principles of non-violence.

## *Appendix 9*

### **Report on the Police/Telecom Stop Bullying Workshops**

Mark Cleary held seventeen workshops in various locations around the country, with a total of 706 participants. The participants came from more than 350 different schools or institutions. At each workshop there was a mixture of primary, secondary teachers and police personnel. On occasion members from educational support organisations such as the Specialist Education Services and Community Health were present.

The workshops were held in the afternoon beginning at 1:00 p.m. and concluding at 5:00 p.m. Each workshop began with a short introduction from the local Telecom ambassador, and there was usually a fifteen-minute break at 3:00 p.m. for coffee.

Police/Telecom banners the Michael Jones video posters and copies of the Stop bullying print media advertisements ensured that the sponsors had a high profile at each venue. Telecom's sponsorship was further re-enforced by the giving away of 5-6 \$5 phone-cards during the sessions. These were much appreciated by the winners.

The majority of workshops were held in schools venues. The unusually hot weather in February and March combined with often poorly ventilated and cramp conditions made for a less than ideal learning environment in a number of places.

Participants were appreciative of the opportunity to focus on an issue that was child focused as opposed to the usual assessment and curriculum professional development.

Evaluation sheets were completed by 212 of the attendees. The results are on the next page.

### **Recommendations:**

Follow-up evaluations be sent to participating schools during the third or fourth term to assess the impact of the workshops.

A series of follow-up one-day seminars be held later in the year to support those schools who feel the need for further information or ideas. These could be on a cost recovery basis and would need to be of at least one day.

Support materials be prepared and posted on the 'No-Bully' Internet site.

Telecom be encouraged to continue its sponsorship of the 'no-bully' campaign.

The Ministry of Education be encouraged to ensure that follow up guidelines and support material be sent to all New Zealand schools

### **TELECOM AND POLICE STOP BULLYING CAMPAIGN WORKSHOP**

#### **Evaluation Sheet Summary**

Please complete and return at the end of the workshop or fax to Rob Lee at Corporate Communications, Police National Headquarters, fax (04) 473 2699

#### **The aims and objectives of the workshop were clear and appropriate.**

Impressive	190	Moderate	21	Deficient	0
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#### **The course was relevant and useful and I will be able to apply the ideas in my current school.**

Impressive	187	Moderate	24	Deficient	0
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#### **There was a good blend of theory and practice.**

Impressive	147	Moderate	63	Deficient	1
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#### **There was adequate opportunity for my own questions and comments.**

Impressive	122	Moderate	85	Deficient	4
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**I especially liked:** Participants generally commented on the style of the presenter, the range of activities and the practical nature of the material.

**I would have liked more:** Time was the most significant factor mentioned here. Many wanted follow up and access to more of the material used in the seminars.

**I have liked less:** Not filled in by most, though there was a feeling that too much was packed into the too short time.

### ***Appendix 10***

#### **1993 SURVEY ON BULLYING**



We want to find out how much intimidation (bullying and "spinning") goes on.

All answers are **confidential** and therefore do **not** put your name on the form. Please answer each question in turn by either circling a response or writing a short description.

1. Sex: MALE FEMALE Level: F3 F4 F5
2. Have you bullied someone this year? - YES NO
3. Have you been bullied this year? - YES NO
4. If Yes to 3, how often have you been bullied -

only once  
once a month  
once a week  
every day  
more than once a day


5. Why do you think people bully you?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How do they bully you? (What do they say or do?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How do you feel when being bullied?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What do you do to cope with being bullied?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Who can you see / or have seen within the school to help cope with being bullied?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What do you think can be done to reduce the amount of "spinning" or bullying that is going on?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CONTINUE ON OTHER SIDE IF NECESSARY**  
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

*Appendix 11*

**RESULTS FROM SURVEY ON BULLYING**

<b>1.</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>TOT.</b>
F3	31 (43%)	41 (57%)	72 (26%)
F4	40 (41%)	57 (59%)	97 (35%)
F5	46 (43%)	60 (57%)	106(39%)
<hr/>			
TOT	117(43%)	158(57%)	275

<b>2.</b>	<b>Have you bullied someone this year?</b>	<b>YES</b>	
F3	18 (58%)	14 (43%)	32 (44%)
F4	13 (33%)	19 (33%)	32 (33%)
F5	17 (37%)	17 (28%)	34 (32%)
<hr/>			
	48 (41%)	50 (32%)	98 (36%)

<b>2.</b>	<b>Have you bullied someone this year?</b>	<b>NO</b>	
F3	13 (42%)	27 (66%)	40 (56%)
F4	26 (65%)	38 (67%)	64 (63%)
F5	29 (63%)	43 (72%)	72 (68%)
<hr/>			
	68 (58%)	108(68%)	176(64%)

<b>3.</b>	<b>Have you been bullied this year? - YES</b>		
F3	18 (58%)	22 (54%)	40 (56%)
F4	19 (48%)	18 (32%)	37 (38%)
F5	14 (30%)	22 (37%)	36 (34%)
<hr/>			
	51 (44%)	62 (39%)	113(41%)

<b>3.</b>	<b>Have you been bullied this year? - NO</b>		
F3	14 (45%)	17 (41%)	31 (43%)
F4	19 (48%)	39 (68%)	58 (60%)
F5	26 (57%)	37 (62%)	63 (59%)
<hr/>			
	59 (50%)	93 (59%)	152(55%)

<b>4.</b>	<b>If Yes to 3, how often have you been bullied</b>	<b>once</b>	
F3	11 (35%)	10 (24%)	21 (29%)
F4	7 (18%)	5 ( 9%)	12 (12%)
F5	6 (13%)	7 (12%)	13 (12%)
<hr/>			

24 (21%)	22 (14%)	46 (17%)
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**4. If Yes to 3, how often have you been bullied monthly**

F3	2 ( 6%)	3 ( 7%)	5 ( 7%)
F4	2 ( 5%)	2 ( 4%)	4 ( 4%)
F5	4 ( 9%)	4 ( 7%)	8 ( 8%)
<hr/>			
	8 ( 7%)	9 ( 6%)	17 ( 6%)

**4. If Yes to 3, how often have you been bullied: weekly**

F3	6 (19%)	6 (15%)	12 (17%)
F4	5 (13%)	5 ( 9%)	10 (10%)
F5	4 ( 9%)	7 (12%)	11 (10%)
<hr/>			
	15 (13%)	18 (11%)	33 (12%)

**4. If Yes to 3, how often have you been bullied: daily**

F3	( %)	3 ( 7%)	3 ( 4%)
F4	4 (10%)	7 (12%)	11 (11%)
F5	( %)	4 ( 7%)	4 ( 4%)
<hr/>			
	4 ( 3%)	14 ( 9%)	18 ( 7%)

## Appendix 12

### Bullying Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Soon you will take part in a programme that will help you develop skills and strategies to overcome intimidation and bullying. You will be asked to fill this questionnaire twice, once before the Kia Kaha programme and again at the end of the programme. This will help us measure how successful the programme is.

Answer each question by **ticking the box that best shows how you feel.**

1. Is intimidation (bullying, teasing, spinning etc. a problem for you at school?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Major problem ←————→ No problem

2. Are you aware of people being intimidated at school?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Major problem ←————→ No problem

3. If you were to be threatened or intimidated do you know what you should do to stop being picked on?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Major problem ←————→ No problem

4. Do you think you can personally do anything to stop others being bullied and picked on?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Major problem ←————→ No problem

5. Do you think the school can do anything to stop pupils being bullied and picked on?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Major problem ←————→ No problem

## ***Appendix 13***

### ***The Civics programme as presented as part of a Diploma in Educational leadership assignment***

#### **Background:**

The general area of my School Improvement Project is on **pupil involvement**. This was the area identified **by all subgroups** surveyed as needing the greatest development.

The initial project had a stated specific focus of: ***increasing and clarifying the involvement of senior pupils in school programmes and activities with the primary aim of increasing ownership of learning amongst the whole pupil body.***

#### **Rationale**

The focus stemmed directly from an analysis of the current Anti-Bullying literature that clearly draw direct correlation between the quality of the whole school approach and the reduction of bullying and the enhancement of co-operation. The involvement of pupils is a key factor in a whole school approach.

The project supports the thrust of the new curriculum framework in its emphasis on individual ownership of learning, but also in the need for greater co-operation in the learning process.

As the project has evolved, the scope has broadened and the primary emphasis has moved into the development of a course for all our year 13 pupils that will involve them in the learning support structures of the school.

#### **Activity Report**

##### **1 & 2 Progress Achieved**

***1 Review current senior pupil involvement in formal and informal school activities.***

An informal survey of staff was conducted, where all the activities, curricular and co-curricular, that involved senior pupils in an organising, leading or supportive roles were identified. To this were added programmes and schemes that pupils and staff had indicated that they would like to run.

The list is attached.

Current practice has been reviewed and the successful Peer Tutoring programme

has been evaluated and a report prepared for discussion.

***2 Establish a working party to review activities. This will include pupil, parent, BOT, staff and tertiary representatives.***

A working party of interested staff and pupil has met four times. As yet no parent or BOT involvement has taken place (both groups are aware of the project and are keen to participate in the project later). The working party has expressed a desire to develop more concrete plans before involving parents and the Board. The pupil council has discussed the programme and two pupil representatives have been involved in the working party deliberations.

The Palmerston North College of Education Adviser in Health and Guidance (Secondary) has been in discussion with the convenor and has assisted and supported the concept.

The working party has enthusiastically worked to prepare a draft programme that will be a core component of all year 13 pupils' course in 1996.

***3 Establish policies and practices for the use of senior pupils. This will include guidelines for the training and subsequent supervision of senior pupils.***

All planning so far has included time for the on going and regular training and support of pupils. (See draft programme planner.) This will be further developed after the objectives and contents of the programme have been finalised. The planning group in its review of current practice is very aware that the lack of ongoing support and supervision is a significant cause in the fall off of senior pupil involvement in pupil support projects that exist at present.

***4 Develop a Code of Practice.***

While there is an agreement that the training and support of the pupils involved in the project is the *key* to successful implementation it has yet to be formalised. Clearly this is the one area that parent/Trustee involvement is essential.

***5. Plan for and develop a 1996 course that will provide an opportunity for pupils who are formally involved in school activities to receive recognition of their learning.***

The draft programme is designed to give all pupils in year 13 the opportunity to participate fully in a varied service programme. A major emphasis will be in developing the pupils' own organisational skills, as record keeping and self management will be seen as core competencies. The seniors will receive opportunities to pass on these skills to junior pupils in a variety of settings.

The school has applied for Qualifications Authority accreditation in a wide range of fields. The planning group has identified a large number of New Zealand Qualifications Authority Unit Standards that will be relevant to the types of activities and programmes the senior pupils will be involved in.

At present our seven-line timetable has given the opportunity for senior pupils to have a full five line academic programme with two self-monitoring study lines. The new programme will be a sixth course and will be a core component. Pupils will be expected to use either one of their two 'non-academic' lines on the new senior studies "Personal Skills Programme".

The programme is divided into four distinct components:

- A Peer Tutoring/Learning Assistance**
- B Social Development/Peer Support/Skills for living**
- C Community Service**
- D School Service**

It is expected that the pupils will spend at least one term in each area. They will be trained before the programme and will receive evaluation and be assessed at the end of the programme, as well as being supported and monitored by a staff member.

Each component of the course will have distinctive objectives and expected outcomes.

#### ***A Peer Tutoring/Learning Assistance***

Pupils will be taught how to support an individual's or a small group of pupils learning, in a classroom setting. They will learn/develop skills in translating teacher instructions and a range of simple techniques to assist pupils to get on task and to clarify tasks. There will be basic observational tasks (in a classroom setting) and the need for accurate record keeping will be emphasised. The pupil will be expected to meet formally with the teacher of the class and prepare for the lessons. This will form a part of the assessment of the pupil for this component.

Part of this programme will focus on basic study skills and will involve looking at learning styles. It is hoped that the seniors will apply this learning to their own academic programmes.

There will be a range of other activities for the senior pupils during this session. These will include working in the Pupil Support System as a supporter

Apart from being involved in the classroom as a peer tutor, the pupil will have

the opportunity to assist junior pupil learning as Computer Tutors, providing research assistance in the Library, Homework centre tutors, helping in practical technology classes, helping with pupils in the Work Experience area...

### ***B Social Development/Peer Support/Skills for living***

At the end of 1995, all year 12 pupils will receive three days of intensive Peer Support Training. This will take place in the last week of the sixth form certificate course and will be taken by the eleven school staff who are qualified Peer Support Trainers.

This will be reviewed and further developed at the Year 13 Leadership camp in the first week of the 1996 school year.

In teams of four, the year 13s will be attached to third form classes to help in orientation to the new school and to help in the year 9s getting to know the school. They will also provide support in the third form Social Development programme. The year 13s will spend at least a term working with their third form groups, **and this may** be formalised into a full peer support programme. This component of the programme is yet to be finalised as the school has been asked to join the Lions Club, "Skills for Adolescence" programme.

The aim of this section of the programme is for the pupils to provide non-academic pupil leadership, providing opportunities for the seniors to provide positive role models etc.. This will include helping on the Marae visit, at the getting started camps.

### ***C Community Service***

The year 13s will each have a one-term project where they will provide help in a community project. The school will organise a wide range of possible projects from home help, working with the aged, environment etc.

### ***D School Service***

A wide range of activities will be included in this section of the programme. These will range from membership of the school council, assisting with sports team practices, managing pupil extra-curricula activities, helping with the litter control, entering in absence data, running and assisting in lunchtime activities and competitions, the school library, the school ball etc.

Pupils will play an important role in providing 'telling points' for juniors, who according to research are reluctant to tell adults. They will receive rudimentary training in listening skills and will have set procedures for dealing with juniors who have bullying or harassment.



A key component will be the Teina/Tuakana programme or buddy system where seniors will buddy up in a big sister/brother style to provide directions and support for pupils who are having difficulty adjusting to school.

The main emphasis will be service and the development of a co-operative environment.

***6. If possible this course will give pupils the opportunity to gain credit on the QA Framework.***

The planning group is excited by the potential the Qualifications Framework gives to provide tangible recognition of the pupil's work. It is hoped that all year 13 pupils will participate in the programme and will as a consequence go onto the framework. This will provide an opportunity for many of our academic Bursary pupils to go onto the framework and gain credits, while still pursuing a traditional academic programme.

**3 Factors involved in helping/hindering progress:**

**Helping**

- Accreditation process.
- STAR funding application
- An emphasis on the senior curriculum from the Curriculum group who want a better course for our year 13s.
- The push for a Learning support system that will better use our peer tutor system
- The support and enthusiasm of the staff and senior management team.
- A new timetable initiative.

**Hindering**

- Pressure of work
- The need to "sell" service to pupils
- Finding appropriate staff to provide the ongoing support and training
- A lack of suitable or obvious community service project
- Tying up the unit standard delivery.
- The cost of hooking all the pupils into the Framework.

**4 Steps still to come**

1. Preparation of the final programme.
2. Formalise the representative policy group to prepare the draft policy, the guidelines and the code of practice.
3. Prepare and resource the term 3 training programme.

4. Formally identify the unit standards available and specify the assessment procedures.
5. Formalise how each the programme will be supervised for each of the four components.
6. Identify a wide range of community service projects available.
7. Ensure the anti-bullying/harassment training is ready.

**Contingency plans that you have prepared.**

⇒ A team approach that has links with several standing committees ensures that the project has a greater life than one individual. The pupil council is a keen supporter of the project and this year's year 11, who are already planning several projects of their own for 1996.

⇒ I am confident that the project will work well.

Senior Pupils Project

**Some school based activities that could be included in the project:**

<b>Helper</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Organiser</b>
Getting Started	Peer Tutor	Peer Support	Assemblies
Marae Visit	Harassment contact	School council	Lunchtime activities
Journey	Anti bullying counsellor	House	Inter form
Breakfast club	Homework centre	Coach	Mufti days
Kayaking	Drama role plays	Manager	Fund raising
Sports team	Learning Centre	Class rep	Canteen
Lunchtime games	Computer tutor	Junior Drama	Environment
Orienteering	Retest	Committees	Breakfast Club
Sports days	Study skills adviser		Common room
Peer support	Classroom observer		Ball
Canteen	Buddy		Junior Socials
Litter	Music tutor		Junior Drama
Ball	Library		Magazine
Junior Socials	Careers Assistance		Cultural groups
Junior Drama	Canteen		

The pupils would be expected to provide ongoing evidence in their involvement in at least three areas. A section based in the wider community would also be

included. Non-bursary pupils would be expected to have involvement in four areas.

Pupil Service Pupil Leadership School Service Community Service

All pupils would receive training opportunities at the end of their year 12 (form 6) and at the leadership camp at the beginning of year 13. As well at the end of each term pupils will receive special skill training to help them with the next section of work. Each pupil will also receive the support of a tutor who, based in the Learning Centre, will provide advice and resources for programmes that involve pupils.

This will be supplemented with regular reviews (two per term) which will include assessment of the performance of each pupil and where appropriate, credits linked to the Qualifications Framework. Pupils will be expected to maintain accurate records of their projects and these records will be used as part of the assessment.

<b>Year 13 Personal Skills/Service Draft Programme</b>													
<b>Term 1</b>													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			Group A	A
Leadership camp				Review				Assessment				Group B	B
				Training day				Training				Group C	C
F3 orientation												Group D	D
F3 camps				Sports									
<b>Term 2</b>													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			Group A	D
				Review				Assessment				Group B	A
				Training day				Training				Group C	B
F3 marae												Group D	C
<b>Term 3</b>													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			Group A	C
				Review				Assessment				Group B	D
				Training day				Training				Group C	A
												Group D	B
<b>Term 4</b>													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			Group A	B
				Review				Prize Giving				Group B	C
				Training day								Group C	D
F3 kayak												Group D	A



**Appendix 14:**

**Scenarios**

**Read the following situations and chose:**

- The one which would concern you the most.**
- The one which would worry you the least.**

1. Sally enjoyed the distress Luana felt from the constant name-calling.
2. Karen become so upset by her friends' remarks about her needing to go on a diet that she ended up overeating.
3. Regan in his seventh day at the new school was punched by a year 10 (form 4) girl who had been told by a year 11(form 5) pupil that he (Regan) was a racist.
4. Kristy was called names every morning on the school bus but couldn't see any way to avoid it or tell anyone because of the threats.
5. The two boys talked for a long time about the worst names they could call Scott to drive him out of the school.
6. Polly was concerned when she was told that her name-calling had made Trudy so ill she had to stay off school.
7. When Helen was in a bad mood, usually because of what was happening at home, she would make personal remarks about anyone who was unlucky enough to annoy her.
8. Sally left the school on the second morning in tears because her new classmates had told her "to go back to England you bitch."
9. Now that John's mates had left school, Michael was glad he could get his own back for all the times that John had called him names.

Most worrying

TM

Least worrying

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