

ABOUT BULLYING



What is bullying?

It isn't uncommon to hear someone say something insensitive or mean to someone else. Although these comments or actions are not okay, bullying has some specific features that make it much more serious and harmful.

- Bullying is deliberate – harming another person intentionally
- Bullying involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- Bullying is usually not a one-off – it is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time
- Bullying involves behaviour that can cause harm – it is not a normal part of growing up (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

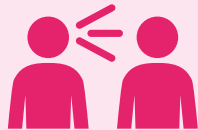
What does it look like?

Bullying can be:



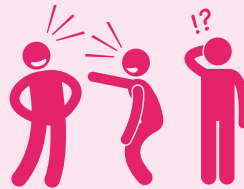
PHYSICAL

- hitting, tripping up



VERBAL

- insults, threats



SOCIAL

- spreading gossip or excluding people



CYBERBULLYING

- bullying online, via the internet, mobile phones and social media. It's a common form of bullying, especially amongst young people (Steiner-Fox, 2016).

Why do some people get bullied?

We know people are more likely to be bullied if they seem different from their peers in some way.

This might include being clever or popular, differences in race, sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, disabilities and abilities, weight or height.

That's why it's so important to celebrate diversity and embrace our differences – we aren't all the same and that's a great thing! (Bullying-Free NZ Week website, 2017).

Why do some people bully others?

Just as there are many reasons someone might experience bullying, there are also many reasons why someone might bully someone else.

- They feel unhappy
- They have been the target of bullying themselves
- They want to feel important or powerful
- They don't realise how their behaviour harms others
- They believe being different is a bad thing.

Labelling someone who bullies as a "bad person" isn't right or helpful. While the bullying behaviour isn't okay, someone who bullies others often needs our help and awahi/support too.

It's really important to remind people that it's okay to be different from others and it's not okay to bully people because they are not the same as you.



Is bullying harmful? Why prevent bullying?

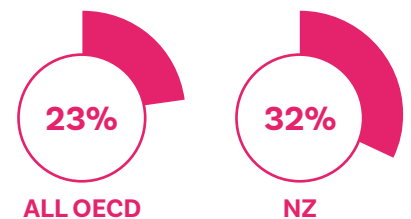
- Many studies show that rangatahi who are bullied are more likely to experience mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.
- This can impact on their learning, relationships and ability to feel good about who they are.
- Bullying harms the person being bullied, the person doing the bullying and can also harm those who witness it (bystanders).
- Rangatahi who bully others, or are bullied (or both), are more likely to skip classes, drop out of school, and perform worse academically than schoolmates who have no conflict with their peers (OECD, 2017).
- In Australia, by the time each student cohort has completed its schooling years (generally this is 13 years), the people experiencing the bullying, the people doing the bullying, their families, schools and the community will have experienced an estimated \$525 million in costs associated with bullying (PwC).
- In Australia, after school completion, the consequences of bullying continue and are estimated to cost \$1.8 billion for each single cohort of students over a period of 20 years (PwC).
- By taking bullying seriously and celebrating the diversity of taura/students, all rangatahi can feel safe and supported, and flourish at your school!



7 in 10 teens in NZ have experienced at least one type of unwanted digital communication in the past year (Pacheco & Melhuish, 2018).



19% of NZ teens experienced an unwanted digital communication that had a negative impact on their daily activities (Pacheco & Melhuish, 2018).



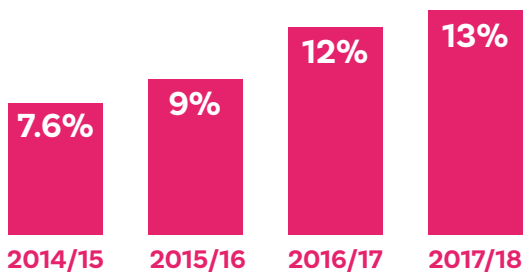
ALL OECD

NZ

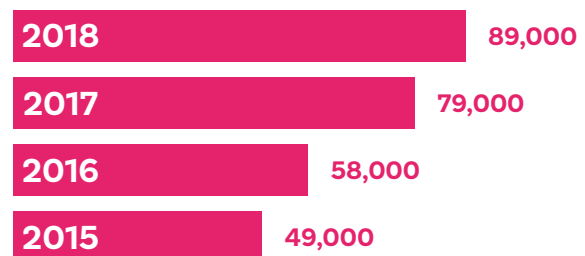
In NZ, 32% of students reported being bullied at least a few times a month, compared to 23% on average across OECD countries (OECD 2019).



High school students who had been bullied weekly or more often were four times more likely to experience significant depressive symptoms than students who had been bullied infrequently or not at all (Clark et al., 2009).



The number of 15 to 24 year olds struggling with mental health issues has been steadily increasing (Ministry of Health, 2019).



The number of young people experiencing anxiety or depression has steadily increased in the past years (Ministry of Health, 2019).



Some people are more likely to be targeted

While all young people are potential targets of bullying, some groups can experience higher rates.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying

These terms refer to bullying based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Young people who identify as LGBTQIA+, or are perceived to be part of the rainbow community, experience higher rates of bullying than students who do not. However, it is important to note that not all of these students will experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying.

LGBTI young people are resilient, have higher rates of volunteering and community engagement and are an important part of our community. Despite this, LGBTI young people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying (Clark et al., 2013).

- The Youth'12 national health and wellbeing survey of New Zealand secondary school students found:



Nearly one in five students who are same/both sex attracted, or are transgender or unsure of their gender identity, reported being bullied weekly at school, compared to 6% of their peers ([Lucassen et al., 2014](#)) and ([Clark et al., 2014](#)).



50% of transgender students had been hit or physically harmed on purpose in the last 12 months ([Clark et al., 2014](#)).



Four out of ten same/both-sex attracted students had been hit or physically harmed on purpose in the last 12 months ([Lucassen et al., 2014](#)).



Discrimination and social exclusion on the basis of sexuality or gender identity has been directly linked to an increased risk of depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts for LGBTQIA+ young people ([Adams, Dickinson & Asiasiga, 2012](#)).



The effects of homophobic and biphobic bullying at school can be lifelong, and can include lower educational attainment, lower income and lower wellbeing ([Henrickson, 2008](#)).

