

A case study of good practice

St Clair High School, St Clair Public School, Blackwell Public School Clairgate Public School and Banks Public School

<p>Case study title</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of your case study. 	<p><i>Reporting Effective Anti-Bullying Programs in NSW Schools - St Clair Anti-Bullying Linkages Program</i></p>
<p>Background information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your school context. For example 'We are a small primary school of 90 students in a coastal farming community'. 	<p>We are a group of five schools located in the St Clair area in Sydney's West. Four of our local primary schools have established stronger links with each other, and with St Clair High School. Collectively we are the <i>St Clair Anti-Bullying Project Linkages Team</i>.</p>
<p>Aims and rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of the issue to be addressed. <p>For example, what was happening? Is increasing tension as some groups felt their beliefs weren't being respected.</p>	<p>The School Linkages Program was established as part of a proactive approach to addressing the issue of bullying in our schools. The aims of our project follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a safe and happy school environment for students, staff and parents. Develop a school culture in which co-operation is fostered. Implement strategies which deal with bullying behaviours in a positive way to ensure our school is a safe and happy environment. Monitor and evaluate programs to identify focus areas for innovative anti-bullying programs that prevent and manage incidents of bullying. Understand that social sensitivity can be taught in a systematic manner through the curriculum and school culture. Acknowledge that all school community members have a responsibility to work together in order to achieve the aims of the Anti-Bullying Program. Ensure the whole school community is aware that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Provide strategies for parents, teachers and students to respond to bullying incidents in a positive way. Encourage students to be active bystanders and to intervene if they see someone being bullied. Encourage parents to support their children in implementing all aspects of the program. Make the school playground enjoyable and positive for all.

Getting started...

- How did you decide to address the issue?
For example, through improving relationships between cultural groups, developing a more inclusive curriculum.
- What research basis/other programs did you use as a basis for your initiative?

In consultation with the School Education Director, our Principals identified a need to specifically address bullying behaviours in schools in the local area. This was not prompted by an epidemic of bullying but rather by a desire to be proactive in this area of student welfare.

Staff from St Clair Public School who expressed interested in the project met with Noela Rosnell from the Behaviour Team who suggested that a link between St Clair High School and the feeder primary schools would strengthen the project. St Clair High School, Clairgate, Blackwell, Banks and St Clair Primary Schools were interested in forming the Anti-Bullying Project. Representatives from each school have been meeting on a regular basis to plan and implement this project.

We decided that each school needed to begin by developing their own definition of bullying so that it was a reflection of each unique school culture. The Anti-Bullying Project then developed a set of Beliefs and Practices.

Beliefs

Collectively, the schools are committed to the following belief.

- All students & staff have a right to feel safe & happy at school.

Practices

Collectively the schools are committed to the following practices.

- All members of the school community have a right to be treated with respect.
- All students need to be provided with the information and skills to enable them to access appropriate strategies to manage bullying.
- Each school community will deal with all bullying behaviour in a fair and just manner.

Resources

We used the following resources.

- R.I.C. Publications (2002), *Bullying, Identify, Cope Prevent* and (2006) *Self Esteem*.
- *Anti-Bullying Template for Schools*, McGrath, H.
- *National Safe School Framework* (DEST).
- Eisenberg, M., *School Connectedness and Academic Achievement*.
- Gregory, K., *A Strategy to Help Students with Bullying*.
- *Anti Bullying Plan for Schools* (DET) We also referred to other school's policy documents.

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.

This initiative began in February 2005 and is intended as a long term project. All schools involved have decided to take a proactive approach to preventing and addressing bullying issues through co-operative learning.

Our schools worked co-operatively to develop programs and implement whole school strategies. Collective strategies apply to all five schools, including:

- Regular team meetings with staff from schools.
- Annual parent information sessions with Regional Behaviour team support.
- Ongoing staff development involving the Regional Behaviour team and Student Welfare team.
- Annual training with St Clair High School to foster primary/high school links.
- Relevant anti-bullying information in school newsletters and/or on school websites.
- Development and implementation of school based anti-bullying programs.
- Analysis of student/teacher/parent surveys (pre and post program).

Some of the schools also undertook the following.

- Incorporated a student leadership model. This involved weekly training of year 5 and 6 leaders to implement anti-bullying lessons with small groups of students (K-4).
- Conducted peer mediation sessions (Years 8-10).
- Introduced or reinforced the program with an anti-bullying performance/drama presentation.
- Designed and displayed anti-bullying posters.
- Designed student work booklets and visual prompts to reinforce lesson content.
- Reviewed and updated anti-bullying policies.

Most of the school based programs were developed in 2005 and implemented during 2006. The whole school community has shared a role in the process of program development and implementation.

During 2006, each school taught a series of lessons with similar themes.

- What is bullying?
- What do bullies look like?
- Why do people bully?
- What to do if you are being bullied.
- You can help stop bullying
- What to do if somebody else is being bullied (The Bystander's Code)

<p>What we are learning...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has changed? For example, outcomes for students, staff and community members. • Comment on any related issues. • Refer to evidence where possible. 	<p>The schools involved in this project are developing a strong culture and understanding that values the notion of school being a safe place that does not tolerate bullying. All of the school communities share a role in this process.</p> <p>Students, parents and teachers are more aware of what bullying is and how to deal with bullying issues in an appropriate manner. The programs have inspired our schools to review anti-bullying policies and improve the process of reporting and resolving bullying issues. Staff student and parent surveys indicated strong support for the programs.</p> <p>Explicit teaching of lesson content has equipped students with the appropriate language and strategies to report cases of bullying and/or to resolve conflict. Student work samples and posters reflected their firm understanding of program content.</p> <p>Schools that analysed student surveys pre and post program reported positive student attitudes towards anti-bullying lessons. Post program survey results revealed a decrease in incidents of bullying reported by students.</p> <p>Teachers have noted a decrease in bullying behaviour in the playground and classrooms. Overall the program is there to ensure more effective learning by improving social and educational outcomes for all students.</p>
<p>Where to from here...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? 	<p>The St Clair Learning Network-Anti-Bullying Project Linkages team will maintain strong connections by sharing school based anti-bullying programs.</p> <p>We plan to continue implementing and updating our programs each year.</p> <p>We will meet regularly to discuss collective anti-bullying school strategies and to reflect on the direction of the anti-bullying programs in our schools. We acknowledge the need to be proactive in pre-empting the changing nature of bullying especially in the use of technology.</p> <p>Working with the Regional Learning Support Team, the School Learning Support Teams and Year 6 teachers, we aim to identify Year 6 students who may benefit from a social support network in Year 7. This strategy will be implemented as part of the Transition to High School Program. We are aiming to target those students who may need additional support to develop new friendships and confidence in the high school environment.</p>

	<p>Selected students from each primary school will participate in a series of workshops at St Clair High School focused on strategies for dealing with bullying in a proactive manner. These workshops will run with the support of the regional Behaviour Team.</p> <p>We are now in the process of developing information booklets and/or brochures to promote the aims and content of our anti-bullying programs. We are also trialling reporting and monitoring practices.</p> <p>The establishment of stronger connections between local schools has been a successful and motivating initiative for staff, students and the wider community. Schools in our network have benefited greatly from taking the time to share anti-bullying programs and resources.</p>
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