

## A case study of good practice

### Nowra Public School

<p><b>Case study title</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title of your case study.</li> </ul>	<p><i><b>Nowra Public School Action Research - Anti-bullying</b></i></p>
<p><b>Background information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe your school context. For example 'We are a small primary school of 90 students in a coastal farming community'.</li> </ul>	<p>Nowra Public School is a large primary school in the Shoalhaven. There are 570 students enrolled. The school is situated on a split site (K-2 and 3-6) and has a large Aboriginal population. As there is a Navy base in Nowra there are many defence families at the school.</p> <p>Our school believes in working as a partnership and we have strong parental participation.</p>
<p><b>Aims and rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of the issue to be addressed.</li> </ul> <p>For example, what was happening? ie increasing tension as some groups felt their beliefs weren't being respected.</p>	<p>The staff recognised that bullying occurs and that it needs to be dealt with swiftly and with due procedural fairness.</p> <p>The school aims to build a strong supportive culture so that bullying and anti-social behaviour are not accepted under any circumstances. We believe students have a right to learn in a safe and supportive learning environment where all students can participate equally without discrimination or fear.</p>
<p><b>Getting started...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did you decide to address the issue? For example, through improving relationships between cultural groups, developing a more inclusive curriculum.</li> <li>What research basis/other programs did you use as a basis for your initiative?</li> </ul>	<p>Staff from the Student Welfare Committee attended training courses to assist them to design surveys and write the Anti-bullying Policy.</p> <p>Staff meetings addressing bullying and the specific needs of our school were held during the planning, implementation and evaluation phases.</p>

**How we went about it...**

- Who has been involved?  
For example, in planning strategies and applying them.
- What actions have been taken to address the issue?
- How long has it taken?  
For example, timelines.

Surveys were designed by the Student Welfare Committee and distributed to all students in Stage 2 and 3. A teacher randomly surveyed small groups of students in Stage 1, as it was determined that they were unable to accurately complete the survey without support.

Students were asked to complete two surveys. The first survey identified their understanding of bullying (survey used from *Stop the bullying: A handbook for schools*, Ken Rigby, 2003) and the second related to their perception of bullying at our school.

Surveys were distributed to parents with 18% of surveys returned.

All staff completed surveys.

We worked with another primary school (Nowra East Public School) to design a scope and sequence for Early Stage 1 – Stage 3 based on the information from data analysis at both schools. The units were distributed to teachers to be taught during the first six weeks of Term one. The lessons covered aspects of bullying including:

- what is bullying?
- types of bullying
- what to do if you are bullied
- what to do if you see someone else being bullied.

**What we are learning...**

- What has changed?  
For example, outcomes for students, staff and community members.
- Comment on any related issues.
- Refer to evidence where possible.

Teachers have noticed that students are able to identify and report bullying more effectively. Teachers, however, felt that all incidents of inappropriate behaviour were being reported as bullying. To support the students understanding a series of weekly articles were placed in the school newsletter and parents were encouraged to discuss bullying with their child/children.

Surveys were redistributed to students at the end of Term 2, 2006 to determine if the program was meeting our aims. While students generally felt safe attending school in the initial survey staff believed that through explicit teaching this number could be improved. The results (in percentages) demonstrate the effectiveness of the lessons over 2005 (05) and 2006 (06).

	Stage 2		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 3	
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
	05	06	05	06	05	06	05	06
Never	12	4	8	4	4	5	9	2
Sometimes	32	19	24	17	29	15	33	23
Usually	32	29	36	21	42	32	36	23
Always	24	47	32	57	25	48	22	53

Another pleasing result was that the majority of students indicated that they more clearly understand issues around bullying behaviour and are able to identify and report bullying behaviour. Significantly, 31% of students consider bullying to be less of a problem than it was prior to the introduction of the program.

Staff and parents reported that students on the infants' site would benefit from a program that allows senior students to model appropriate playground behaviours on site.

Students in Years 5 and 6 nominated to attend Peace Keepers training sessions. These students work on a roster system to support younger students. This has been a successful program and will continue in 2007 (and beyond).

**Where to from here...**

- How does your school community plan to maintain/improve the present situation?
- Are you going to use the solution in any other area?
- Would you do anything differently next time?
- Any suggestions for other communities?

To ensure the effectiveness of the program data must be reviewed regularly and modifications made to meet the specific needs of the school community. The school plans to undertake the following actions:

- continued staff development in anti-bullying
- implement parent information evenings with the support of a counsellor.
- continue to build on positive programs such as Peace Keepers.

Our school also has a District K-6 Suspension Unit. The program teacher plans to implement a program for students who have been identified as displaying bullying behaviours and another program for students who have been bullied.

We currently work with the Youth Liaison Officer at the Shoalhaven Area Command, Shoalhaven City Council, YWCA and Crossroads (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). We will continue to work with other support services in the Shoalhaven to reduce bullying.