

Bullying: Be a Defender Not a Bystander

5 steps to moving from being a bystander to bullying or abuse to being an active defender - a human rights defender. More information at www.students4inclusion.org

1. Notice what is going on. You need to be alert to identifying bullying, abuse or inappropriate behaviour towards another student - in the classroom, playground or online. Don't choose to ignore it. Imagine what it would feel like if you the words, actions or online posts were directed at you.

2. Recognise that bullying and abuse is very harmful, sometimes fatal. Bullying and abuse results in physical and emotional harm. There is nothing more damaging to a student than to be attacked by their peers, physically or psychologically. We think of victims as having few friends. But just because someone is popular or has lots of friends does not mean that they do not feel threatened by bullying - especially if the bullying and abuse is coming from their friends.

3. Take responsibility for helping out. Helping is not about "interfering" in the bullying incident - but it is about responding to the needs of another student who may need support. If no one responds, then we are all bystanders just making up an audience for the bully. From the perspective of the victim, we are just endorsing the bullying by our presence or silence.

4. Choose an appropriate way to intervene. Not everyone can take on the person who is doing the bullying. Sometimes that might make the situation worse and can even be dangerous. Often the best thing to do is to support the victim. By supporting your fellow student, you let them know that they are not alone and you also show the person doing the bullying that their victim has your support - that is often enough to stop the bully from continuing. But sometimes the bullying or abuse is so serious (e.g. the victim is in physical danger or has said things about harming themselves) that the right thing to do is to immediately report the bullying behaviour to a teacher, to your parents or to contact one of the Help Services listed on our website, such as the **Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800** or Bullying No Way - Safe Australian Schools Together www.students4inclusion.org.

5. Carry out the Intervention. Once you have worked out an appropriate way to intervene, carry it out. Actions change things, just good thoughts don't.

By being a defender, not a bystander, you can help to stop bullying.