

PREVENTING AND REDUCING BULLYING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT HIGHEST RISK

PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATORS







Updated 2025

This practice guidance complements the bullying prevention [Plink online learning module](#) about preventing and reducing bullying for the following groups of children and young people:

- children and young people with disabilities
- children and young people in care
- Aboriginal children and young people
- culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse

How to use this practice guidance:

-  Conversation starters
-  Action suggestions
-  Actions to avoid
-  Relevant policies and procedures


Effective strategies to prevent and reduce bullying for children and young people at higher risk

The following strategies help you as an educator to create safe and inclusive learning environments which acknowledge and normalise multiple perspectives. This helps to prevent and reduce bullying.

Department for Education resources




The department has a range of targeted services and resources to assist educators to build knowledge and provide supportive environments for children and young people in these highest risk groups.

Children and young people with disability


-  Familiarise yourself with the Statewide Inclusive Education Services (SIES). SIES provide materials, services, and professional learning to families and department educators to help improve the learning outcomes of learners with disability.

 [Children and students with disability policy.](#)

Children and young people in care (under guardianship)

-  Access the [Children in Care service](#) in Student Support Services (SSS).
-  Familiarise yourself with the [school retention programs](#) for children and young people in care. This includes:
 - care mentoring program
 - children and young people in out-of-home care tutoring program
 - school engagement program (Department for Child Protection referral required).
-  Learn about [trauma-informed practice](#) as a whole-school approach to provide educators with comprehensive skills and strategies to better meet students' educational needs.

Aboriginal children and young people

-  The [Aboriginal Education Strategy](#) builds upon both individual and shared strengths and sustains excellence, values wellbeing and enables self-determined pathways to success.
- ✓ Read about [grant programs and professional development](#) to support the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages.
- ✓ The [Culturally Responsive Framework](#) outlines how we can all contribute to creating environments where Aboriginal people can work, learn and thrive.
- ✓ Encourage staff to complete the '[working together – cultural awareness introduction](#)' training on Plink.


Consider resources available outside of the department:

- ✓ Access anti-racism resources on the [ReconciliationSA](#) website.
- ✓ See [Narragunnawali](#) for resources about developing a Reconciliation Action Plan for your school.

Culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people

- ✓ Read about [funding](#) to support students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect.
- ✓ Increase parent engagement with your school and their children's education.
- ✓ Learn about the role of [community liaison officers](#) and how to seek support for culturally and linguistically diverse students with settlement, wellbeing, engagement and growth.
- ✓ Access [translated forms](#) and information about [translating services](#) on EDi.
- ✓ Use the racist bullying [video](#) and [guidance for educators](#).

Gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse children and young people

-  Supporting gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse children and young people [policy](#), [procedure](#), and [gender affirmation plan](#).
- ✓ Seek advice, training, and specialist consultancy support through [Education engagementandwellbeing@sa.gov.au](#).




- ✓ Use the diversity and inclusion [video](#) and [guidance for educators](#).

Consider resources available outside of the department:






- ✓ [Transcend Australia](#) offers peer support to trans, gender diverse and non-binary children and young people and their families
- ✓ [Shine SA](#) offer LGBTIQ+ inclusive medical and counselling services and support as well as inclusion training for educators.
- ✓ [Bfriend](#) provides free and confidential services including LGBTIQ+ peer support, community connections and workplace training.

Language

Language is one of our most powerful tools that can either include or 'other' students. Being well-informed with current terminology and definitions specific to diverse cohorts is important to create inclusive environments and prevent bullying.

-  Consider greetings like 'folks', 'learners' or a special class pet-name. Be creative! Make language fun and inclusive at the same time.
-  Welcoming children and young people using cultural and linguistically diverse greetings.
For example, Kurna greetings include 'Naa marni' – Are (all of) you good? With response 'Marni'ai' – Good.
-  Incorporate sign language or visual representations to diversify communication.

Avoid:

-  Dividing groups into 'boys' and 'girls' and use gender inclusive terms to address the group.
-  Presuming a student's name as it appears on the roll is their preferred name.
-  Using the term 'GOM' when referring to children or young people in care.
-  Terms such as handicapped or disabled when referring to a child or young person with disability.
-  Slang references when referring to ethnic groups.

An important rule of thumb in inclusion:
If in doubt, ask. It is ok to be unsure and asking communicates to the child or young person that their emotions and needs are important.

Learning and Curriculum

When children and young people see themselves and their families represented in and around their learning setting, it has a positive effect on how they feel about themselves.

- ✓ Consider components of the Australian Curriculum, the Early Years Learning Framework and Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum that cover inclusion and diversity.
- ✓ Generate positive discussions in the classroom about diversity and inclusion. For example:
 - ☐ "Why can't any person wear a skirt or dress?"
 - ☐ "What would our school be like if we all looked and sounded the same?"
- ✓ Challenge stereotypes that arise in classroom conversations and shared literature and encourage students to do the same. Give students some helpful replies when they encounter prejudice or stereotypes. For example:
 - ☐ "I don't find that funny."
 - ☐ "I am surprised to hear you say that."
 - ☐ "What makes you say that?"
- ✓ Use picture books, novels, music, instruments and dance routines that represent diversity in our community. For example, instead of the traditional bell, play music from different cultures.
- ✓ Consider how Aboriginal people's history and current perspectives are integrated in diverse learning areas. For example, literature studies could reflect Aboriginal perspectives or science curriculum might incorporate Aboriginal inventions for fishing.
- ✗ Avoid content that may be distressing or triggering to certain children and young people. For example, books that may depict fleeing or material pertaining to war should be avoided.

Developing a positive and inclusive school culture

Inclusion and cultural diversity must go further than special celebratory days (ie NAIDOC week, Harmony Day, IDAHOBIT). These are wonderful opportunities to encourage greater awareness of diversity and expression of unique identity, however school communities would benefit in weaving diversity in and through the nuances of school climate.

To cultivate a positive and inclusive school climate:

- ✓ Become well-connected with the Aboriginal Community Education Officer, Bilingual and Cultural Support [Community Liaison Officer](#) or specialist programs that bridge the gap from school to community.
- ✓ Consider how the school is welcoming diversity in their staffing, volunteers, and prominent cultural community members within the school gates.
- ✓ Establish student-led social clubs to foster a sense of belonging and affirmation to their unique identity. Consider social clubs that are current and culturally relevant like LGBTQIA+ social club, non-gendered sporting teams, SAATA program or dance crew.
- ✓ Undertake relevant training and professional development to ensure staff have current knowledge and understanding around diversity and inclusion.
- ✓ Display artwork around the school and classroom which reflects the diversity of the school's religious and cultural backgrounds such as flags, statues, visual art and music.
- ✓ Create opportunities for children, young people and their families to share their experiences, cultural practices, languages, food, skills and interests within the classroom and wider school community.
- ✓ Use school newsletters, social media and other communication platforms in creative ways.
- ✓ Mark and celebrate important holidays and events in the cultural calendar such as Ramadan or Chinese New Year and use this opportunity to educate the wider school community on cultural diversity.

- ✓ Look for opportunities within the classroom to do an Acknowledgement of Country and encourage student ownership of the process.
- ✓ Plan inclusive dietary options available in the school canteen for all to enjoy. For example, appealing Kosher options or offering a culturally themed menu on a Friday.
- ✗ Refrain from singling out individual students as examples or expect them to explain their culture, disability or gender or sexual diversity to others.

School policies and procedures

Inclusion and wellbeing are enhanced when children and young people are aware that specific policies relate to them and exist at their school.

- ✓ Be familiar with policies and procedures in your sector that relate to diverse student cohorts.
- 📖 Publish current policies and procedures on your school's outward facing website.
- 📖 Advocate for local school policies that support and affirm diversity and inclusion. For example, update your [bullying prevention policy](#) and plan to reflect actions the school are committed to that foster diversity and inclusion.

- ✓ Provide the child or young person with detailed daily and weekly schedule to encourage predictability.
- ✓ Appropriate information sharing within the school for staff who need to provide support to the child or young person.
- ✓ Proactive communication with social workers and other allied health professionals who are involved in supporting a child or young person.
- ✓ Encourage a buddy system at break times to ensure the student connects in purposeful ways with peers and enhance inclusion and a sense of belonging.
- ✓ Offer additional transition visits prior to a student commencing at your site.
- ✓ Supervise toilet and changeroom spaces diligently, where identified as necessary.
- ✗ Ensure students don't need to retell their story over and over again.

Transition points in education

Transitions can increase vulnerability for children and young people who are already at higher risk. The following considerations can help to ensure students are included and thrive in their learning environments:

- ✓ Names and pronouns are communicated effectively and sensitively to staff and other service providers.
- ✓ Review student records to ensure necessary supports are in place for a smooth transition that meets the student's needs. This may include liaising with external service providers.
- ✓ Encourage a child or young person to bring a familiar soft toy, favourite book or other personal item to create familiarity.