

**STRATEGIES USED TO COUNTERACT BULLYING IN
SCHOOLS – A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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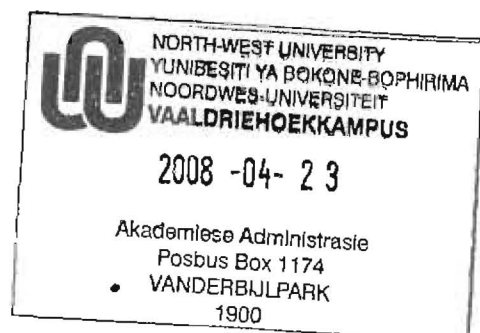
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There by the grace of God go I. (Granny Joan)

"Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn"

Robert Burns

ABSTRACT

This is an in-depth comparative study of the strategies used to counteract bullying at schools. It provides an international perspective on such strategies: Studies in South African schools are used to provide an African perspective; Australian research is used to provide an Oceanian perspective; Japanese research to provide an Asian perspective; and research conducted in England is used to provide a European perspective on bullying at schools.

The extent and nature of bullying in schools was discussed in great detail, as well as the characteristics of bullies and their victims. The causes of bullying, as well as the effects of bullying on learners in the school situation are reviewed. The concept of cyberbullying was expanded upon. The role of the governments, the schools and independent organizations in combating bullying was investigated.

To conclude the study, the laws concerning bullying at schools in the four countries are scrutinized and recommendations are made, based on the conclusion that bullying at school can indeed be counteracted successfully.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie omvat dieptenavorsing om die strategieë te vergelyk wat benut word om afknouery op skool te beveg. Dit voorsien 'n internasionale perspektief op sodanige strategieë: Studies van Suid-Afrikaanse skole word gebruik vir 'n Afrika-perspektief; Australiese navorsing word gebruik vir 'n Oseaniese perspektief; Japanse navorsing vir 'n Asiatiese perspektief; en navorsing in Engeland vir 'n Europese perspektief op afknouery op skool.

Die omvang en aard van afknouery op skool word in besonderhede bespreek, asook die kenmerk van bullebakke en hul slagoffers. Die aanleiding tot afknouery, asook die uitwerking daarvan op leerders in die skoolsituasie word gehanteer. Die begrip kuberafknouery word ook uiteengesit. Die rol van die regerings, die skole en onafhanklike organisasies in die bekamping van afknouery word verder ondersoek.

Om die studie af te sluit, word die vier lande bestudeer en aanbevelings word gedoen aan die hand van die bevinding dat afknouery wel suksesvol op skole beveg kan word.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Bullying infringes upon learners' right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security. It also has a negative influence on both the victim and the bully's physical, emotional, social and educational well-being. Moreover, every learner has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation (De Wet, 2005:1). Yet from research done for this study, it is clear that bullying is, to a lesser or greater extent, a problem at most schools.

This chapter presents the problem, aims of the research, a literature review and the research design. This study was undertaken to compare the available intervention strategies used to counteract bullying at schools because the field of vitimology has been concerned primarily with adults as victims of crime, and where learners are involved, it is typically as victims of adult perpetrators. But learners are sometimes the victims of other learners. When this occurs, it is often described as bullying and usually no *crime* as such is recognized (Rigby, 1994:8). Implementing this study will, however, enable the researcher to compare the strategies used to counteract bullying at schools in four different countries and determine which of them is most successful. The research focuses on the type of strategy that has been implemented in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England, as well as the successes of the various strategies in achieving their goal.

Australia was targeted as it has been in the forefront of education change and innovation. At the Anzela (Australian and New Zealand Law Association) Conference held in 2005, bullying was highlighted, so the researcher believes that these countries have implemented strategies to counteract bullying as it has become a problem at Australian schools.

In general Japan is also considered a leading country with regard to economics and education. As the Japanese school culture values conformity, any learner who is different from the other learners, could be a target of

bullying (Homusho, 1994:27). Researching the methods that have been used to combat bullying in that country would enable the researcher to determine the most effective means to combat bullying and incorporate them into the study.

England is well known as a forerunner specifically in the prevention of bullying at schools. The English have implemented numerous anti-bullying policies at their schools (cf.3.5.3), which will be discussed, and their effectiveness will be explored by the researcher.

Furthermore, by comparing the intervention strategies of the four countries, the researcher is able to determine which of the strategies or combinations of strategies would best serve schools in the South African context.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learner bullying can have serious mental and physical health problems and long term adverse consequences, including lowered self-esteem, depression, increased anxiety, greater rates of hyperactivity and conduct problems and more common health problems, so it is a serious issue that has to be prevented at all costs (Woods & Wolke, 2003:398).

There has been an international urgency to implement intervention strategies to eliminate the occurrence of bullying at schools. Due to the unique education system and cultural diversity at South African schools, we need to be *au fait* with all the different strategies that are available in other countries.

To add to the value of an international comparison, a study conducted in Italian schools (Olweus, 1993:12) found that about 42% of learners at primary school and 28% at secondary school indicated that they had been bullied by peers at least sometimes in the previous three month period. Therefore at Italian schools, a systematic and ecological approach to tackle and prevent bullying behaviours at schools was implemented (Besag, 1989:15; Rigby, 1996:456; Smith & Sharp, 1994:75)

Bullying usually involves an imbalance in strength, either real or perceived, so intervention strategies need to be implemented in order to prevent it from continuing.

Bullying can also be violent. According to the literature it is one form of violence that takes place at primary schools (Sullivan, 2000:3) and Neser (2004:9) clearly indicates that the bully/victim problem at primary schools has become a serious problem world-wide.

One robust finding, at least in cross-sectional research, is that the number of learners who report being bullied tends to decrease as they grow older (Smith & Madsen & Moody, 1999:271). Frequency of incidents is therefore generally lower at secondary schools than at primary schools (Pellegrini & Long, 2002:265).

If bullying is allowed to continue at schools without intervention, the educational standards of schools and the achievement of learners would also be at risk.

By conducting a comparative study to determine which strategies are available and determining under which circumstances or conditions they were successful, one will be able to devise a plan to enable effective anti-bullying strategies to be implemented in South African schools.

The following questions flow from the above:

- What is the nature of bullying at school level?
- Which strategies are used to counteract bullying at South African, Australian, Japanese and British schools?
- What role does legislation play in counteracting bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England?
- Which strategies would best suit the South African school situation?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The overall aim of this study is to compare the intervention strategies used to counteract bullying implemented in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England in order to determine which would best serve South African schools.

This overall aim can be operationalized by:

- determining the nature of bullying at school level;
- documenting which strategies are used to counteract bullying at South African, Australian, Japanese and British schools;
- comparing the role that education law plays in counteracting bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England; and
- suggesting strategies best suited to the South African school situation.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the first place, this study comprised a review of the available literature in general (*cf.* Chapter 2), in order to determine the nature of bullying at school level. In the second place, this study focused on a comparative research design (*cf.* 1.4.2; Chapter 3 & 4) which gave rise to the comparative education law perspective that was shown specifically in Chapter 4 (*cf.* 1.4.3).

1.4.1 Review of literature

A literature study on the different strategies used to counteract bullying was conducted with the aim of determining which strategies have been implemented in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England and which strategies were successful under specific conditions.

A DIALOG-search was conducted with the aid of the following key words: bullying, primary school, intervention, prevention, Australia, Japan, England, South Africa, victimization, learners, pupils, education law, school law, law in education. Internet searches using mainly GOOGLE, EBSCO-Host (ERIC) were also conducted.

1.4.2 Comparative research

According to Hantrais (1995:129), a comparative study serves as a means of gaining a better understanding of different societies, their structures and institutions. Furthermore, she states that a comparative study is held to be cross-national. When individuals or teams set out to examine particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries with the express intention of comparing their manifestations in different social-cultural settings, using the same research instruments, either to carry out secondary analysis of national data or to conduct new empirical work, this is considered comparative research.

Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre (1986:45) state that in comparative research, the researcher sets out to identify the specificity of social forms and institutional structures in different societies and to look for explanations of differences by referring to the wider social context. The aim of comparative research would be to seek explanations of similarities and differences, to generalize from them or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different national contexts (Hantrais, 1995:129).

This study made use of the comparative research method as it was considered to be the best method to achieve its aims and the knowledge gleaned from the comparisons will be used to determine which strategy would best be suited to counteract bullying at South African schools.

1.4.3 Comparative education law perspective

Venter, Van der Walt, Van der Walt, Pienaar, Oliver and Du Plessis (1990:211) describe the comparative law method as a unique, systematic and jurisprudential strategy that is aimed at gaining new knowledge and understanding concerning the topic that is studied. This new perspective is made possible by pointing out similarities and differences between the legal systems that are being scrutinized.

A comparative study allows the researcher to acquire insight and be able to evaluate different systems by comparing specific aspects. Van Zyl and Van der Vyver (1982:365) emphasized the importance for both law students and practitioners to take cognizance of the legal systems and workable practices of other countries.

The aim of this study is to gain knowledge and insight concerning the current intervention strategies used to counteract bullying at public schools, as well as to compare the role that Education Law plays in the chosen countries in this regard. Such a comparative study was done with reference to South Africa, Australia, Japan and England.

The decision to use these four countries in a comparative law study regarding intervention strategies used at schools to counteract bullying was made as it provided an African, European, Asian and Oceanian perspective on the topic.

England has developed an approach grounded in *professional conversation*. The implication of this is that educators are spending more time in discussion with learners and getting to know them and their problems and less time worrying about the results and evaluation of the learner.

Moreover, Australia and Japan performed well and appear among the top ten countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003 (Thompson, Cresswell & De Bortoli, 2004:33), an internationally standardized assessment jointly developed by the participating countries.

In each of the countries chosen for this study, bullying has been recognized as a problem by government authorities and strategies have been implemented to attempt to solve it.

1.5 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

- Text books, manuals, journal articles and research projects were used in order to obtain results of research carried out on anti-bullying strategies. For the purpose of this study, the researcher would like to bring the following aspect to the attention of the reader: A number of resources that

have been obtained via the internet have made referencing in the standard manner (name: year: page reference) complex, as many articles and research documents do not have page numbers. These sources are still to be considered reliable and can still be accessed via the author and the year.

- The focus was on anti-bullying strategies used in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England.
- A comparison was made of the results of the different strategies, bearing in mind the context in which they were implemented.
- A recommendation was made as to which strategy would best be suited to the South African situation.

1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

This chapter sets the stage for the study in that the introductory components of such a dissertation, as well as the chapter divisions, are presented.

CHAPTER 2: THE NATURE OF BULLYING AT SCHOOL LEVEL

In this chapter the researcher shows the review of the available literature in general, in order to determine the nature of bullying at school level.

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIES USED TO COUNTERACT BULLYING AT SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA, AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN

The four countries are introduced into the dissertation by focusing on the various strategies used to counteract bullying in their schools.

CHAPTER 4: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY IN COUNTERACTING BULLYING AT SCHOOL

The researcher discusses the role of legislation and policy with reference to counteracting bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation concludes with a general summary, specific findings and substantiated recommendations.

1.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the concept of bullying and explained the rationale for the research to be conducted. The aims of the research were explained and the research methodology was discussed.

In the following chapter, the researcher will conduct a literature review explaining the problem of bullying at schools. Many definitions of bullying will be given. The extent and the nature of bullying at schools will be discussed, as well as the reluctance on the part of the learners to report bullying. The characteristics of bullies, as well as of their victims will be dealt with. Furthermore, cyberbullying and the serial bully will be scrutinized.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE OF BULLYING AT SCHOOL LEVEL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Bullying is one of the most underestimated problems at our schools today (Sullivan, 2000:14). Most people prefer to ignore it and blame it on spiteful learners just picking on one other. Bullying is, however, a very serious problem and is prevalent at most schools. Research on bullying in England suggests that four out of five learners are affected by bullying (Ahmad & Smith, 1990:23). Similar research in the USA indicates that one in seven learners is either a bully or has been the victim of a bully (Squelch, 2000:51; *cf.* 2.2.1)

According to Werly (2001:5) bullying is in the same league as harassment, discrimination, racism, violence, assault, stalking, physical abuse, sexual abuse, molestation and rape (*cf.* 2.4). It causes trauma and psychiatric injury and can, if untreated, cause a psychiatric injury of sufficient seriousness to blight a person for life, resulting in a lower standard of educational achievement, causing a poorer standard of health, preventing them from realizing their potential and thus being able to contribute less to society than would otherwise be the case (Werly, 2001:5).

Both educators and parents should see peer victimization at schools as an important area for investigation. Firstly, because the harm caused by bullying has been greatly underestimated; secondly, because bullying establishes a pattern for subsequent interaction involving victimization in the wider adult society (*cf.* 2.2); thirdly, because there is a clear need to identify strategies that could be used to reduce the incidence of bullying (Smith, 2003:36).

The nature of bullying at school level in South Africa, as well as abroad will be discussed. The focus of this chapter is to give an overview of the nature of bullying at school level. The researcher will define bullying, discuss the characteristics (*cf.* 2.2.) of a bully, as well as those of the victims of bullies and look at the different types of bullying. Bad schools deny it, ignore it, justify it,

rationalize it, handle it inappropriately, sweep it under the carpet, blame the victim of bullying, blame the parents of the victims of bullying, say they've *ticked all the boxes*, and make many impressive noises, but take no substantive action. At most schools that claim *There is no bullying here*, the primary objective is to protect the school against bad publicity and to divert the attention from the fact that the staff does not have control of the discipline.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Bullying can happen at any time, at any school and among any children (Taki, 2001:98). At schools, this is a worldwide problem that could have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the right of learners to learn in a safe environment without fear (*cf.* 4.2.1; 4.2.2; 4.2.4; 4.4.1). Bullying could also have negative lifelong consequences ---- both for learners who bully and for their victims (Banks, 2006:1).

Dan Olweus (1993:34), a researcher in Norway, conducted groundbreaking research in the 1970s, exposing the widespread nature and harm of school bullying (*cf.* 2.2.7.1). Research from some countries has shown that, without intervention, bullies are much more likely to develop a criminal record than their peers (*cf.* 2.2.6). Furthermore, Olweus (1993:34) discovered that, as young adults, former school bullies in Norway had a fourfold increase in the level of relatively serious, recidivist criminality (*cf.* 2.2.6).

2.2.1 Defining bullying

In colloquial speech, bullying is most often used to describe a form of harassment perpetrated by someone who is in some way more powerful than a weaker peer (Wikipedia, 2006:1). Researchers accept that bullying generally contains three essential elements (Wikipedia, 2006:1):

- The behaviour is aggressive and negative.
- The behaviour is carried out repeatedly.
- The behaviour occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power between the parties involved.

Furthermore, bullying is divided into two categories. Firstly, direct bullying and secondly, indirect bullying or social aggression. Direct bullying is more common to male bullies, whereas social aggression or indirect bullying is more common to female bullies and young learners. It is characterized by forcing the victim into social isolation. This isolation can be achieved through a wide variety of techniques, including:

- spreading gossip;
- refusing to socialize with the victim;
- bullying other people who wish to socialize with the victim; and
- criticizing the victim's manner of dress and other socially-significant markers (Wikipedia, 2006:2).

Bullying can be defined as repetitive behaviour that always involves an imbalance of power and is inflicted verbally, physically or psychologically (Batshe & Knoff, 1994:12). Smit (2003: 7) shows that this behaviour peaks during primary school.

Olweus (1991:24), in his questionnaire concerning bullying, states the following:

We say that a child is being bullied, or picked on, when another child or group of children say nasty or unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a child is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, or when no one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently, and it is difficult for the child being bullied to defend him or herself. It is also bullying when a child is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is not bullying when two children of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel.

Bullying has also been described as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behaviour, such as name-calling, threatening or shunning committed by a child or children against another child or other children and infringes on a child's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security (Neser, 2004:29).

Bullying comprises of direct behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing that are initiated by one or more learners against a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a learner to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize more subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumours and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad & Smith, 1990; Smith & Sharp, 1994:4).

Whether the bullying is direct or indirect, the key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Olweus, 1993:8). Bullying has two key components: repeated harmful acts and an imbalance of power. It involves repeated physical, verbal or psychological attacks or intimidation directed against a victim who cannot properly defend him/herself because of size or strength, or because the victim is outnumbered or less psychologically resilient.

Farrington (1993:4) defines bullying as repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful individual or group of persons. This definition draws attention to the fact that being bullied, whether physically or psychologically, exists in the mind of the victim, not only when he or she is being abused, but also in anticipation of abusive treatment and during the aftermath of that treatment. It also identifies a central feature of bullying, that is, an imbalance of power between bully or bullies and victim.

The Japanese Ministry of Education (Hōmushō, 1994:3) defines bullying as physical and/or psychological attacks against the weaker and more vulnerable.

Bullying is the general term applied to a pattern of behaviour whereby one person with a lot of internal anger, resentment and aggression and lacking interpersonal skills chooses to displace his/her aggression onto another person, chosen for his/her vulnerability with respect to the bully, using tactics of constant criticism, nit-picking, exclusion, isolation, teasing, with verbal, psychological, emotional and (especially with children) physical violence.

When called to account, the bullying child will typically exhibit denial – counterattack - feigning victimhood, respond to evade accountability, often with success. (Neser, 2004:78).

Neser (2004:139) identifies six defining factors of bullying:

- **Intent to harm:** The perpetrator finds pleasure in taunting or trying to dominate the victim and continues even when the victim's distress is obvious.
- **Intensity and duration:** The bullying continues over a long period and the degree of bullying is damaging to the victim's self-esteem.
- **Power over the victim:** The bully has power over the victim because of age, strength, size or gender.
- **Vulnerability of the victim:** The victims are more sensitive to teasing, cannot adequately defend themselves and have physical or psychological qualities that make them more prone to victimization.
- **Lack of support:** The victim feels isolated and exposed. Often the victim is afraid to report the bullying for fear of retaliation.
- **Consequences:** The damage to the victim's self-esteem is long-lasting and leads the victim to withdraw from school activities or also to become aggressive.

The same author (Neser, 2004:139) continues by saying that peer victimization or bullying is one of the hidden elements of the culture of violence that contributes to different manifestations of violence in our society (such as child abuse, domestic violence, workplace violence, hate crimes and road rage). Peer victimization is a form of harassment and antisocial behaviour that prevails in all segments of the school community.

Bearing the above-mentioned definitions and descriptions in mind, in this dissertation the term bullying will refer to long-standing violence, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or a group and directed at

individuals who are not able to defend themselves in the actual situation. It is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt others and put them under stress.

2.2.2 Extent of the problem

In the past, bullying was regarded as part of the school-going experience, largely unavoidable for some, with little or no harm being done (Smit, 2003:36). However, in the past few years there has been a remarkable change in the way bullying at school is regarded (*cf.* 2.2.2). Smit (2003:28) suggests that the incidents of bullying tend to be based on varying levels of support within schools. As a consequence, many schools must acknowledge that bullying is prevalent in their school community and need to take positive actions to build better support networks for learners.

With the introduction of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (108/1996; hereafter Constitution; SA, 1996a), educators can no longer ignore the bullying that is occurring at their schools (*cf.* 4.2.1). Section 10 of the Constitution states that everyone has the right to human dignity and to have their dignity respected and protected. The school has a legal duty to provide learners with a safe and secure environment (South Africa, 1996b) section 4(f); *cf.* 4.2.5), and to protect them from deviant behaviour that affects their well-being and infringes on their right to security, human dignity, privacy and education (Squelch, 2000:53).

According to a survey conducted by Naser (2004:139) in Gauteng during 2003, 47,3% of the Grade 7 learners who took part in the survey witnessed bullying at their schools on a daily basis. Racist bullying was also a worrying feature in his survey as 30% of the learners experienced racist teasing and name-calling. It could not be determined whether those learners of a non-white ethnic group experienced more racist name-calling, as the questionnaires were completed anonymously.

Various reports and studies have established that approximately 15% of all learners are either bullied regularly or are initiators of bullying behaviour (Olweus,1993:13). Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in the middle school (Grades 6, 7 & 8) and decline during the high

school years. However, according to Banks (2006:1), while direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant. School size, racial composition and school setting (rural, suburban or urban) do not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying.

A report on the BBC News (21 April 1999) emphasized the importance of taking note of the occurrence of bullying:

- Most incidents of school violence begin with bullying.
- School violence is on the increase.
- Bullying plays a role in serious incidents of violence such as the Columbine massacre in the USA.

Both educators and parents (*cf.* 2.2.2.1) should see peer victimization at schools as an important area for investigation. Firstly, because the harm caused by bullying has been greatly underestimated (*cf.* 2.1); secondly, because bullying establishes a pattern for subsequent interaction involving victimization in the wider adult society; thirdly, because there is a clear need to identify strategies that can be used to reduce the incidence of bullying (Smith & Sharp, 1994:36).

Children spend so much of their time at school that it stands to reason that many incidents of bullying take place there. They usually happen out of the educators' sight and hearing (*cf.* 2.4). According to a 'large-scale survey reported by Whitney and Smith (1993:9), the form of bullying that was most frequently endorsed by those learners who had experienced bullying, was that of being called names (*cf.* 2.2.5). This was singled out by 50% of the Grade 6 and 7 learners.

Research indicates that bullying is widespread at schools. Educators tend to ignore it, although bullying causes considerable suffering to individual learners and also has a damaging effect on the school atmosphere (Elton Report, 1989:102-103). Extensive studies in other countries during the 1990s and

1990s generally found that between 8 and 38% of learners are bullied with some regularity and that between 5 and 9% of learners bully others with some regularity. Chronic victims of bullying, bullied once a week or more, generally constitute between 8 and 20% of the learner population (Sampson, 2003:4). Clearly bullying appears to be widespread at schools in every country which is studying the problem.

The bullying phenomenon involves four groups: the victims, the victimizers, the audience and the bystanders. The victimizers pounce on a victim while the audience watches and cheers and the bystanders stand back and do nothing (*cf.* 3.4; 3.4.4 & 3.4.6). As disturbing as the physical act of bullying is, it is disconcerting to have many more people who act as the audience and the bystanders. Without their support of duplicitous silence the bullying acts would not be possible (Sampson, 2003:4).

2.2.2.1 The reluctance to report

Most learners do not report bullying to adults. Surveys from a variety of countries confirm that many victims and witnesses fail to tell educators or even parents (Sampson, 2003:2). As a result, educators may underestimate the extent of bullying at their school and may be able to identify only a portion of the actual bullies. Studies also suggest that learners do not believe that most educators intervene when told about bullying (Sampson, 2003:3).

If the victims are as miserable as the research suggests, why do they not appeal for help? One reason may be that, historically, adults' responses have been so disappointing (Clark & Kiselica, 1997:311). In a survey of American middle and high school learners, *66% of victims of bullying believed school professionals responded poorly to the bullying problems that they observed.*

Some of the reasons victims gave for not telling include (Hoover, Oliver & Hazler, 1992:18):

- fearing retaliation;
- feeling shame at not being able to stand up for themselves;

- fearing they would not be believed;
- not wanting to worry their parents;
- having no confidence that anything would change as a result;
- thinking their parents or educators' advice would make the problem worse;
- fearing their educators would tell the bully who told on him/her; and
- thinking it was worse to be thought of as a snitch.

The same is true of learner-witnesses. Although most learners agree that bullying is wrong, witnesses rarely tell educators and only infrequently intervene on behalf of the victim. Some learners worry that intervening will raise a bully's wrath and make him/her the next target. Also, there may be *diffusion of responsibility*: learners may falsely believe that no one person bears the responsibility to stop the bullying if an educator or a parent is not present at the time of the incident (Clark & Kiselica, 1997:311).

2.2.3 Perceptions of bullying

Violence follows a predictable escalation pattern. Words always precede blows. They do not happen in reverse. Bullying behaviour tends to peak between Grades 6 and 9, a time when peer pressure can be crushing. The Secret Service in England reports that of the 41 youths involved in school shooting since 1974, 66% said they had been *bullied at school and that revenge was one of their motives* (Ross, 2005:5).

Olweus (1993:9) surveyed learners in the Midwest of the USA and found that a clear majority felt that victims were at least partially responsible for bringing the bullying on themselves. Learners surveyed tended to agree that bullying toughened a weak person, and some felt that bullying *taught* victims appropriate behaviour. Furthermore, he found that learners considered victims to be *weak, nerds, and afraid to fight back* (cf. 2.2.7).

Parents are often unaware of the bullying problem (cf. 2.1) and talk about it with their children only to a limited extent (Olweus, 1993:11). Learner surveys

reveal that a low percentage of learners seem to believe that adults will help. Learners feel that adult intervention is infrequent and ineffective, and that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies. Learners report that educators seldom or never talk to their classes about bullying (cf. 3.2.5.1).

Bullying support groups have been established in England (cf. 3.5.3), North America, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia (cf. 4.3.2). These include support groups for adults that are being bullied in the workplace. The groups included educators, ex-educators and social workers. A support group exclusively set up to assist police staff has also been developed. This is an indication that bullying does not stop at school level, but is prevalent in many work-places (cf. 2.2).

The Japanese society is considered to be homogeneous. People tend to consider that being similar to one another is a virtue and gives a sense of relief or safety. People are afraid of being different from others (cf. 4.4.1). They do not want to feel alienated. They attempt to be like one another, otherwise, they will be considered deviants (Sakamaki, 1996:39). People will try to eliminate people who are different from them to protect themselves. In individualistic nations, like the United States, to be different has significant meaning. People have various thought styles and they show them openly. But in collectivist countries, like Japan, the differences produce difficult encounters. The differences might include people who have an exceptional ability, and they will be abused because of the jealousy of others. For example, a learner who is unusually good at mathematics, may find that this great talent causes him to be bullied.

Japan is also known as an academic, career-based society. As people care about their academic abilities, they study quite hard. It is usual that children go to a cram school after regular school. To get a good job, they are required to go to a high quality university. It is difficult to enter a university in Japan: therefore it is almost a duty to study hard to go on to university. As they are so busy studying, learners cut their time to relax or play. This means that people have no chance to release their tension and stress. This also indicates that learners lose an opportunity to communicate and make friends.

As they lose a chance to acquire social skills, they never know how to get along with friends and become lonely (Sakamaki, 1996:39). It is possible that such stress or loneliness becomes a cause of bullying (*cf.* 2.3.2).

Japanese schools have rules that are often considered too excessive. For instance, learners are not allowed to grow their hair long, learners' curiosity is suppressed and as they must feel frustration from these regulations, this may cause bullying (*cf.* 2.3).

2.2.4 General features of school bullies

Despite country and cultural differences, certain similarities in gender, age, location and type of victimization appear in bullying in the USA and elsewhere. The following are features of bullies at school that occur across the board (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997:311):

- Bullying more often takes place at school than on the way to and from school (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997:311; *cf.* 2.4).
- Boy bullies tend to rely on physical aggression more than girl bullies, who often use teasing, rumour-spreading, exclusion and social isolation (*cf.* 2.2.1).
- Girls tend to bully girls, and boys bully both boys and girls.
- Consistently, studies indicate that boys are more likely to bully than girls.
- Some studies show that boys are more often victimized, at least at primary school; others show that bullies victimize girls and boys in near equal proportions (Smith & Sharp, 1994:23).
- Bullying does not end at primary school. High schools seem to provide ample opportunities for bullying, although at lesser rates.
- Bullying by boys declines substantially after age 15. Bullying by girls begins declining significantly at age 14.

- Bullies often do not operate alone. In England, two different studies found that almost half the incidents of bullying are one-on-one, while the other half involves additional youngsters (Rigby & Slee, 1999:24).
- Studies in Europe and Scandinavia show that some schools seem to have higher bullying rates than others. Olweus (1993:11) generally believes that bullying rates are unrelated to school or class size, or to whether a school is in a city or suburb (although one study found that reporting was higher at inner-city schools). Schools in socially disadvantaged areas seem to have higher bullying rates and classes with learners who have behavioural, emotional or learning problems have more bullies and victims than classes without such learners.
- There is a strong belief that the degree of the school principal's involvement helps determine the level of bullying.
- There is some evidence that racial bullying occurs in the United States. In a nationally representative study combining data about bullying outside of school, 25% of learners victimized by bullying reported they were belittled about their race or religion (Rigby & Slee, 1999:24).
- The study also found that black youth reported being bullied less than their Hispanic and white peers. Racial bullying is also a problem in Canada and England.

Research (Wikipedia, 2006:3) indicates that adults who bully have personalities that are authoritarian, combined with a strong need to control or dominate. Envy and resentment may also be motives for bullying and, contrary to popular belief there is little evidence to suggest bullies suffer from any deficit in self-esteem. Furthermore, if aggressive behaviour is not challenged in childhood, there is a danger that it may become habitual. Indeed, there is research evidence to indicate that bullying during childhood puts learners at risk of criminal behaviour and domestic violence in adulthood (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:2).

2.2.4.1 What does bullying comprise of?

Bullying is not a question of a single attack directed at one learner here and at another there: the victim is subjected to systematic harassment. It is difficult for the victims to defend themselves and they experience a sense of helplessness or defenselessness *vis-à-vis* the bully (Neser, 2004:5).

Olweus (1993:8) states that bullying includes assaults, tripping, intimidation, rumour-spreading and isolation, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, destruction of another's work, and name-calling. Furthermore, he states that, in the United States, several other school behaviours (some of which are illegal) are recognized as bullying, such as:

- sexual harassment (repeated exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning and sexual abuse involving unwanted sexual contact);
- ostracism based on perceived sexual orientation; and
- hazing (for example, upper-level high school athletes' imposing painfully embarrassing initiation rituals on their new freshmen teammates).

Not all taunting, teasing and fighting among schoolchildren constitute bullying. Two persons of approximately the same strength (physical or psychological) fighting or quarreling is not bullying.

2.2.4.2 Why do learners become bullies?

In Tokyo, the latest targets of bullies are children of parents in difficulty, following the loss of a job or a move to a different area. If a child does not have strong enough shoulders and his father loses his job, he will quickly become *ijime* (victim of bullying). The Japanese educational system is respected for its iron discipline at schools, but criticized for the stress it puts on learners due to its systematic cramming and neglect of the human nature of children (Werly, 2001:3). The behaviour of educators, placed on a pedestal by the system, also leaves much to desire. Werly (2001:3) states that many educators live in an ivory tower and ignore their learners. They could not care less whether or not they feel good or are being treated well.

According to Bully on Line (2006:1) the following are reasons why some learners become bullies:

- Frustration – A learner is impaired in some way and is frustrated and resentful because the source of his/her difficulty has not been identified. Problems can include deafness, dyslexia, autism, allergy, being left-handed, undiagnosed or unidentified learning difficulty. Nevertheless, the child is expected to perform at the level required by the school and no attempt is made to identify the source of the frustration
- The child is being bullied - The responsible adults have repeatedly failed in their duty of care, so the child slowly and reluctantly starts to exhibit aggressive behaviours because that is the only way to survive in this bullying-entrenched climate.
- Poor or no role model - The learner has no role model at home or a poor role model for one or both parents and has never had the opportunity to learn behaviour skills.
- Abuse at home - The learner is being abused and is expressing his/her anger through bullying.
- Neglect at home - Similar to abuse, as the learner's emotional and behavioural development is being retarded.
- Undue influence – The learner has fallen in with the wrong crowd.
- Conduct disorder – The learner has a conduct disorder, the precursor to antisocial, psychopathic or another personality disorder.

Research conducted by Wikipedia (2006:2) indicates that while envy and resentment may be motives for bullying, there is little evidence to suggest that bullies suffer from any deficit in self-esteem, as this would make it difficult to bully. However, there are instances where bullying takes place only for humour. It is generally used in this instance by learners who were bullied earlier in their lives, on the assumption that those who bullied them derived fun from their acts and that this would teach the victims to do the same

(Wikipedia, 2006:2). However, many bullies have never suffered bullying themselves and only bully others because it is fun and has nothing to do with being bullied when they were younger, to impress other people or to be socially accepted. Bullies say these things are the reason for their actions because they will not be punished as badly (Wikipedia, 2006:2).

Bullying may also be *tradition* in settings where an age group or higher rank feels superior to lower-class-members.

The Anti-Bullying Centre (2007:3) states that *it is often suggested that bullying behaviour has its origin in childhood: If aggressive behaviour is not challenged in childhood, there is a danger that it may become habitual. Indeed there is research evidence to indicate that bullying during childhood puts children at risk of criminal behaviour and domestic violence in adulthood.*

2.2.5 Types of bullying

Bullying can take many forms, for example physical, emotional or verbal, or a combination of these forms. It may involve one learner bullying another, a group of learners bullying a single learner, or groups against other groups. The victim does not intentionally provoke these negative acts and, for such acts to be identified as bullying, an imbalance in real or perceived power has to exist between the bully and the victim (Coloroso, 2002:67).

The types of bullying that learners experience are as follows (Olweus, 1993:13):

- Physical aggression: This behaviour is more common among boys than girls. It includes pushing, shoving, punching, and kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While boys commonly engage in mess fights (eating halls in certain schools) they can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Physical bullying is often written off as *horseplay, pretending or just a game* when challenged. While learners can play roughly, in the case of

bullying one must be aware that these *games* can be a precursor to vicious physical assaults (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:3).

- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a learner's suitcase or bicycle. The contents of the school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the victim not promptly *paying up*. Victims' lunches, lunch vouchers or lunch money may be taken. Victims may be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes, this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim. Young learners are particularly vulnerable to extortion bullying (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:3).
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it is based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called *look* – a facial expression that conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Abusive telephone calls:** The abusive anonymous telephone call is a form of verbal intimidation or bullying. The anonymous call is very prevalent where educators are the victims of bullying.
- **In an ever more technologically advanced world,** a new strain of bullying has emerged among learners, which utilizes web pages, emails and text messaging to abuse, intimidate and attack others, either directly or indirectly i.e. rumour-mongering (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:4).
- **Isolation:** This form of bullying behaviour seems to be more prevalent among girls. A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. The person engaged in bullying behaviour usually initiates this practice. It may be accompanied by writing

insulting remarks about the victim on blackboards or in public areas, by passing around notes about or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

- **Name-calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour; most name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, for example, learners with big ears, size of learners or clothes worn by learners.
- **Slagging:** This behaviour usually refers to the good-natured banter which goes on as part of the normal social interchange between people. However, when this slagging extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at the one individual about appearance, clothing and personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family, particularly if couched in sexual innuendo, then it assumes the form of bullying. It may take the form of suggestive remarks about a learner's sexual orientation.
- **Bullying of school personnel:** Bullying of school personnel can occur by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse and threats to people's families.

Bullying is widespread and perhaps the most underreported safety problem on school campuses (Sampson, 2003:4). Once thought of as simply a rite of passage or relatively harmless behaviour that helps build young people's character, bullying is now known to have long-lasting harmful effects, for both the victim and the bully. Sampson (2003:4) states that studies in Europe show that some schools seem to have higher bullying rates than others. Researchers generally believe that bullying rates are unrelated to school or class size, or to whether a school is in a city or suburb. Schools in socially disadvantaged areas seem to have higher bullying rates and classes with learners with behavioural, emotional or learning problems have more bullies and victims than classes without such learners (cf. 2.2.4). Furthermore there

is a strong belief that the degree of the school principals' involvement helps determine the level of bullying.

2.2.6 Characteristics of bullies

Peers describe bullies as disruptive and likely to start fights, and victims as being shy and likely to seek help (*cf.* 2.2.3), with both being low on co-operation (Nabuzoka & Smith, 1993:1439). Research (Olweus, 1993:13) shows that bullies tend to revert to substance use and abuse and that by reducing aggressive, antisocial behaviour this can be reduced. Furthermore, chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviours into adulthood, negatively influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relations (*cf.* 2.2).

In one of Olweus' studies (1993:13), he states that 60% of those characterized as bullies in Grades 6 - 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24 (*cf.* 2.2). Many of the European and Scandinavian studies concur that bullies tend to be aggressive, dominant and slightly below average in intelligence and reading ability, and most evidence suggests that bullies are at least of average popularity (Farrington, 1993:14). The belief that bullies *are insecure, deep down* is probably incorrect (Olweus, 1991:45).

Bullies do not appear to have much empathy for their victims. Young bullies tend to remain bullies, without appropriate intervention. *Adolescent bullies tend to become adult bullies and then tend to have children who are bullies* (Farrington, 1993:15). In one study in which researchers followed bullies as they grew up, they found that youths who were bullies at 14 tended to have children who were bullies at 32, suggesting an intergenerational link. They also found that bullies have some similarities with other types of offenders. Bullies tend to be drawn disproportionately from lower socioeconomic-status families with poor child-rearing techniques, tend to be impulsive and tend to be unsuccessful at school (Farrington, 1993:15; *cf.* 2.3.1 & 2.2.4).

In Australia, research shows that bullies have low empathy levels, are generally uncooperative and, based on self-reports, come from dysfunctional families low on love. Their parents tend to criticize them frequently and control them strictly (Rigby & Slee, 1999:32). Dutch researchers have found a

correlation between harsh physical punishments such as beatings, strict disciplinarian parents and bullying (Junger-Tas & Van Kesteren, 1992:23). In USA studies, researchers have found higher bullying rates among boys whose parents use physical punishment or violence against them (Harachi, Catalano & Hawkins, 1999:21).

Some researchers suggest that bullies have poor social skills and compensate by bullying. Others suggest that bullies have keen insight into others' mental state and take advantage of that by picking on the emotionally less resilient (Smith & Brain, 2000:141). Along this line, there is some suggestion, currently being explored in research in the USA and elsewhere, that those who bully the early grades are initially popular and considered leaders. However, by Grade 3, the aggressive behaviour is less well regarded by peers, and those who become popular are those who do not bully (Sampson, 2003:4). Some research also suggests that bullies direct aggressive behaviour at a variety of targets. As they learn the reactions of their peers, their pool of victims becomes increasingly smaller, and their choice of victims more consistent (Sampson, 2003:4). Thus, bullies ultimately focus on peers who become chronic victims due to how those peers respond to aggression. This indicates that identifying chronic victims early can be important for effective intervention. Bullies are possessed of a verbal facility which is mistaken for intelligence, but is more about plausible lying, deception, cunning, superficial charm and a Teflon-like ability to evade accountability. Learners who bully are adept at manipulating the perceptions of adults, especially the less capable adults and those adults with low emotional intelligence.

In an article called *Myths And Misperceptions About School Bullying* (Anon, 1993:4) taken from *Bully OnLine*, bullies target their victims for the following reasons:

- Bullies select a victim who is physically less strong than they are, for bullies are always cowards.

- Bullies select victims who have a mature understanding of the need to resolve conflict with dialogue and who will not turn around and kick the bully (*cf.* 2.2.7).
- Bullies select victims who have a low propensity to violence – which is what parents and society instil in and demand of children.
- Targets of bullies go to enormous lengths to resolve conflict with dialogue, not realizing that bullies are too disordered, dysfunctional, aggressive and immature to respond to dialogue.
- Bullies are weak people – normal healthy people do not need to bully
- Bullies are dysfunctional, disordered, aggressive and emotionally retarded, which they reveal by their compulsive need to bully.
- Bullies prey on learners with a kind heart (*cf.* 2.2.7).

According to research (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:4), bullies are often surrounded by other learners, not through popularity, but through fear. The bully is rarely able to sustain a friendship (which is based on trust, dependability, loyalty and mutual respect), but instead forms alliances, which are part of his/her strategy for power and control. A hard look at the bully and his/her cohorts still reveals a gang or clique mentality in which true friendship is absent (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:4). Some learners side with the bully because they gain sufficient bravado to act like bullies themselves – which they are too weak and inadequate to do without the bully – but most learners side with the bully for fear of otherwise becoming a target – a fear that is nearly always justified. The bullies who gain power from numbers then target those learners who do not join the gang or clique (Anti-Bullying Centre, 2007:4).

2.2.7 Characteristics of victims

Learners have it drummed into them from the moment they are born that they must not hit, punch, kick, bite, scratch, pull, push, poke or use any form of physical violence (Hodges & Perry, 1996:24) (*cf.* 2.3). Children are often

punished - sometimes brutally and humiliatingly – for exhibiting any form of violent behaviour. Some adults then criticize children for not using violence when faced with a bully. Child targets of bullying also know that, if they retaliate physically, the bully will feign victimhood and the responsible adult will be fooled into believing that the target is the bully and the bully the target. Victims are often learners with high moral integrity and a clear understanding of the need to resolve conflict with dialogue. Hodges and Perry (1996:24) suggest that there are three main social risk factors for victimization: having few friends; having friends who are unable to help or protect you; and being rejected by the peer group. Furthermore, victims are less likely to have a *best friend* or *high quality friendship*, and score *higher* on a scale of loneliness at school. They are more likely to spend *breaktimes* alone.

Victims often fear school and consider school to be an unsafe and *unhappy* place. *Being bullied* leads to depression and *low esteem*, problems that carry over into adulthood (Olweus, 1993:16). Smit (2003:39) states that victims usually have a negative view of themselves, feel unattractive, and incapable. *Boy victims* tend to be physically weaker than their male peers. Recent research carried out in South Australia has shown that victimized learners are also more likely than others to report having suicidal thoughts (Rigby, 1994:12).

According to Rigby (1996:47), people who are bullied have many common characteristics including an *unwillingness* to resort to violence to resolve conflict and a *tendency to internalize anger* rather than express it outwardly. *Focusing anger inward* is a recognized cause of depression. Bullying is perpetrated over a long period of time, perhaps measured in years, and the internalized anger builds to the point where one of these occur (Rigby, 1996:47):

- The target starts to exhibit all the symptoms of stress as the internal pressure causes the body to go out of stasis (this happens in every case) (*cf.* 2.3.2).

- The target focuses the anger onto themselves and self-harm, either by using drugs (usually alcohol) or by attempting or committing suicide (the UK has the highest suicide rate in Europe).
- In rare cases, the target flips and starts to exhibit the same behaviours as the bully; in extremely rare, but well-politicized cases, the target returns to the place of bullying to carry out a spree killing.

Furthermore, many people who are bullied experience and report symptoms similar to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (formally ME). The main symptoms are (Rigby,1996:47):

- Overwhelming fatigue
- Pains in the joints and muscles with no obvious cause
- Occasional bursts of energy, followed by exhaustion and joint/muscle pain
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor recall of words or sentence construction
- Mood swings, including anger and depression
- Difficulty in learning new information
- Sense imbalances such as smell, taste and appetite
- Dislike of loud noises and bright lights
- Inability to control body temperature
- Sleep disturbances (sleeping by day and waking at night)
- Disturbance of balance
- Clumsiness, such as being unable to grasp small objects or the inability to separate sheets of paper

People who are targeted by bullies are sensitive, respectful, honest, creative, have high emotional intelligence, a strong sense of fair play and high integrity with a low propensity to violence. Bullies see these factors as vulnerabilities to be exploited (Werly, 2001:3).

Most targets of bullying like to study, but are prevented from doing so by the thuggery of bullies who enjoy causing harm to others. When a victim is forced to attend school (under threat of sanction and prosecution of parents if they do not), and is forced to endure violent assault, intimidation and threat on a daily basis, while the responsible adults repeatedly fail in their duty of care, it is hardly surprising that fear enters the equation. The learner's self-protective instinct is often wrongly diagnosed as school phobia – a diagnosis which is incorrect, offensive and tantamount to professional misconduct and collusion with the bullying.

2.2.7.1 Chronic victims of bullying

While many, if not most, learners have been bullied at some point in their school career (Junger-Tas & Van Kesteren, 1999:26), chronic victims bear the brunt of the harm. It appears that a small subset of 6 to 10% of school-age learners are chronic victims (Bernstein & Watson, 1997:491), some bullied as often as several times a week. There are more chronic victims at primary schools than at high schools (*cf.* 2.2.2). If a learner is a chronic victim at age 15 (high school age), it would not be surprising to find that he or she has suffered through years of victimization.

Several researchers suggest, although there is not agreement, that some chronic victims are *irritating* or *provocative* because their coping strategies include aggressively reacting to the bullying (Farrington, 1993:47; Olweus, 1993:32). The majority of chronic victims, however, are extremely passive and do not defend themselves. Provocative victims may be particularly difficult to help because their behaviour must change substantially to lessen their abuse.

Both provocative and passive chronic victims tend to be anxious and insecure, *which may signal to others that they are easy targets* (Harachi, Catalano & Hawkins, 1999:27).

In the USA, courts appear open to at least hearing arguments from chronic victims of bullying who allege that schools have a duty to stop persistent victimization (Harachi, Catalano & Hawkins, 1999:27; *cf.* 4.2.2 & 4.4.1).

2.2.8 Factors which contribute to aggression at school

According to the Anti-Bullying Centre (2007:4), there are a number of factors which contribute to the aggression experienced at schools:

- Inconsistent and inflexible rules
- Poor staff morale
- Inadequate supervision
- Punishment that is too harsh, abusive or humiliating
- Few incentives and rewards for non-aggressive behaviour
- Curriculum that affords few feelings of success and achievement

2.3 CAUSES OF BULLYING

The causes of bullying are varied and may depend on the culture and upbringing of the learners. Research (Taki, 2001:90) has found that many of the bullies have common factors that bind them and the following causes have been identified.

2.3.1 Family background

Problem behaviour in Japan is not considered as pertaining specifically to learners with problematic backgrounds, but rather to those with ordinary backgrounds (*cf.* 2.2.6). There are a few cases concerning children with particular background experiences such as child abuse, a dysfunctional family, an aggressive temperament, and so on (Taki, 2001:21). Taki continues

by saying that there are many other cases that cannot be explained by any of the above factors and therefore a single common factor to explain bullying behaviour is difficult to identify.

2.3.2 Stress

Taki (2001:14) focuses on stress as the direct factor to explain *ijime* (bullying). Nier (2001:14) also discovered the correlation among stressor, stress and bullying. Stress feelings might be influenced, not only by stressful experiences, but also by the coping factors. If learners are tolerant enough, they feel less stress. Japanese learners feel greatly stressed by personal interactions with others, especially with peers. It is difficult to find a solution based on the use of a single causal model. Causes of incidents are sometimes complex or synergic with several factors. Taki's research (2001:16) shows that multiple factors, including stress as an exacerbating factor, lead to problem behaviour such as bullying. He has identified four types of stress categories:

Table 2.1: Four stress categories

Types of stress	Items
Physical stress	I feel sick and tired
	I get sick a lot
	I get headaches
Depression stress	I get depressed
	I worry about things
	I feel very lonely
Aggression stress	I get irritated easily
	I get angry easily
	I feel like shouting at others
Apathy stress	I don't have much energy
	I don't feel interested in things
	I can't concentrate on studying

Taki (2001:18) explains that stress is an important factor in any problem behaviour; and that Japanese learners with behaviour problems such as bullying feel all types of stress; they do not only feel aggression, but also physical stress, apathy and depression. Furthermore, he states that stress is the most important factor in explaining problem behaviour in Japan.

All developed countries have similar problems to bullying. It is often mentioned that such problems have similar causes, and similar intervention can be effective in whole countries. One must just bear in mind the different cultures and traditions of the learners involved (Taki, 2001:18).

2.3.3 Socialization patterns

Schwartz and Dodge (1993:1759) have found that early socialization patterns affect the social behaviour of aggressors as well as victims. Their study showed that boys who experience physical abuse and who were witness to adult aggression in the home showed more aggressive behaviour. These same children were more prone to peer victimization. Therefore, it is clear that there are various factors involved in bullying incidents.

Kadokawa (1998:24) argues that there is a *dehumanization* trend in the Japanese society today, where interaction among humans is decreasing. He states that the long climb to economic recovery (after the Second World War) and economic stability (where industrialization was prioritized in the homes and society) resulted in sacrifices made in the families and societies. This, then resulted in a generation in which the children are not very attached to their families or neighbours and are rather indifferent to these relationships.

Furthermore, the inevitable situation where the mother is solely responsible for childrearing (because the father can spend little time in the home on a daily basis) may lead to emotional and social maladaptions. Long (1987:24) proposes that the shrinking extended family size may cause the mother to feel overly self-conscious and anxiety-ridden about raising the children by herself (without the help of her mother or other relatives who have experienced childrearing). This in turn, may result in an excessive and unhealthy amount of attention and nervousness concerning all aspects of the child.

The fathers' situation at work, which ultimately affects their private life, may also be a significant contributor to the weakening ties of the family unit. This is not only due to the diminishing power as the "head of the household", but also due to the long hours spent away from home. Hence, researchers speculate that because the children cannot see their father at work where he is strong and ambitious, but see only the *lazy* side of him, he cannot be a good role model, which results in his becoming emotionally as well as physically distant from his family (Long, 1987:27).

Subsequently, each member of the family carries on a lifestyle independent of the other members so that there is little communication or sharing of a common activity among family members. This weak bonding among the family members and the alienation of each member discourages children from consulting their parents in times of trouble and turmoil (Takano, 1986:12).

It seems that the underlying causes of these bullying incidents may be due to the socialization environment of the child, as well as early experiences of social interaction and emotional regulation in childhood (Takano, 1986:12).

2.3.4 Video games

Many learners play violent video games, but only a handful of learners are violent. Therefore violent video games are not a cause of bullying –otherwise everyone who played violent video games would be violent, which they are not. Furthermore, a lot of learners watch violence on TV, but only a handful of people are violent. Therefore TV violence is not a cause, otherwise everybody who watched TV violence would be violent, which they are not (Takano, 1986:12).

On the other hand, an article published by the Anti-Bullying Centre (2007:5) states that research suggests that learners who constantly view violence on TV and video develop more aggressive tendencies and less empathy with victims of aggression.

2.4 LOCATIONS OF BULLYING

Bullying can occur in any context in which human beings interact such as in schools, universities, families, between neighbours and in workplaces. Bullying at schools frequently takes place on the playground. School playgrounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Many of the games which learners play present possibilities for bullying because of their physical nature. It is relatively easy to single out and harass another learner. The noise level masks much of what is going on. The playground provides the opportunity for older learners to pick on younger learners. The playground is also the ideal setting for the bully

gang. Continuing provocation may eventually lead to physical fights and ironically in some cases the victim may appear to be the aggressor because he/she finally gives vent to his/her frustration (Wikipedia, 2006:7).

Toilets, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms and showers may be the scene of verbal, psychological and physical harassment (*cf.* 2.1). The behaviour of learners in those areas needs careful monitoring.

Bullying may also take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks and sniggers but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails in which learners are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other educators. However, educators need to be alert to the underlying reasons for such comments in case learners are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and this needs further investigation.

2.5 CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic messaging to ostracize, threaten and harass an individual. In short, cyberbullying is wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006:1).

2.5.1 Defining cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is harassing, humiliating, intimidating and/or threatening others on the Internet or on a cell phone. Although the Internet is most often used for healthy social communication, teens are increasingly using the Internet to deliver cruel and harmful messages and photographs. Cyberbullying sometimes involves racial, religious or cultural slurs. It can also be sexual in nature. It can involve someone your learner knows or a complete stranger. Cyberbullying can include cruel jokes, malicious gossip, embarrassing information or photographs, and/or websites designed to target a specific learner or educator (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006:1). Furthermore, cyberbullies are malicious aggressors who seek implicit or explicit pleasure or profit through the mistreatment of another individual. Violence is often associated with aggression and corresponds to actions intended to inflict injury (of any type). While power in traditional bullying might be physical (stature) or social

(competency or popularity), online power may simply stem from proficiency. That is, youth who are able to navigate the electronic world and utilize technology in a way that allows them to harass others are in a position of power relative to a victim.

Patchin and Hinduja (2006:1) state that there are two major electronic devices that young bullies can employ to harass their victims from afar. Firstly, using a personal computer, a bully can send harassing emails or instant messages; post obscene, insulting, and slanderous messages to online bulletin boards; or develop websites to promote and disseminate defamatory content. Secondly, harassing text messages can be sent to the victim via cellular phones.

According to the Canadian educator William Belsey (2005:2), *cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, defamatory personal websites, blogs, online games and defamatory online personal polling websites to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.*

2.5.2 What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet or other digital communication devices. It includes the following (Willard, 2005:1):

- Sending cruel, vicious, and sometimes threatening messages.
- Creating web sites that have stories, cartoons, pictures, and jokes ridiculing others.
- Posting pictures of classmates online and asking learners to rate them, with questions such *Who is the biggest ____ (add a derogatory term)?*
- Breaking into an e-mail account and sending vicious or embarrassing material to others.

- Engaging someone in IM (instant messaging), tricking that person into revealing sensitive personal information, and forwarding that information to others.
- Taking a picture of a person in the locker room using a digital phone camera and sending that picture to others.

2.5.3 Effects of cyberbullying on children

Victims of cyberbullying may experience many of the same effects as learners who are bullied in person, such as a drop in grades, low self-esteem, a change in interests or depression (National Crime Prevention Council). However, cyberbullying can seem more extreme to victims because of several factors (Willard, 2005:5):

- It occurs in learners' homes. Being bullied at home can take away the place learners feel most safe.
- It can be harsher. Often learners say things online that they couldn't say in person, mainly because they can't see the other person's reaction.
- It is far reaching. Learners can send e-mails making fun of someone to their entire class or school with a few clicks or post them on a website for the whole world to see.
- It maintains anonymity. Cyberbullying often hides behind screen names and email addresses that do not identify who they are. Not knowing who is responsible for bullying messages can add to a victim's insecurity.
- It may seem inescapable. It may seem easy to get away from a cyberbully – just get offline – but for some kids not going online takes away one of the major places they socialize.

Furthermore, the Internet provides the perfect forum for cyberbullies, individuals whose aim is to gain gratification from the distress caused by provoking and tormenting others. The anonymity, ease of provocation, and

almost infinite source of targets means the Internet is full of predators from pedophiles targeting children to serial bullies targeting ... anybody.

Cyberbullies get a perverse sense of satisfaction (called gratification) from sending people flame mail and hate mail. Flame mail is an e-mail whose contents are designed to inflame and enrage. Hate mail is hatred (including prejudice, racism and sexism) in an e-mail. Cyberbullying is emerging as one of the more challenging issues facing educators and parents as young people embrace the Internet and other mobile communication technologies (Willard, 2005: 7).

Cyberbullying can be a complicated issue, especially for adults who are not as familiar with using the Internet, instant messenger or chat rooms as learners. But like more typical forms of bullying, it can be prevented when learners know how to protect themselves and adults are available to help.

2.5.4 Cyberthreats

Willard (2005:7) states that cyberthreats are a related concern. A cyberthreat is online material that threatens or raises concern about violence against others, suicide or other self-harm. There are two kinds: Firstly, direct threats, which are actual threats to hurt someone or commit suicide. Secondly, distressing material, which provides clues that the person is emotionally upset and may be considering hurting someone, hurting him/herself or committing suicide.

2.5.4.1 Distressing material

According to Willard (2005:7), *leakage* or *suicide ideation* is considered to be one of the most important clues that may precede a violent act. Leakage occurs when a learner intentionally or unintentionally reveals clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes or intentions that may signal an impending violent act. Some teens have no-one to talk to about how bad they are feeling and how horrible their lives are. So they post material online that shares how hurt they are. They might think that if they post this kind of material online, they will meet someone who cares about them. Unfortunately, they may meet

a dangerous stranger or hook up with another teen who reinforces their bad feelings. It should be assumed that emotional distraught youths with Internet access will likely post online material that provides significant insight into their mental state. It stands to reason that schools must learn how to find, analyze and effectively respond to online *leakage* and specifically encourage the youth to report this material.

2.6 THE SERIAL BULLY

The serial bully appears to lack insight into his/her behaviour and seems to be oblivious to the crassness and inappropriateness thereof; however, it is more likely that the bully knows what he/she is doing, but elects to switch off the moral and ethical considerations by which normal people are bound. If the bully knows what he/she is doing, he/she is responsible for his/her behaviour and thus liable for its consequences on other people (Bully Online, 2006).

2.6.1 Characteristics of serial bullies

A learner in a school situation who has not been identified and assisted could very possibly become a serial bully (Bully Online, 2006:1). Symptoms of serial bullies can include someone who is a *convincing, practised liar* and when called to account, will make up anything spontaneously to fit his/her needs at that moment. A serial bully has a *Jekyll and Hyde nature*: is vile, vicious and vindictive in private, but innocent and charming in front of witnesses; no-one can (or wants to) believe that this individual has a vindictive nature. Only the current target of the serial bully's aggression sees both sides; while the Jekyll side is described as *charming* and convincing enough to deceive personnel, management and a tribunal, the Hyde side is frequently described as *evil*; Hyde is the real person, Jekyll is an act (Bully Online, 2006:1).

A serial bully excels at deception and should never be underestimated in his/her capacity to deceive (Bully Online, 2006:1). He/she also uses excessive charm and is always plausible and convincing when peers, superiors or others are present (charm can be used to deceive as well as to cover for lack of empathy). This person may also appear *glib, shallow and superficial* with plenty of fine words and lots of form, but without substance.

Serial bullies are possessed of an exceptional verbal facility and will outmanoeuvre most people in verbal interaction, especially at times of conflict. They often rely on mimicry, repetition and regurgitation to convince others that they are both normal human beings and tough dynamic managers, as in extolling the virtues of the latest management fads and pouring forth the accompanying jargon. They are unusually skilled in being able to anticipate what people want to hear and then saying it plausibly (Bully Online, 2006:1).

According to Bully Online (2006:1), the serial bully cannot be trusted or relied upon and continually fails to fulfil commitments to others. Serial bullies are emotionally retarded with an arrested level of emotional development; while language and intellect may appear to be that of an adult, the bully displays the emotional age of a five-year-old. Furthermore he/she is emotionally immature and emotionally untrustworthy (Bully Online, 2006:2). These bullies exhibit unusual and inappropriate attitudes to sexual matters, sexual behaviour and bodily functions; underneath the charming exterior there are often suspicions or hints of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, perhaps also sexual dysfunction, sexual inadequacy, sexual perversion, sexual violence or sexual abuse (Bully Online, 2006:2).

2.6.2 Relationship barriers

In a relationship, serial bullies are incapable of initiating or sustaining intimacy (Bully Online, 2006:2). They hold deep prejudices (for example against the opposite gender, people of a different sexual orientation, other cultures and religious beliefs and foreigners - prejudiced people are unvaryingly unimaginative), but go to great lengths to keep this prejudicial aspect of their personality secret. They are self-opinionated and display arrogance, audacity, a superior sense of entitlement and sense of invulnerability and untouchability.

Serial bullies are control freaks and have a compulsive need to control everyone and everything one says, does, thinks and believes. For example, they will launch an immediate personal attack attempting to restrict what you are permitted to say if you start talking knowledgeably about psychopathic personality or antisocial personality disorder in their presence, but they

aggressively maintain the right to talk (usually unknowledgeable) about anything they choose. Serial bullies despise anyone who enables others to see through their deception and their mask of sanity (Bully Online, 2006:2).

These bullies display a compulsive need to criticize while simultaneously refusing to value, praise and acknowledge others, their achievements or their existence. They show a lack of joined-up thinking with conversation that does not flow and arguments that do not hold water. Serial bullies flit from topic to topic so that you come away feeling you have never had a proper conversation (Bully Online, 2006:2). Furthermore, they refuse to be specific and never give a straight answer.

Serial bullies are evasive and have a Houdini-like ability to escape accountability (Bully Online, 2006:2). They undermine and destroy anyone they perceive to be an adversary, a potential threat or who can see through their mask. They are adept at creating conflict between those who would otherwise collate incriminating information about them (Bully Online, 2006:2) and are quick to discredit and neutralize anyone who can talk knowledgeably about antisocial or sociopathic behaviours.

2.6.3 Personality traits

Serial bullies may pursue a vindictive vendetta against anyone who dares to hold them accountable, perhaps using others' resources and contemptuous of the damage caused to other people and organizations in pursuance of the vendetta (Bully Online, 2006). They are also quick to belittle, undermine, denigrate and discredit anyone who calls, attempts to call or might call them to account. The serial bully also gains gratification from denying people what they are entitled to.

The serial bully is highly manipulative, especially of people's perceptions and emotions, and poisons peoples' minds by manipulating their perceptions (Bully Online, 2006:3). When called upon to share or address the needs and concerns of others, the serial bully responds with impatience, irritability and aggression. He/she is arrogant, haughty and overbearing (Bully Online, 2006).

Serial bullies often have an overwhelming, unhealthy and narcissistic attention-seeking need to portray themselves as wonderful, kind, caring and compassionate persons, in contrast to their behaviour and treatment of others. Bullies see nothing wrong with their behaviour and choose to remain oblivious to the discrepancy between how they like to be seen and how others see them. They are spiritually dead although may loudly profess some religious belief or affiliation (Bully Online, 2006:3).

Mean-spirited, officious and often unbelievably petty are words used to describe serial bullies (Bully Online, 2006:3). They are considered to be mean, stingy and financially untrustworthy by those around them. Serial bullies are greedy, selfish, parasitic and emotional vampires who always take and never give (Bully Online, 2006:3).

Serial bullies are convinced of their superiority and have an overbearing belief in their qualities of leadership, but cannot distinguish between leadership (maturity, decisiveness, assertiveness, co-operation, trust, integrity) and bullying (immaturity, impulsiveness, aggression, manipulation, distrust, deceitfulness). Furthermore they often fraudulently claim qualifications, experience, titles, entitlements or affiliations which are ambiguous, misleading or bogus (Bully Online, 2006:3).

One can clearly see the consequences of leaving bullying in schools unresolved. If only a small percentage of learners can be saved from one of the fates above, it is clearly worth implementing an anti-bullying programme at our schools.

2.7 SUMMARY

The school plays a central role in a child's socialization and it is critical that schools offer a safe environment in which learning and growth can take place. Violence contaminates the school environment and jeopardizes the educational process. Crime and violence at schools are therefore matters of significant public concern. It is important to understand this phenomenon so that effective strategies can be developed to prevent school violence and increase school safety. It is imperative that the psychological world of these

school children be explored and understood, using rigorous methodological tools and techniques, to better accommodate their need and to facilitate their academic achievement as well as their emotional and social development

Never ignore bullying: bullies use provocation to elicit a response from their target and if you ignore it, the provocation will get worse. When people say *ignore it*, they mean *don't engage and don't respond*. When bullying starts, recognize it immediately, keep a log of events, do your research and get the parents and learner involved. No-one has the right to be bullied, harassed, assaulted or abused.

The researcher feels that a school should create an environment where learners understand from the moment they step onto the premises that bullying, aggression and violence are not acceptable. It is often the absence of such an ethos that potential bullies perceive as acceptance of their aggressive behaviour. A policy is a start, but it must be more than just words on paper, it has to be a proactive policy, not just a rulebook that is dusted down in the principal's office after aggression has resulted in injury. This policy should also support both parties. The target is taught assertiveness skills (this will not solve bullying problems, but enables a learner to learn emotional and verbal self-defence), while the bully is taught how to deal with aggression and how to interact in a socially responsible manner with other children.

In the next chapter the focus will be on the strategies used by South Africa, Australia, Japan and England to counteract bullying at schools. The role of the governments, the schools and independent organizations will be discussed. Use of the *No Blame Approach* to bullying in South Africa will be discussed, as well as the evaluation of this programme. In Australia, a number of research projects have been conducted. They will be discussed and evaluated in order to determine their effectiveness. Japan's school refusal syndrome (**tokokyohi**) will be discussed in relation to bullying at schools and classroom management in Japan will be reviewed. Bullying in England will be discussed against the backdrop of the compulsory anti-bullying policy that must be in effect at every school.

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES USED TO COUNTERACT BULLYING AT SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN AND ENGLAND

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Bullying violates a learner's right to freedom and security and it is the responsibility of the educators to ensure that this does not occur while the learner is at school. In this chapter, the researcher will focus on presenting strategies used to counteract bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England. The different strategies will be analyzed and their effectiveness will be discussed.

The contribution of different government departments and private organizations will also be discussed.

3.2 SOUTH AFRICA

Bullying among South African school children is not something new. Moreover, it is a problem that is often overlooked or ignored because educators and parents are often not aware that it is going on, or, if they are aware of it, they do not know how to deal with it. The situation is worsened by the fact that learners who are victims of bullying are often afraid to report it for fear that things would get worse for them.

3.2.1 Introduction and background to bullying in South Africa

According to Professor Ndabandaba (Minister of Education and Culture, Province of KwaZulu-Natal), it has become apparent to everyone involved in education in South Africa that even with the best intentions and ideals, schools will not function optimally in situations of insecurity, indiscipline and the absence of safety (Naicker & Waddy, 2003:1). He continued by saying that since schools, by their very nature, are the fulcrum of most activities in

communities, it is not surprising that they often become the focus of that which is unpleasant, in other words thuggery and contempt for the law.

Schools in South Africa have taken steps, within the constraints of limited budgets, to help ensure relative security and safety at schools. Professor Ndabandaba (Naicker & Waddy, 2003:1) then stated that it has become obvious that all the measures have been of limited effectiveness when the support and commitment of the local communities to ensure safety and security at school have not been given.

The Department of Education of Kwazulu Natal has issued a manual entitled *Towards Effective School Management* (Naiker & Waddy, 2003:24). It provides a number of suggestions on how to deal with bullying at schools. It states that one should not draw attention to the bullying by making a public issue of a particular case. This is the last thing the victim desires, and it would play into the perpetrator's hands by giving him/her the publicity he/she seeks. This concept links with the method recommended by Buswell (2007:12; cf. 3.2.5.1).

According to research carried out by the Human Sciences Research Council, entitled *Emerging Voices* (2005: 60), in many cases rural schools are not happy or safe havens for many learners. They suffer maltreatment, abuse and discrimination at the hands of both peers and educators. There is widespread evidence of sexual harassment and frequent beatings by educators, and bullying. Violence within schools in South Africa and violence against girls in particular are serious problems. Going to and from schools, girls are at risk of harassment, beatings and rape. At schools, relationships between male educators and female learners can find expression in anything from the *sugar daddy* phenomenon to girls being demeaned and treated as less than equal in classrooms. Both the Department of Education and educator unions have placed these issues high on their agendas, and have embarked on awareness campaigns. The Revised National Curriculum Statement also provides opportunities for teaching how to recognize and act on harassment, bullying and abuse (Emerging Voices, 2005:61).

The researcher feels that more time could have been spent on research concerning bullying in South African schools, as the consequences of this phenomenon are far-reaching.

3.2.2 South African initiatives to counter bullying at schools

According to the South African Human Rights Commission (SA, 2006:12), the safety of learners at South African schools has become a matter of national concern in recent years as many incidents of school-based violence are being reported. Violence against learners has emerged in various forms from bullying to daily assaults and even murders or deaths of learners occurring in or around school premises.

The South African Human Rights Commission on School Based Violence (SA, 2006:12) states that the cause of the upsurge in school-based violence has been attributed to numerous social-ills that filter onto school premises, including gender discrimination, gang-related activities, drug and alcohol abuse, racism and reoccurring patterns of violence in the homes of learners. These factors result *inter alia* in school dropouts, academic underperformances, increased risk of teenage pregnancy and HIV/aids infection among youth, overall community disintegration and a deterioration in the teaching and learning environment. In order to combat these problems, a public hearing was to be convened on school-based violence.

3.2.2.1 Government authorities

In an address by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, given at the school safety colloquium in Pretoria (2006), stated that if we allow violence, abuse and drugs to become a familiar and accepted part of schooling, our future is lost. If we dither and hide behind our rights-based laws, then we merely confirm that rights protect abusers and not the dignity of all. She also stated that the presence of ill discipline, bullying, sexual abuse and violence at our schools point to a deep malaise that requires urgent attention. Furthermore, the extent of violence among learners, leading to murder and attempted murder highlighted by the media paints a worrying picture (*cf.* 2.2.3 & 2.2.6).

Die Burger (Anon, 2007) reported a bullying incident concerning a 17-year-old Grade 9 learner at Eerste Rivier Senior Secondary who was stabbed in the neck with a pair of scissors on the school premises and died shortly after arriving at hospital. After investigation by the police, it was determined that this was a case of inter-personal conflict.

The Star (Anon., 2006) reported that many urban schools in South Africa were war zones with educators struggling to cope with unruly learners, some of whom are armed. Violence at schools varied from assault to human bite wounds and firearm-related injuries. Furthermore, pointing to the problems facing both learners and educators on a daily basis, the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (Naptosa) said the right to human dignity was being infringed (Anon., 2006).

The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor (2006), stated in her address that they would make the school safety regulations available and that the Department of Education would draw up a template for a code of conduct that each school should adapt and adopt. This was needed in order to protect educators and learners. Learners find it easier to confide in one another rather than in adults or educators, and therefore a positive buddy system should be encouraged so that incidents of bullying and violence and the perpetrators are exposed. She furthermore stated that the curriculum should teach positive values and that the provinces must attend to the expansion of educational support services so that counsellors and other professionals are available to provide sustained support to learners who need this.

In the first South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey 2002, Asmal (2002:9) stated that this survey was undertaken to provide the Education Department with data on the prevalence of the behaviour that places school-going learners at risk and to advise on programmes for intervention. The aim of the Department was to free the community from fear of victimization and to realize the potential of all our youth (cf. 2.2.2). The survey confirmed that 32% of learners felt unsafe at school and that 41% had been bullied in the thirty days prior to the survey. The recommendation to come out of the survey was that a Youth Development Programme (YDP) be set up. The YDP, in

collaboration with the National Youth Commission, Government departments and all other stakeholders, will be responsible for the health and social development programming for youth across social clusters.

3.2.2.2 Other contributions assisting anti-bullying initiatives

In a media briefing held by the Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula (2006) stated that The Safer Schools programme is a partnership between the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Education which focus on ensuring a safe learning environment. This programme is implemented jointly at provincial level and addresses issues such as drugs and firearms at schools, sexual offences and bullying. He stated that School Governing Bodies and school safety committees needed to be involved in this programme.

The Minister of Education, in conjunction with the Minister for Safety and Security, have launched a programme called *Tiisa Thuto*. Its aim is to fight school community-based crime through the inculcation of a positive value system among all members of the school community. In the process, it contributes towards the heightening of a sense of school ownership by their respective communities, and the creation of conditions and/ or culture conducive to effective teaching, learning and support.

In research conducted by the University of South Africa's Department of Criminology (Buswel: 2007:3), 14% of learners witnessed bullying at their schools daily. 39,8% of learners felt unsafe at school and of these 50,3% were subjected to physical violence. These learners reported significantly higher incidences of loneliness, social dissatisfaction, disliking of school and an indication to avoid school. They also tended to have lower self-esteem, were more prone to depression and were predisposed to higher levels of anxiety and less self-restraint (*cf.* 2.2.7).

The main finding made by the University of South Africa was that school violence in South Africa is a reality. Strategies recommended to prevent bullying included the following aspects:

- Individual assistance
- Assistance with relationships
- Community-based projects
- Societal approaches to prevention

According to Gail Dore (2007:3) who developed a programme called *Back off, Bully* especially for South African schools, all aspects of bullying have to be addressed. The learners, staff and parents must be involved in an anti-bullying campaign if it is to be successful. Dore believes that a curriculum that educates learners and educators about bullying must be introduced at all schools. A support system must be introduced for learners who are involved in incidents and parents need to be informed when incidents of bullying occur. The bullies themselves must be counselled and appropriate disciplinary procedures for the bully must be developed and maintained. Furthermore, the cases of persistent bullying must be reported, learners must join together and a pledge supporting the school's anti-bullying policy must be jointly formulated (Dore, 2007:3).

3.2.3 Solving the problem: the No Blame Approach

One of the strategies recommended by Buswell (2007:9) in his interview on Bullying in the South African Classroom is the use of the method known as *the No Blame Approach*. This method was first introduced in Bristol, England by George Robinson, a university lecturer and Barbara Maines, an educational psychologist (1992:18), and has been successfully applied in South African classrooms. This method involves the use of the following steps to be followed in order to alleviate bullying within a group of learners.

3.2.3.1 Creating a telling environment

According to Buswell (2007:9), a telling environment will be developed when adults demonstrate that they understand bullying behaviour and show that they are committed to stopping the behaviour. Young people will not tell for a variety of reasons. Mainly, they are worried about the subsequent re-action of

the bully. They are naturally fearful of retribution and are also often confused in their attitude towards the bully, who can be a dynamic, fun and attractive classmate. Educators need to show an understanding of the issues and work constructively with the group to end the bullying behaviour. Once learners know the telling will result in a fair resolution, they will trust the adults with information about bullying behaviour (cf. 3.2.5.3.5).

Buswell (2007:9) states that it is important that the traditional tale-telling myth is destroyed. A telling environment is one where all members recognize that they have responsibilities to the other members in the group and if they are aware of bullying or any other abuse, they have a duty to tell. This environment can be supported by constant attention to basic codes of behaviour and the maintenance of a co-operative, well-ordered, tolerant classroom/school. This will ensure that learners have the opportunity to tell, without attracting the attention of offending peers and that their actions are affirmed by the educator taking action (cf. 3.2.7).

3.2.3.2 Creating opportunities for telling

According to Maines and Robinson (1992:12), the following opportunities should be created by the educator in the classroom:

- Have telling drop boxes for learners to place information in.
- Have regular opportunities for learners to talk about what's going on.
- Have clearly understood, consistent, open and fair responses to bad behaviour.
- Ensure that all members of the school community constantly reinforce the telling message. This may include the use of posters.

These suggestions afford the victim the opportunity to inform the educator of any bullying that may occur in more than one manner. If he/she feels threatened by talking to someone, they are able to write a message. The onus then lies on the educator to react to the letter.

3.2.3.3 Handling bullying incidents

Maines and Robinson (1992:12) also state that it is essential that schools have clearly understood and consistently applied responses to bullying. This should include a parent information leaflet that discusses the issue of bullying and outlines the approach the school will adopt when dealing with specific cases. Buswell (2007:4) states that this is the responsibility of each South African school. Approaches that are suggested follow below.

3.2.3.3.1 Bringing the behaviour out into the open

The first response when someone is made aware of any bullying behaviour is to express relief that the behaviour is out in the open and can now be dealt with. There needs to be recognition of the *hidden nature* of bullying. Victims of bullying rarely seek help, as they do not want to draw attention to themselves. By its very nature, bullying is an abuse that targets learners who, despite their best efforts, cannot handle the unwanted attentions of the bully (Maines & Robinson, 1992:14). They will often valiantly try to present a brave face, while inside they feel terrible. It is very tempting to focus on the shortcomings of the bullying victim rather than to concentrate on where the immediate problem is – the behaviour of the young person who bullies others.

Maines and Robinson (1992:15) state that it is often very difficult to gain a clear understanding of exactly what has been happening. Many victims will have tried very hard to *handle it* themselves and feel very much as though they have failed. They lack confidence and many even blame themselves for what is going on. This confusion can be further compounded by the attitude of the bully who fails to recognize the hurt of his/her actions, regarding them as passing, often trivial incidents.

The aim of any intervention must be to stop the immediate abuse. The most effective way this can happen is to insure that the bullies change their behaviour. They are the cause of the damage and the first step must always be to stop their unsafe actions. They need to be made to recognize that the behaviour is not only damaging to the victim, but that the other people at school also do not appreciate the behaviour.

Assuming the bully is motivated by a mixture of excitement, status and *group process*, it is important that, rather than challenge the hard-won status in a confrontational way, we work on establishing the awareness that in actual fact the behaviour is damaging and unpopular.

3.2.3.3.2 Isolating the bullying behaviour

Maines and Robinson (1992:14) recommend that the bully be removed from the school environment, ensuring that they know why they are being excluded. This process should be accompanied with an opportunity for the bully to reflect upon the reasons for the isolation that goes beyond *because the victim told on me*.

3.2.3.3.3 Providing support for the victim

Ensure that the victim has access to a bully-free environment at all times. This may involve using others as supporters. These may be reliable peers, educator aids or senior volunteers who are prepared to spend time with the isolated learner. This can only be a short-term measure, as most victims of bullying want to be with their peer group. They are drawn to them, which is natural, as they are the peer group. Any extended time with a supporter will result in the learner being even further removed from the group with whom they must work. It also amplifies the perception of difference that the initial bullying created (Maines & Robinson, 1992: 25).

A special safe room that has adequate staff supervision is always useful. Senior learners can be recruited to work in the room, which should be an attractive quiet room. Having board games could enhance the environment.

3.2.3.3.4 Involving withdrawn and isolated victims

Buswell (2007:11) states that those learners who have experienced bullying for a long time will often have difficulty integrating with their peer group. They may have become so withdrawn and introverted that they are incapable of initiating sustaining social contacts. While their first need is to be assured a safe environment, free from the taunts of their peers, these learners have

special needs and need to be given the opportunity of being involved in special programmes that would help them develop a more confident approach to life.

3.2.3.3.5 Changing the behaviour of the bully

This step is a simple one where the bullies are confronted with the impact their behaviour has had on the victim and the other learners are given the opportunity to talk about what has been going on (Maines & Robinson, 1992:18). The confrontation must be very carefully managed. It is important that no-one is blamed at this stage. While the victim is not present, the educator taking the group talks about how the victim has been feeling and will use a piece of writing, song lyric, picture or poem the victim has selected to express his/her feelings. This is important, as it is impossible to argue or dispute an individual's feelings. The learners present are asked for help. How can we make the *victim* feel better? According to Maines and Robinsin (1992:18), each participant is encouraged to come up with an inclusive strategy that will draw the isolated learner back into the group

3.2.3.3.6 Working with persistent offenders

Buswell (2007:12) states that there will be some learners who find it difficult to leave behind aggressive ways of relating to other learners. That style of relating may have been so reinforced that an ongoing programme aimed at developing social skills is necessary.

3.2.3.3.7 Mediating through peer programmes

Peer mediation programmes have been successful in encouraging young people to seek help when they are in a conflict situation. These trained learner mediators can be of tremendous support to a victim of bullying. They are a contact point and are trained to listen to and may encourage the bully and the victim to get together to talk about what is going on. This may well result in the bullies understanding the hurt they are causing and modifying their behaviour (Buswell, 2007:12).

Trained mediators will be much more sympathetic to the plight of a bullied learner and will be less inclined to stand by passively when others are being bullied. They can be powerful role models who provide constructive leadership in the class and at school.

3.2.3.3.8 Understanding the dynamics of bullying

Whatever the approach taken, there must be clear understanding of the bullying dynamics. According to Buswell (2007:12), the following dynamics occur when bullying takes place:

- Learners bully to gain/cement status or power within the group.
- Bullies often have high self-images and believe that their peer group finds their behaviour attractive and exciting.
- They minimize the impact of their behaviour on others or refuse to take the others' feelings into account.
- The active collusion of a minority and the silent acquiescence of the others reinforce the experience that bullying behaviour is a useful strategy to maintain power and influence.
- The bully may interpret educator intervention as a direct challenge to their status. They may seek to reassert their power by seeking retribution on their victims.
- Victims of bullying are often very confused by the attentions of the bully.
- They will initially keep a low profile in the hope that the abuse will stop.
- The lack of support from classmates is interpreted as hostility.
- The inability to stand up for themselves can lead to feelings of helplessness, self-doubt and self-blame.
- Long-term victims of bullying may become provocative victims, acting out as a defence mechanism and thereby alienating themselves even further.

- Victims often have low status within the group and are often perceived as not helping themselves.

The aim of an intervention must be to stop the bullying immediately. The most effective way this can happen is to insure that the bully changes his/her behaviour in a positive manner.

3.2.3.4 Evaluating the programme

According to Maines and Robinson (1992:14), there are several indicators that will show the initiative has been successful:

- An increase in *telling*. Learners will have confidence that adults can help change bullying behaviour, and that they don't have to put up with it.
- A marked reduction in observable aggressive incidents in classrooms and on playgrounds.
- Greater learner consistency in dealing with bullying incidents.
- Reductions in other aggressive behaviours such as petty thieving and teasing.

The overall effect of a successful anti-bullying programme will be felt throughout the school. Learners and educators will feel more relaxed and confident to be themselves (Maines & Robinson, 1992:14).

3.2.3.5 Maintaining an anti-bullying initiative

Buswell (2007:13) explains that even the most successful initiative loses its edge over time. It is important that the issue of maintaining a safe environment be carefully linked to the school charter and should retain a high priority each year.

According to Buswell (2007:13), awareness-raising exercises need to be planned for each year. Programmes with new intakes of learners should receive special consideration. A session on the bullying policy is an essential component of new educator induction and should be reviewed at a full staff

meeting each year. Accurate record-keeping could also provide the opportunity to review procedures and to help target the hot spots around the school.

3.2.4 Counselling interventions used at South African schools

Buswell (2007:14) advises that counselling intervention is another method that could be used by educators in order to curb bullying at South African schools. The following seven strategies are suggested below.

3.2.4.1 Interviewing the victim

When conducting an interview, the first step involves concentrating on supporting and congratulating the victim for the confidence shown (Smith & Sharp, 1994:88). What needs to be stressed is that the first attempt should not be to solve the problem immediately. The emphasis should be on a third person approach in which the victim is convinced that it is the behaviour of the other learners that is abhorrent, not his/hers. They as victims of bullies have done nothing wrong and therefore they have every right to be left in peace. A discussion should follow on how it feels to be bullied, and the experience and the common human feelings of loneliness that come from being isolated and rejected should be shared (Smith & Sharp, 1994:88).

Buswell (2007:15) suggests that the educator tell the victim that he/she is going to work with the bullies and some others in the class/group to get them to understand the effect their behaviour or lack of support is having on one of their classmates. The victim should suggest whom they admire and look up to in the class or group. These learners should be included in the group discussion the next day.

These victims must be invited to spend some time putting down their feelings on paper that night. Many victims of bullying start diary writing as a counter-measure to the isolation from their peer group. These feelings should be shared with the group in an effort to end the bullying (Buswell, 2007:15).

3.2.4.2 Arranging a meeting for all learners who are involved

In the second step, one must consult with educators who know the peer group well to ensure that one assembles a balanced group to look at the bullying (Buswell, 2007:16). Furthermore, the main bully, his/her two main supporters, one or two bystanders who have been friends of the victim in the past, as well as two dominant, assertive class members who have abdicated their responsibility to stop the bullying behaviour, should be present (Buswell, 2007:16).

3.2.4.3 Explaining the problem

A meeting of this group should be convened, allowing at least thirty minutes. Explain that there is a problem in the class/group. That (victim's name) is very unhappy and should be allowed to tell of her/his feelings. The feelings of the victim can be shared by reading out the written work from the victim. Do not get into details and certainly do not apportion blame at this stage of the process (Buswell, 2007:15).

3.2.4.4 Sharing responsibility

Buswell (2007:15) states that at this stage the concept of group responsibility should be discussed, if necessary. The group must then be permitted to discuss why the victim is feeling the way he/she is. A larger discussion of class dynamics may be entered into.

3.2.4.5 Identifying solutions

Each group member is then encouraged to suggest ways in which the victim's problem may be solved (i.e. made to feel happier). There is no need to solicit promises (Buswell, 2007:15).

3.2.4.6 Allowing learners to take action themselves

The group should be re-convened in more or less a week to discuss the progress and it should be left up to them to support the victim. Buswell

(2007:16) suggests that the educator support the victim by meeting him/her informally on a daily basis to check on the progress.

3.2.4.7 Meeting them again

After about a week, the educator should hold a discussion with each learner, including the victim, in order to check how things have been going. This allows the educator to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process (Buswell, 2007:17).

3.2.5 Reactions to bullying

The victims, as well as the bullies, could exhibit the specific behaviour patterns as listed below (Buswell, 2007:16):

- Bullies will be surprised that they are not going to be punished. This leads to a more relaxed empathetic response and makes the problem-solving approach much more successful.
- Do not ask the victim to do anything different. If they had the personal skill and resources to deal with the problem, they would already have dealt with it. Often the victim is made to feel more helpless if asked to adopt strategies that may not work.
- Do not ask why. They will be unable to explain and may become alienated, de-motivated or anti-social if challenged. The raising of levels of apathy is crucial.
- Avoid labelling the participants, as talk of victim and bully will reinforce the power imbalance that is an essential part of the bullying relationship. Bullying is behaviour, not a personality.
- Separate stopping the bullying behaviour from addressing specific incidents such as assaults. The *No Blame Approach* deals with the behaviour. Specific violent acts need to be dealt with formally in accordance with the law (Robinsin & Maines, 1992:20).

This is a sensitive issue and has to be handled delicately if the correct response is to be obtained. The victims and the bullies must be dealt with in the correct manner.

3.3 AUSTRALIA

Research carried out at Australian schools concerning bullying was conducted predominantly at pre-schools, kindergartens and primary schools. In order to assess the effectiveness of approaches to anti-bullying, a number of reports from outside Australia were selected by Professor Ken Rigby (2001b:321) and used to determine which specific techniques were best suited to reduce school bullying in Australia.

3.3.1 Introduction and background to bullying in Australia

Over the past 10 years there has been a growing recognition in Australia, as in many other parts of the world, of the widespread prevalence and serious harmfulness of bullying at schools (Rigby, 2001b:321). Increasingly, attention has turned to devising and implementing policies and practices intended to reduce the levels of bullying and harassment. A great deal has been written on how this might be done.

Many schools across Australia now have anti-bullying policies and are employing a range of approaches and methods to address the issue (Rigby, 2001a:13). There has, however, been comparatively little research undertaken to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying initiatives at Australian schools, especially among younger learners attending pre-school and early primary school. In fact, of the interventions at schools to reduce bullying that have been rigorously evaluated, only one has so far been conducted in Australia. In view of the importance of early intervention strategies in countering anti-social tendencies (NCP, 1999:2), the need for an evaluation of what is being done and what can be done at Australian schools to address bullying among young people is evident.

Accordingly, the Crime Prevention Branch of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (Rigby, 2002:1) has commissioned this report with these objectives:

- To establish which strategies or combinations of strategies in Australia and overseas have been successfully employed to prevent and reduce the incidence of bullying at schools (Rigby, 2002:1).
- To identify and evaluate, with scientific rigour, effective practices and directions for a policy which can be employed by Australian schools and relevant agencies for the purpose of implementing these strategies (Rigby, 2002:1).

In order to achieve these objectives, it was considered desirable to review initiatives that have been undertaken to counter bullying at Australian schools; to examine national and international literature to identify factors relevant to success; and, in the light of a meta-evaluation of relevant studies, to provide critical analyses and commentary on work that has been done and could be done to address the problem of bullying effectively, especially among young children at Australian schools.

The problem of bullying at Australian schools was first examined in the early 1990s (Rigby, 1994:12). This examination revealed that bullying was prevalent in Australia among children of all ages, including those attending schools and centres at lower primary schools. Since 1994 there have been numerous initiatives undertaken by Australian government bodies at both Federal and State level to promote activities designed to reduce bullying. In addition, project groups have worked with schools to implement programmes; organizations concerned with child welfare have encouraged and supported anti-bullying activities at schools; numerous books and websites have been produced to suggest ways bullying can be addressed; and many schools in Australia have devised and implemented policies and strategies to help stop bullying (Rigby, 1994:13).

Bullying behaviour can be reduced by well-planned interventions. The likelihood of success appears to be greater when programmes are

implemented with younger learners attending kindergarten and primary school (Main, 1999:12). In the absence of programmes to reduce bullying, increases thereof tend to occur over time.

Many schools in Australia are currently implementing practices that have been employed in well-evaluated effective anti-bullying strategies. However, according to Rigby (2002:6), their use does not guarantee success. Moreover, it is currently unclear from research which one of the following two approaches to reducing bullying, a so-called *No Blame Approach* (cf.3.2.5.3.5) or one emphasizing rules and the use of negative sanctions, is likely to be more effective. Possibly each may be applied, depending upon the particular circumstances.

Providing continual external support for schools in the implementation stage of a programme may not be helpful. The degree of educator commitment to a programme and community involvement in carrying it out is an important factor in determining success (Rigby, 2002:6).

In 1999, Associate Professor Donna Cross (2002:1) from the Western Australian Centre for Health Promotion Research at Curtin University received funding to collate, review and synthesize international published empirical and theoretical evidence associated with school-based bullying interventions. The *Friendly Schools* intervention research involved the development and testing of classroom, family and whole-school activities to empower learners, parents and educators to reduce bullying behaviour. The programme focused on social disapproval of bullying by skilling learners to recognize their responsibilities and the actions they can take –even as bystanders – in a bullying situation. It also promotes open communication and peer support for learners who have been bullied, as well as training learners to deal effectively with a bullying situation (Cross, 2006:3).

Finally, given that Australia is currently reliant upon evaluative studies undertaken overseas for suggestions about effective programmes for preventing or reducing bullying among young learners at Australian pre-

schools, kindergartens and early primary school, it is desirable that studies be conducted in Australia which are culturally relevant (Rigby, 1994:13).

3.3.2 Australian initiatives to counter bullying at schools

Initiatives to counter bullying at schools have been taken by government authorities, individual schools, project groups, welfare organizations and authors of publications on bullying (Australian Government Attorney General's Department – Crime Prevention and Community Safety, 2002).

3.3.2.1 Government authorities

The Australian Government's responses to the problem of bullying at school date back to 1994 when the Commonwealth Government published a major report known as *Sticks and Stones*, compiled by a committee of the House of Representatives. In this report there was an examination of violence at schools and recognition of the need to address the problem of bullying among learners. Other government and educational institutions have responded by providing suggestions and advice to schools on how to address the problem (Rigby, 2002:7).

3.3.2.2 Initiatives taken by schools and centres

Currently many schools and pre-schools are taking steps to reduce bullying behaviour between learners, as evidence has continued to grow regarding the harmfulness of bullying behaviour to the mental and physical health of Australian learners (Rigby, 2001a:34). At this stage, however, it is not possible to estimate accurately the proportion of schools that are engaged in specifically anti-bullying activities. Schools throughout Australia are being encouraged by educational authorities to implement anti-bullying strategies and practices, but, with the exception of the Education Department of Victoria, there is no official requirement that schools report on what they have done each year to target bullying.

According to Slee (2000:43), a range of anti-bullying activities are being undertaken at Australian schools, including:

- awareness-raising through the use of self-report questionnaires answered by learners, educators and parents to assess the nature, prevalence and consequences of bullying;
- the development of specific anti-bullying policies;
- provision of instruction and activities in the school curriculum to enable bullying to be addressed among learners in classrooms;
- use of drama to help learners to understand the nature of bullying and to handle bullying more effectively;
- formation of discussion groups in which parents are involved to examine the issue of bullying;
- use of counselling methods to work with learners involved in bully/victim problems; and
- empowerment of learners to help eliminate bullying, for example through Peer Support Programmes and Anti-Bullying Committees of learners, and training for learners in methods of conflict resolution and peer mediation. These approaches are commonly modified in accordance with age and maturity of learners.

Slee (2000:43) states that variations between schools and centres may be found in the choice of approaches and strategies. For example, some choose to see anti-bullying work as being entirely contained within Behaviour Management Policy. Others see anti-bullying more broadly as, for example, including social skills training, education in human relations through classroom work, and counselling procedures. Some schools rely primarily on the use of negative sanctions being applied to learners who bully others. Others employ the use of 'no-blame' approaches in which the focus is upon promoting changes in behaviour by non-punitive means (Slee, 2000:45).

3.3.2.3 Initiatives by project groups

A number of project groups have helped, and are helping, schools in Australia to address bullying at their schools. These include the Peer Support Organization (cf. 3.3.2.3.1); MindMatters (cf. 3.3.5.2); the Friendly Schools Project (cf. 3.3.5.1); Programme for Reintegration and Individual Shame Management (PRISM) (3.3.2.3.2); and Programme Achieve (cf. 3.3.2.3.3; Rigby, 2002:3).

3.3.2.3.1 Peer Support Organisation

The work of the Peer Support Organization in New South Wales (2007:3) is described, but not evaluated, in *Together we can work it out: an anti-bullying program for primary schools*, a publication provided by the Peer Support Foundation of New South Wales in 1998. It proposes that Grade 5 and 6 learners at Primary Schools be suitably trained so as to provide sessions (with educator assistance) for groups of younger learners in order to help them understand and counter peer-related bullying. The publication contains suggestions as to how the programme should be implemented, supervised and evaluated, and questionnaires that can be answered by learners and by parents to provide information about the nature and extent of bullying at school, how learners respond to bullying and where it takes place.

Schools are encouraged to use these questionnaires before and after the intervention in order to assess its impact. The publication also contains a comprehensive set of notes for educators and for the learners conducting the sessions. In total there are 15 sessions, each of which is described in detail and complemented by activity sheets to be used by the younger learners. Areas covered include knowledge about bullying, how learners feel when (2007:1) they are bullied, why learners bully, how to be assertive, how to control anger and how to listen attentively. Role-playing is encouraged and activities are provided to increase understanding of peer-relations and to improve pro-social skills.

The Peer Support Foundation of New South Wales (2007:1) offers training and assistance to implement the project, for which interested schools must

budget. As yet, no evaluation of the programme's effectiveness has been reported.

3.3.2.3.2 Programme for Reintegration and Individual Shame Management (PRISM)

It is assumed that if learners identify with the school and handle feelings of shame appropriately they will not become involved in bully/victim problems (PRISM, 2006:1). The qualities that the programme seeks to develop in learners are respect for others, the capacity and openness required to consider what others are saying, and a readiness to participate in a process that enables feelings of shame to be appropriately discharged. Curriculum material, exercises and role plays have been developed to achieve these ends.

The programme has been trialled at a number of primary schools during 1996 with 978 learners enrolled in Grades 4 to 7. Evidence suggested that learners who bullied others had relatively little pride in their school and that learners who were frequently victimized had little respect for themselves, and that the programme could bring about desirable change in attitudes relating to bullying behaviour (Morrison, 2001:43). It was suggested that the key to changing the behaviour of learners who bully others lies in persuading them to acknowledge feelings of shame and make amends by repairing any harm that has been done. Unfortunately, no evidence has been presented concerning the extent to which the programme can bring about actual reduction in bullying behaviour (PRISM, 2006:1).

3.3.2.3.3 Program Achieve

The programme is contained in a book, also entitled *Program Achieve*, by American author Michael Bernard (2001:21), which provides a curriculum of lessons for teaching learners how to achieve success and develop social emotional well-being. It is for use with Grades 1 and 2. A number of schools in Australia have adopted it. A sub-title of the book is *You can do it*. It emphasizes the importance of ways of thinking about one's behaviour and situations that can help learners to become successful.

To a large extent, the ideas in this book (Bernard, 2001:21) have been derived from the rational emotive therapy theorizing of Albert Ellis (1989:239). Being *successful* includes both academic success and social emotional well-being. The programme's relevance to bullying is found in two of the so-called foundations for success: having confidence and getting along with others. The curriculum material includes exercises designed to counter self-defeating and irrational thinking patterns. This can be important for learners who allow the experience or threat of being bullied to depress them and make them even more vulnerable to peer harassment. Self-confidence is promoted through getting learners to be more self-accepting, to take reasonable risks, to act independently and to believe that they can achieve their goals (Bernard, 2001:21).

This is useful advice for those who see being teased or bullied as a major catastrophe, rather than a challenge to be faced. *Getting along with others* is encouraged through exercises focusing on ways of making and keeping friends. This can be valuable for learners who are often victimised because they have few if any friends to support them.

Bernard's (2001:21) proposed activities are directed towards getting learners to think in positive ways about themselves and others. For learners who are capable of grasping elementary principles of rational-emotive thinking, they are likely to be personally beneficial and lead to higher levels of cooperative and well-considered action. However, given the relatively low level of cognitive development of young learners it seems likely that this approach would be more beneficial with older learners. Although there is some evidence (Bernard, 2001:23) that supports the view that academic achievements of older learners can be increased by this approach, there is, as yet, no evaluation available showing its impact on bullying.

3.3.2.4 Organizations supporting anti-bullying initiatives at schools

These bodies have been concerned especially with the welfare of children. They have supported actions to eliminate bullying at schools and provided much advice and encouragement to promote anti-bullying initiatives (Rigby,

2002:3). They include parent bodies such as the South Australian Association of School Parents' Clubs (SAASPC); groups concerned with child abuse, such as the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), Advocates for Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA); Safety House Australia Inc., and Kids Help Line (Rigby, 2002:3). Each of these organizations has provided advice on countering bullying at schools (Australian Government Attorneys General's Department – Crime Prevention and Community Safety, 2002:8).

3.3.2.5 Other contributions that assist anti-bullying initiatives

Some individual Australians have figured prominently as authors and consultants in providing advice and assistance to schools. Publications (Berne, 1996:4; Linke, 1998:12; Griffiths, 1997:19; 1999:44; Slee, 2000:1; Suckling & Temple, 2001:4; Rigby, 1996:4 & 2001a:10) have been influential in determining what some Australian schools do to counter bullying. Some texts published overseas have helped to shape how Australian schools have responded to bullying. Publications on bullying by Olweus (1993:7), Smith and Sharp (1994:5) and Garrity *et al.* (1997:45) have made particularly important contributions regarding prevention of bullying at schools. According to Rigby (2002:7), a critical examination of the literature on bullying that is available to Australian educators indicates that despite general agreement on the nature and harmfulness of bullying, the advice given is often inconsistent. This is especially true of advice on methods of intervention, some of which promote a rule-based 'consequences' approach in which sanctions are imposed on learners who have bullied others, while some advice promotes an exclusively preventative approach or recommends interventions utilizing non-judgmental or 'no-blame' methods (Rigby, 2002:3).

Furthermore, Olweus (1993:7) states that although some centres providing educator training are currently providing information about bullying at schools, the education of Australian educators about bullying has proceeded mainly through in-service training, organized by various bodies, including state educational authorities, the Australian Council for Educational Research and by individual schools or clusters of schools.

Rigby (2002:9) states that visiting overseas experts on bullying who have run seminars and workshops for Australian educators have also made considerable impact on the policies and practices those schools in Australia have subsequently adopted. These include Delwyn Tattum (from Wales), Valerie Besag and Sonia Sharp (from England) and Professor Anatol Pikas from Sweden. Increasingly, such seminars and workshops have been led by Australian workers in the field of bullying at schools. Journals and magazines providing professional reading for educators have been active in helping schools to handle bullying more effectively. These include the Professional Reading Guide for Educational Administrators, Principal Matters, Primary Focus, EQ Australia and Social Spectrum (Rigby, 2002:3).

3.3.3 Assessing the effectiveness of interventions

The prime objective of a study by Rigby (2002:4) is to identify and evaluate, with scientific rigor, effective practices and directives which are employed by Australian schools, parents and relevant agencies to address bullying. It should be noted that with one single exception, no published study has so far provided a basis for making a rigorous evaluation of effective practice to reduce bullying at Australian schools. The exception is an evaluation of an intervention with secondary school learners at a school in New South Wales (Petersen & Rigby 1999:490).

Although that study did not address bullying among younger learners, it has been included because of its cultural relevance. For the most part one must draw upon reports of evaluations conducted outside Australia. These need to be appraised for the applicability of their conclusions to the Australian educational context.

3.3.3.1 Selecting studies for meta-evaluation

Studies were undertaken to determine which strategies or combinations of strategies in Australia and overseas have been successful in preventing and reducing the incidence of bullying at schools (Rigby, 2002:3).

Studies for meta-evaluation met the following criteria (Rigby, 2002:3):

Firstly, reliable assessments of relevant aspects of bullying behaviour were available at times prior to and after the intervention, making use mostly of anonymous questionnaires. These have generally provided measures of the frequency with which learners have been victimised or bullied and the frequency with which they have bullied others. Some have included other measures to assess the extent to which learners have informed when they have been bullied and how often they have sought to help others who were being bullied. Other approaches have involved interviews with learners, educator ratings, peer nominations (learners indicate class or group members who are being bullied and/or bully others) and direct observations (Rigby, 2002:10).

Secondly, the programme and mode of intervention were adequately described. This requires that a description of what elements or components were contained in the intervention and how it was implemented, ideally with sufficient detail to enable it to be replicated (Rigby, 2002:3).

Thirdly, the degree and significance of reported changes attributable to the intervention were provided. Various research designs have been used. The simplest is one in which the extent or degree of bullying was assessed before and after the intervention. This is described as the pretest, post-test design (Rigby, 2002:13). Others employed, in addition, a control or comparison group or groups. This improved research design is commonly described as pre-test, post-test control group designs (Rigby, 2002:13). It enables evaluators to take into account the following important effects: (i) changes in behaviour that result from the passage of time, as when learners behave differently as they mature; (ii) changes that occur due to the intrusion of historical events unrelated to the intervention, for example, an increase in the stressfulness of family life of children induced by a rise in unemployment in an area; (iii) changes due to the children being tested in the course of data collection; for example, answering questionnaires may increase awareness of bullying and affect its subsequent occurrence or reporting of its occurrence (Rigby, 2002:14).

Because the experimental group(s) receiving the intervention and the control group(s) studied over the same or similar time period have comparable experiences (apart from the intervention), it is considered appropriate to compare changes in the two groups in drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the intervention (Rigby, 2002:21).

A further type of research design has been used in some of the studies. This is the age cohort design with time-lagged comparisons between age equivalent groups. This requires that groups that had received an intervention treatment at Time 1 and had progressed to a higher Grade at Time 2 are compared on relevant measures with learners of the same age at Time 2 with learners who have not yet received an intervention treatment. An example of the use of this method may be found in the description of the evaluation of the Norwegian study in the Bergen area by Olweus (1993:24).

In fact, only two studies of learners attending pre-school or kindergarten met the stated criteria. It was therefore decided to include studies of older learners also, with the proviso that the findings should subsequently be examined to ascertain whether they were likely to apply to younger learners too. Although the Australian study contained no primary school learners, it was included because of its relevance to the work among Australian learners (Rigby, 2002:23).

3.3.4 Evaluations of interventions to reduce bullying at schools

In a report compiled by Rigby (2002:12), thirteen evaluations of interventions to reduce bullying (or in some cases, interpersonal aggressiveness) at schools were examined. In conducting evaluations of the interventions, there were variations in methods of assessing bullying behaviour, in the research designs employed and in the level of schooling and age groups targeted (Rigby, 2002:13). The nature of these programmes and associated outcomes is summarized below.

3.3.4.1 The programmes

According to Rigby (2002:11), the programmes commonly included a number of complementary components directed at different levels of the school organization, for instance, at the level of school administration, the classroom, individual learners involved in bully/victim problems and the wider school community (Rigby, 2002:11). Several programmes focused on the contribution of specific approaches involving the use of curriculum material, teaching methods and the use of continual assistance to schools in implementing anti-bullying programmes. Generally, the programmes employed in the interventions do not differentiate between upper and lower primary school (Rigby, 2002:11)

3.3.4.2 The range of options

On the positive side, the majority of studies have provided results that indicate significant and, in a few cases, substantial reductions in bullying behaviour following the implementation of an anti-bullying programme. The most positive findings have been reported by Olweus (1993:47) in the Bergen area of Norway where a reduction in bullying at the order of 50% was claimed. By contrast, some other researchers have provided evidence of little or no positive change, as in the Toronto Study of Pepler, Craig, Ziegler and Charach (1993:76), or even negative change, as in the evaluation of the Norwegian study conducted by Roland (1989:21) in the Rogaland area of Norway. Most reports showed modest improvement in the reduction of bullying of considerably less than 50%.

3.3.4.3 Generality/specificity of intervention effects

Most studies were concerned with bullying in general, rather than with specific kinds of bullying. An exception is the Bernese study (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:195) with kindergarten learners. Based on educator assessments, it appears that some kinds of bullying may be more readily reduced than others (*cf.* 3.3.3.2). In particular, physical forms of bullying may respond more readily than verbal forms to anti-bullying programmes.

3.3.4.4 Intervention effects in relation to learners' ages

According to Rigby (2002:12), of particular interest in this study are findings relating to interventions directed towards reducing bullying and aggressive behaviour among younger learners. None of the studies examined and compared outcomes for a given programme for learners in the 4 to 8 year range with outcomes for older learners. However, there were several studies which compared results for primary school learners with those of secondary school age. These mainly produced similar results (Rigby, 2002:11).

Regarding changes in reporting being bullied following an intervention, both the Sheffield Study of Smith and Sharp (1994:45) and the Flanders Study of Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij and Van Oost (2000:201) reported that there had been significant reductions in their primary school sample, but not in their secondary school sample.

The Home Office Study of Pitt and Smith (1995:12) provided mainly supportive results. In both of the primary schools where the interventions had occurred, one in London, the other in Liverpool, learners reported being bullied less often after the intervention, but only one of the two secondary schools (the one in London) showed a comparable reduction in learners being bullied.

In the New South Wales Study (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:487) it was again the younger learners (in Grade 7) who showed a decrease in reporting being bullied; older learners reported an increase.

3.3.4.5 Reductions in learners being bullied at kindergartens

In the one study in which bullying itself was addressed in an intervention with kindergarten children (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:140) there was a significant reduction in the proportion of children being bullied, as indicated by the nominations made by children, although, according to educator ratings, reductions did not occur on all indices of bullying. This finding, that a reduction in overall bullying can be induced by an intervention, is consistent with results from the Chicago Study (McMahon, Washburn, Felix, Yakin, & Childrey,

2000:274) for which there was an observed reduction in aggressive behaviour following an intervention. In general, the evidence suggests that bullying/aggressive behaviour among kindergarten learners can be reduced (*cf.* 3.3.5.3), at least as far as the proportion of learners being victimized by others is concerned.

3.3.4.6 Reductions in both being bullied and bullying others

Reductions in the prevalence of bullying following an intervention occurred in some studies with respect to both the proportion of learners being bullied and the proportion of learners bullying others. This was evident in the Norwegian study, as reported by Olweus (1993:47) in the Bergen area. In the Sheffield study of Smith and Sharp (1994:14), reductions in both being bullied and bullying others occurred in the primary school sample only.

3.3.4.7 Reductions in being bullied unaccompanied by reductions in bullying others

Consistency in reductions in being bullied and bullying others has not been found in three other studies.

Firstly, in the Bernese study with kindergarten learners (Olweus,1993:50), there was a reduction in the proportion of learners being bullied, but an increase in the proportion of learners being nominated as bullies.

Secondly, in the Finland study with primary school learners (Salmivalli, Lagerspectz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996:8) there was again an increase in the proportion of learners bullying others, but not themselves being bullied, this time as assessed by a self-report.

Thirdly, evidence from educators in the Expect Respect Study in Texas (Sanchez, Robitson, Lewis, Rosenbluth, Bohran, & Casey, 2000:145) suggests that the proportion of US Primary school learners bullying others after the intervention may actually have increased. Here, however, there is no information on changes in the frequency of being bullied.

Such reported inconsistency between changes in results for being bullied and bullying others suggests that while interventions may sometimes reduce (cf. 3.3.3.2 & 3.3.3.3) the proportion of learners being bullied, those that continue to be bullied may find that there are more learners ready to bully them. This may, in fact, not be an improvement in the situation. According to Rigby (2002, 15), for victimized learners, the bullying may be more intense and troubling. Arguably, an anti-bullying programme may sometimes increase the capacity of some learners to resist being bullied. Those inclined to bully may decide to focus on the more vulnerable learners who have not learned how to take care of themselves (Rigby, 2002:11).

3.3.4.8 Increases in bullying in the absence of interventions

The use of control groups in some of the evaluative studies has been particularly revealing in that it has enabled researchers to see what is likely to happen if no intervention takes place (Rigby, 2002,15). This is especially evident in the Bernese Study (Olweus, 1993:44) where a large increase of 55% in the proportion of kindergarten learners being victimized occurred, according to learner's nominations, in the control group only – that is, among learner's who received no intervention. Hence it is clear that an intervention should be judged, not only in terms of reductions in bullying in an intervention group, but also in terms of what is to be expected without an intervention.

3.3.4.9 Difficulties in identifying crucial components of multi-faceted programmes

Rigby (2002:16) states that most studies have not been particularly helpful in determining what components in a study are crucial. Most programmes reviewed have contained a substantial number of complementary features, including different levels of intervention (as at school, in the classroom, the individual children, the community of parents) and different approaches or methods of intervention. For instance, some have emphasized the need for clearly understood rules and associated sanctions, as in methods employed in the Norwegian Study and in the Bernese Study (Olweus, 1993:46), while others have employed less punitive measures, for example, through the use

of the Method of Shared Concern, as employed by some schools in interventions in Sheffield (Smith & Sharp, 1994:133), and in Finland (Salmivalli *et al.*, 2001:12). In fact, according to Rigby (2002: 16), these interventions, differing as they did in seemingly significant ways, produced similar outcomes.

3.3.4.10 The contribution of curricular activities

A number of programmes have included the use of curriculum content relevant to countering bullying, but only one study has evaluated its effectiveness. The Chicago Project (McMahon *et al.*, 2000:276) directed towards kindergarten learners included lessons on anger management, impulse control and increasing empathy. Furthermore, according to educators, learners in identifying feelings gained knowledge and facial cues, in thinking about how and why learners might respond in conflict situations and in predicting the consequences of their responses. Behavioural observations (but not educator observations) of aggression between learners indicated a reduction in problem behaviours. Although the researchers were not concerned specifically with bullying behaviour, the outcomes were relevant to preventing or controlling the occurrence of aggressive behaviours that involved bullying.

3.3.4.11 The contribution of the teaching method

Only one study has examined the relevance of teaching methodology to the level of bullying behaviour among learners. Cowie, Smith, Boulton and Laver (1994:29) examined the effects of cooperative learning on the interpersonal behaviour of primary school learners. The evidence provided suggests that, in itself, cooperative learning may not be a particularly effective way of countering bullying. Although peer nominations of learners being bullied reduced somewhat following this intervention, the authors regarded their intervention as having provided disappointing results. They maintain that the intervention was conducted in difficult circumstances (in a multi-racial community with relatively severe peer relation problems) and implemented by a staff of educators not fully committed to the approach (Rigby, 2002:14).

3.3.4.12 The contribution of on-going external support in implementing anti-bullying programmes

The Flanders Study (Stevens *et al.*, 2000:202), conducted with both primary and secondary learners, posed the question of whether a research team introducing an intervention should continually provide assistance and support to schools when they are actually implementing a programme. The results suggested that continual support is not helpful: the non-supported schools did at least as well in reducing bullying as those that received continual assistance. Arguably, the loss in autonomy on the part of schools that feel they are being directed from outside is at least as influential in determining outcomes as any advice and support they could have received.

3.3.4.13 Changes in awareness of bullying

It is generally assumed that programmes to counter bullying increase knowledge and awareness of bullying. This assumption is rarely tested. The Expect Respect Project (Sanchez *et al.*, 2000:34), implemented with Grade 5 learners, provided results suggesting that their programme did not result in an increase in knowledge about bullying. It is not evident in the report what constituted knowledge.

At the end of the intervention, there was a greater awareness of bullying going on at the school. It cannot be determined whether this was because bullying had actually increased (as educators in a focus group suggested) or because there had been an increase in sensitivity to bullying behaviour (Rigby, 2002:15).

3.3.4.14 The factor of gender

Evaluations comparing outcomes for boys and girls have tended to produce inconsistent results. In their evaluations of the Norwegian study, Olweus (1993:19) claimed that the reductions in being bullied following the intervention were substantial and similar for boys and girls. In contrast, Roland (1989:24), evaluating effects of the same programme in the Rogaland, claimed that there was a substantial increase in boys reporting being bullied

and at the same time a small reduction in girls being bullied at school. It is possible that long-term outcomes of intervention may differ for boys and girls.

Three years after the Sheffield intervention began, a survey conducted at four primary schools indicated that bullying among boys had continued at a lower level than it had been at the pre-test. Among girls, the percentage of girls claiming to have been bullied was higher than before the intervention (Eslea & Smith, 1998:216).

Nevertheless, girls appear to be more favourably disposed than boys to interventions to reduce (*cf.* 3.3.3.2) bullying. Feedback from girls involved in the New South Wales intervention was significantly more positive than that from boys in their evaluations of the methods used in implementing the programme (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:490).

3.3.4.15 Post-hoc evaluations

Several studies contained evaluative procedures (Rigby, 2002:17), which sought to obtain from the participants in the intervention their views on what components had been most effective. This procedure makes use of subjective judgments and is best regarded as providing estimates of what the participants found most satisfying or attractive about the project (Rigby, 2002:21).

Feedback in the Seville Study (Ortega & Lera, 2000:120) indicated that aspects of the programme that were directed towards improving the school ethos were considered by most learners in the project as helpful in reducing bullying. These included democratic management of social relationships, education in 'feelings and values' throughout the curriculum, and working with individual bullies and victims.

At the conclusion of the Sheffield Study (Smith & Sharp, 1994:121), a large majority of learners (around 80%) in the participating schools indicated that the bullying situation had improved.

Feedback from the New South Wales Study (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:489) indicated that the contribution of the Student Anti-Bullying Committee was by far the most helpful in countering bullying.

3.3.4.16 Parents and educators working together

Although some of the programmes require that educators and parents work closely together, especially in countering bullying among young learners (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:126), no study has specifically examined the contribution of this element in reducing bullying behaviour (Rigby, 2002:22).

3.3.4.17 The extent to which programmes were actually applied

In the application of programmes to counter bullying at schools, it is evident that some schools are more strongly committed to implementation and are more thorough in the work they do (Rigby, 2002:16).

Two studies sought to take this factor into account by conducting interviews with staff at schools afterwards to assess the effort they had put into the intervention. Results from the Sheffield study (Smith & Sharp, 1994:124) for 17 primary schools indicated a substantial correlation between rated staff involvement in applying the programme and the outcome in terms of reducing bullying.

In the evaluation of the Norwegian intervention conducted by Roland (1993:27) in Rogaland, again the degree of school involvement in implementing the programme was significantly associated with reductions in bullying, especially at primary schools. This may help us to understand how similar programmes can at times produce dissimilar outcomes.

3.3.4.18 Implications for interventions with young learners at Australian schools

The evaluative studies reviewed above have a number of implications for addressing bullying among young learners in Australia.

Rigby (2002: 16) states that the most important implication is that there is fairly consistent evidence from evaluations conducted in many countries that bullying behaviour between learners at schools and centres can be reduced (cf. 3.3.7) significantly by well-planned intervention programmes.

Secondly, the chances of success in reducing bullying are greater if interventions are carried out among young learners, that is, in pre-secondary school.

Thirdly, in the absence of a planned intervention to counter bullying, there may well be deterioration in the situation with an increase in bullying behaviour.

Finally, an examination of the content of anti-bullying programmes and approaches reveals that many of the ideas and elements contained in successful interventions are in fact being promoted and employed in countering bullying among Australian learners. These included (Rigby, 2002:15):

- The use of awareness-raising exercises, as in the use of surveys and discussion groups to identify the nature and extent of the problem
- The use of a *whole school approach* in which the resources of the whole school community are drawn upon and coordinated in a systematic manner in addressing the problem of bullying
- Anti-bullying activities being focused at different levels – the school, the classroom, individual children and parent/community groups – have been widely endorsed and implemented
- The use of the school curriculum to provide lessons and activities designed to help children develop knowledge, attitudes and skills that will help them deal more effectively with issues of bullying
- The empowerment of learners so that they can contribute positively towards helping others involved in bully/victim problems, for example,

through applying conflict resolution skills and participating in anti-bullying committees

- The development of strategies and skills to deal effectively with individuals involved in bully/victim problems
- Working cooperatively with parents and parent groups to improve the situation at a school with respect to problems of bullying

Furthermore there are grounds for some caution in supposing that anti-bullying initiatives (Rigby, 2002:20) will invariably produce the intended results. The examination of the evaluations has indicated that not all programmes have proved to be effective. They indicate that the reductions in bullying have tended to be relatively small and to be related more to reducing the proportion of children being victimized than the proportion engaging in bullying. Furthermore, *successful* interventions have not shown that all aspects of bullying are necessarily reduced, for example, physical bullying may be lowered, but verbal may not (Rigby, 2002:24).

Currently available research does not enable Australian educators to decide between models that appear to contain elements that are in contradiction. For example, the Method of Shared Concern of Pikas (1996:76) has been promoted strongly in some programmes that have achieved some success in reducing bullying, for example, in those implemented in Sheffield, England; in Finland; and in Seville, Spain. This is a so-called *No Blame Approach* based upon principles that are contrary to the principles of behavioural control underpinning the Norwegian model advanced and promoted by Olweus (1993:34). Hence, we have a situation in which research cannot arbitrate on a controversy over divergent approaches, both of which have enjoyed a measure of success in implementations that have, it should be said, contained other diverse elements. Some practical resolution of this problem may lie in determining in which situations it is more appropriate to use one of these approaches rather than the other.

A related and unresolved issue of practical interest to educators and parents is whether young learners should receive negative sanctions when they bully

others, as Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:182) propose, or be treated more positively, as Linke (1998:43) suggests. This is an important matter upon which there is no final verdict available from research.

The most relevant study on this issue is one by Gribbin (1979:350). Her experimental study compared the effectiveness of two strategies:

- Traditional methods of dealing with aggressive, anti-social behaviour among two to four year-olds (involving separating learners who had acted aggressively from others and isolating them for a spell)
- So-called aggressively *special attention and warmth*. She reported that aggressive behaviour flourished in the latter condition, but rarely occurred in the former, that study focused upon aggressiveness, rather than upon bullying itself.

There is no necessary advantage to a school in external *experts* being continually involved in the implementation of an anti-bullying programme. A sense of ownership of the programme by the school may be at least as important as any expert help that may be available from outsiders. In fact, too much *interference* may jeopardize the prospects of success (Rigby, 2002: 16).

Furthermore, there is persuasive evidence that a crucial factor in determining a positive outcome in reducing bullying at a school is the commitment of the staff to implementing the programme. Hence, it may be that the process by which an anti-bullying programme is developed and the extent to which members of the school community become engaged in its implementation is at least as important as the content of the programme.

The dearth of Australian research in evaluating interventions is of serious concern. Even though Australian educators can learn from the work conducted overseas, there is always the suspicion that generalizations across cultures may not be valid.

3.3.5 Empirically evaluated Australian projects addressing bullying at schools

A number of programmes have been developed and promoted at Australian schools by groups that are outside educational systems. As yet, however, they have not been evaluated empirically (Rigby, 2002:23) and are therefore not included in the interventions described below.

3.3.5.1 Friendly Schools Project

The Friendly Schools Project was developed by a research group led by Associate Professor Donna Cross at Curtin University in Western Australia (Centre for Health Promotion Research, 1999). Its aim is to assess the effectiveness of whole school intervention aimed at preventing, reducing and managing bullying in the primary school setting.

The target group for the study comprised Grade 4 learners, educators and parents across the years 2000 and 2001. The assumptions are that bullying can be reduced (cf. 3.3.7 & 3.3.11) if learners develop *skills and values required to respond adaptively to bullying...*, support learners who are *bullied*, and refrain from bullying others. It is also asserted that a whole school approach is needed that engages parents as well as staff.

The programme involves a wide range of activities, including extensive consultation and policy development. A central feature is the Educator Manual outlining nine lessons which provide information about bullying, how to feel good about yourself and others, and how to cooperate with others. The lessons are intended to be practical and to address the needs and interests of learners in Grades 4 and 5. This programme emphasizes the importance of increasing cooperative behaviour among learners and focuses on values that such behaviour encourages (Cross, 2002:1).

Unlike many programmes addressing bullying, this programme is well informed by findings from recent research in the area. Although the curriculum material is designed for Grades 4 and 5 at primary school, some of it could be adapted for younger learners (Cross, 2002:1).

3.3.5.2 Mind Matters

Dealing with bullying and harassment, Mind Matters is a national mental health strategy funded by the then Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (Mind Matters, 2007:1). Part of it provides classroom materials for use in a whole-school approach in dealing with bullying and harassment (Rigby, 2002:29).

It seeks to develop in learners an understanding of what bullying is, and explores bullying themes through literature and drama. The proposed curriculum content is more suitable for older learners, but could be adapted for use with younger ones. The programme has been promoted throughout Australia and has been used by numerous schools; however, as yet, it has not been evaluated (Rigby, 2002:29).

3.3.5.3 From Bullying to Responsible Citizenship

This is a restorative approach to building safe school communities. This project was supported by the Criminology Research Council in 1996 and aimed at reducing bullying among primary school learners through their involvement in a programme of classroom activities. Its rationale is based upon Ahmed's conception of PRISM (Programme for Reintegration and Individual Shame Management; 1999:4). Broadly, it is assumed that if learners identify with the school and handle feelings of shame appropriately, they will not become involved in bully/victim problems. The qualities that the programme seeks to develop in learners are respect for others, the capacity and openness required to consider what others are saying, and a readiness to participate in a process that enables feelings of shame to be appropriately discharged. Curriculum material, exercise and role-plays having been developed to achieve these ends.

The programme has been tested at a number of primary schools during 1996 with 978 learners enrolled in Grades 4 to 7. Evidence suggested that learners who bullied others had relatively little pride in their school, that learners who were frequently victimized had little respect for themselves, and that the

programme could bring about a desirable change in attitudes relating to bullying behaviour (Morrison 2001:35).

It was suggested that the key to changing the behaviour of learners who bully others lies in persuading them to acknowledge feelings of shame and make amends by repairing any harm that has been done. Unfortunately, no evidence has been presented concerning the extent to which the programme can bring about actual reduction in bullying behaviour (Morrison, 2001:36).

3.3.6 Evaluation of three programmes used to counter bullying at Australian schools

Three studies, the Bermise Study (Alasker & Valkanover, 2001:188), the New South Wales Study (Peterson & Rigby, 1999:485) and the Sheffield Co-operative Learning Study (Cowie, Smith, Boulton, & Laver, 1994:35) were undertaken at schools to counteract bullying. The Bermise Study focused mainly on kindergarten learners and ran for approximately four months. The New South Wales Study focused on secondary school learners and relied strongly on learner participation. The main focus was on learners in the first year of high school. The Sheffield Cooperative Learning Study focused on learners aged 7 to age 13 years and was run for a period of two years. The aim of this study was to create an environment where learners would learn to cooperate.

3.3.6.1 The Bernese Study conducted at Australian schools

This is the only study that has rigorously assessed an intervention designed to reduce bullying at kindergartens and was recently conducted in Berne, Switzerland (Rigby, 2002:33).

The work of Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:147) is referred to as the Bernese Study and the first report in English became available in 2001. The programme, as described by Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:188), was directed by a research team and implemented by educators. It required *intensive focused supervision* of kindergarten educators for a period of

approximately four months, during which time eight meetings with educators were conducted.

The aims and content of the meetings can be summarized as follows (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2002:189):

- To sensitize educators to different kinds of aggressive behaviours perpetrated by learners. Educators were assigned observational tasks upon which they were asked to report back later. They were asked to discuss their findings and their *often idealized* expectations of pre-school learners.
- To promote close contact and cooperation between educators and parents on matters relating to bullying.
- To convey the importance of setting limits to learners' behaviour and the necessity of providing sets of rules to regulate learners' interpersonal behaviour. Educators were asked to *elaborate some behaviour codes with the learners and to come back with the rules that would be used in their classes* (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:188).
- To ensure that the behaviour of the learners' was managed in a consistent manner. Educators were urged to make use of both positive and negative sanctions, and basic learning principles.
- To facilitate discussion among educators on issues of interest. These included whether learners should inform when they received 'unwanted behaviour'; the role and responsibility of so-called non-involved learners and bystanders; the possible relevance of empathy, gender differences and expectations of so-called *foreign children*.

3.3.6.1.1 Participants

All kindergarten educators in Berne, apart from those used in a preliminary study, were invited to take part in a study which was described to them (Rigby, 2002:33). This guaranteed that no schools would have been

influenced by participation in an earlier study in which assessments of bullying had taken place.

The centres were self-selected; none were coerced into taking part. The centres in the study were those motivated to try to reduce bullying among their learners. Results could be generalized to centres which were keen to undertake anti-bullying programmes. Centres were asked to say whether they wanted to be in the study immediately and thereby become an intervention group, or were prepared to wait a year – and in the meantime to serve the purpose of a control group (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:188–189). This may be regarded as desirable in that it enabled all the interested schools to receive the proffered help to reduce bullying sooner or later. However, as the researchers conceded, the centres that wanted to start immediately (and did so) were more strongly motivated than the control groups which were ready to wait (Rigby, 2002:34).

Arguably, at the *intervention centres* there was a more urgent need to get started. This was a minor defect in the design which could have been avoided by random allocation of centres to the different *treatments*. A positive feature of the sampling in this intervention study was that parental permission to participate was provided for 99,4% of the learners at the 16 kindergartens that were included in the study (Rigby, 2002:35).

The numbers and gender ratios in the eight intervention and eight control centres were broadly similar with 152 learners (50% girls) in the former group and 167 (50,9% girls) in the latter. Finally, it should be noted that although the learners in this study are described as 'kindergarten' learners, the ages of the participants in the Berne studies were somewhat higher than are normally found in Australian kindergartens, being between 5 and 7 years (Rigby, 2002:34).

3.3.6.1.2 Assessment methods

Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:12) acknowledged that measurement of bullying among young learners is difficult, and they sensibly opted for using more than one method of data collection.

One method made use of interviews with each learner. Photographs of every learner in the class were shown one by one to each interviewee, who was asked to describe how the learner in the photograph interacted with others. Scores for each learner in the class were computed according to the percentages of nominations he/she received from the class members indicating that he/she engaged in bullying others or was bullied – or fitted both categories. There was a high consensus in the learners' judgments suggesting reliability (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:192). However, many learners (over 70%) nominated themselves as victims, and such judgments were discounted as unrealistic as this estimation was considered unreasonably high. Therefore results for self-nominations were not used in the study.

The second method made use of educator ratings. Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:195) point out that unlike the situation with older learners, educators are less focused on the academic content they must impart and generally have a better opportunity to observe the social behaviour of learners. This appears to be the case in Australia as well as overseas. Educators were asked to rate learners on a five-point scale according to their tendencies to bully others and their tendencies to be victimized by others. Methods of bullying were differentiated in making these judgments: educators were asked to rate individual learners according to whether they practised physical, verbal, relational (exclusion) or property-related bullying and whether they were victimized by such means (Rigby, 2002:35).

3.3.6.1.3 Research design

The researchers made use of the classical pre-test / post-test control group research design. This requires that two equivalent groups of respondents or units be selected, one of which is subjected to an intervention procedure, while the other is not. Eight intervention and eight control schools were employed. Data were collected at the start and at the end of the school year. Outcomes for the intervention and control groups were then compared and statistical analysis undertaken to evaluate differences (Rigby, 2002:35).

3.3.6.1.4 Outcomes

The main results were presented in graphical form and their statistical significance is not reported in detail. The authors state what was statistically significant, but not the level of significance. What the graphs and their interpretation by the authors show are the following (Rigby, 2002:35):

- According to reports from learners in the intervention group, there was a reduction of 15% in the proportion of learners nominated by peers as being victimized. At the same time there was an increase of 55% of learners in the control group who were nominated as victims.
- Consistent with the above, educators in the intervention group reported a significant reduction in learners being victimized physically and also indirectly, that is, through being isolated. However, there was a reported increase in the extent to which learners were observed being bullied verbally (Rigby, 2002:35).
- From neither the data derived from learner's nominations nor the data derived from educator ratings was there any evidence of a lessening in bullying behaviour (that is: learners bullying other learners) in the intervention or in the control schools; indeed, according to learners' judgments in both groups there was a slight increase.
- The outcomes thus appear to be somewhat mixed, depending upon the way bullying was assessed. Generally, the intervention appears to have led to a decrease in the proportion of learners being victimized, despite a suggestion of a slight increase in the proportion of learners actually engaging in bullying behaviour.

Finally, there is an indication that in the absence of an intervention programme, the proportion of learners attending kindergarten being victimised by peers is likely to increase substantially (Rigby, 2002:35).

3.3.6.1.5 Critique

Strictly speaking, the Bernese study (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:129) is concerned with aggressive actions perpetrated by young learners aged 4 - 7 years. A good deal, but not all, of this behaviour may be termed bullying. The researchers appropriately made use of multiple measures of learners' behaviour, drawing upon both educators' reports and learners' nominations.

Unfortunately, the authors do not report the degree of association between the measures, as do Crick, Casas & Mosher (1997:580) in their study of relational and overt aggression in an American pre-school. These authors reported low but significant correlations between their measures for some sub-groups. It would have strengthened the Berne study if they could have reported evidence of the concurrent validity of the methods used in their data collection.

The use of a control group design allowed the researchers to take into account changes that took place over time independently of the intervention. This peer-nomination method, which provided important results in this study, is widely used in research into bullying in many countries in Europe and North America, including some studies of kindergarten learners. The use of this method has, however, run into serious problems with Ethics Committees in Australia (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:189). It is commonly discouraged on the grounds that it is unfair to ask learners to make judgments about other learners. It is therefore not possible at this stage to obtain comparable Australian data using this method.

The authors (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:190) claim that "a *prevention programme* based upon educator counselling had an effect on reducing the number or intensity of aggressive interactions and of diminishing the risk of being victimized". According to Rigby (2002:19), this general conclusion is somewhat overblown. It should be noted that it is inferred from accounts or ratings of being victimized, rather than accounts or ratings of victimizing others. The evidence for a decrease in learners being victimized is not entirely consistent.

According to educator data, the reduction is reported as occurring in physical bullying and indirect bullying. However, there was a reported significant increase in verbal bullying and no change in material-related victimization. Furthermore, there was no evidence that the proportion of learners taking part in bullying others decreased. The authors (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:191) claim that, in the absence of a systematic intervention programme of the kind they initiated, bullying is likely to increase. This claim is supported by the data derived from the learners' nominations of learners being victimized, and also from educator ratings of material-related victimization. But note that there is no evidence from educator data of *things getting worse* for vulnerable learners in the control group as far as physical, verbal and indirect bullying were concerned. The general claim is made that, if there is no systematic intervention, peer victimization is likely to increase over the course of a year. This claim rests on inferences from the learners' data and is not consistently supported by educators' judgments (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:192).

3.3.6.1.6 Questions raised by this study

The Bernese Study (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:190) raised the following pertinent questions:

Why might bullying tend to increase over time when not systematically addressed?

There are several possibilities. One is that increases are 'not real', but are due to an increased sensitivity to the phenomenon of bullying. Learner and educator may come to include as bullying what was not noticed or not regarded as bullying at an earlier stage. This could have occurred in the control schools, given that these schools (though seemingly not in such urgent need to intervene to reduce it) nevertheless were interested in reducing bullying, and members of the school community may have increased their sensitivity to it over time.

In addition, the very fact that the educators and learners were involved in assessing the prevalence of bullying would have affected their sensitivity to it. This has been observed to be an important contributory factor to change in

the absence of a planned intervention (Rigby, 2002:35). However, it should be noted that the individuals in the intervention group were subjected to more information and more persuasion relevant to bullying, but (as far as the children's data was concerned) did not show an increase in the percentages of learners being nominated as victims.

A different explanation seems more plausible. Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:124) propose that what happens over time when a learner is bullied can be explained by the so-called gradual consolidation hypothesis. According to this view, being victimized can result in a gradual change in self-perception that may make one feel increasingly negative about oneself – that is, more helpless, worthless and ashamed. This may account for such learners becoming more likely to see themselves as victims and arguably becoming more likely to be victimized. Learners with low self-esteem are more likely than others to elicit bullying responses from others. It is certainly possible that the anti-bullying work of educators in the intervention group to some extent cancelled out this tendency.

Given that there were fewer victims after the intervention aimed at stopping bullying, why was there no corresponding decrease in the number of learners identified as bullies?

One might have expected that a decrease in the proportion of learners being victimized (as in the learners' data) would have been accompanied by a decrease in the proportion of those who bullied others (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:190). But the proportion of bullies did not change. It may have been that those who bullied were concentrating on fewer victims. Possibly some of the learners who were bullied at the pre-intervention time had subsequently learned how to defend themselves more effectively. Alternatively (or additionally), possibly over time the bullies had gained a better appreciation of who was more amenable to being bullied or gave greater satisfaction when bullied. If this is the case, one may question whether an increase in intensity of bullying focusing on fewer individuals constitutes much of an improvement. Relatively severe suffering on the part of a smaller minority of learners may be

at least as objectionable as suffering at a lower intensity level by a greater number of victimized learners (Rigby, 2002:37).

Why was there inconsistency in the changes in bullying behaviour as reported by educators?

Educators reported a decrease in physical and indirect forms of aggression, but an increase in verbal bullying, following the intervention. Alsaker and Valkanover (2001:130) suggest that as physical bullying declined, educators may have turned their attention more towards forms of bullying earlier seen as less serious, and become more sensitive to the nuances of verbal abuse.

This may be so, but we should ask why they had not also become more sensitive to subtle forms of indirect aggression, which was seen as decreasing. It is possible that the differences in outcomes for the different kinds of bullying may be because some forms of bullying are more amenable to change following an intervention than others (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:190).

What aspect(s) of the interventions brought about the observed changes in bullying behaviour?

Granted that there is some persuasive, but not entirely consistent evidence that the intervention resulted in less bullying being experienced by the learners than would otherwise have been the case, one may ask what was it about the intervention that brought about the desired change (Rigby, 2002:37). The main elements of the programme may be summarized as follows (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:130):

- The provision of a series of guided discussions with kindergarten educators on ways in which the problem of bullying could be addressed.
- The need for educators to be able to observe and identify bullying behaviour among young learners.
- The importance of educators of young learners working closely with the learners' parents.

- The need for limits and rules for the regulation of behaviour among young learners, ideally generated with the support of the learners themselves.

3.3.6.2 The New South Wales Study conducted at Australian schools

This study by Petersen and Rigby (1999:485) was conducted at a secondary school with learners who were aged 11 - 16 years. It is included because it is currently the only published study of an intervention study in Australia. The school counsellor, Libby Petersen, directed it.

3.3.6.2.1 Programme

The New South Wales Study (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485) was based largely upon the assumption that a group of learners who were dedicated to working with staff to counter bullying could contribute significantly in reducing the level of peer victimization. Hence, in this study, there was a heavy emphasis upon learner participation in anti-bullying action.

This was in addition to the development of a school anti-bullying policy and the employment of a non-punitive method of dealing with bully/victim cases at the school, in this case the Method of Shared Concern of Pikas (1996:105). The basis for learner participation in anti-bullying activities was the formation of a voluntary learners' anti-bullying committee which worked closely with the school counsellor and produced a number of school-based initiatives.

These included a *peer helper* group whose members identified learners involved in bully/victim problems and offered help especially to victims. Training was provided for these peer helpers to help them to listen in a caring, sensitive way. They were encouraged to put learners involved in bully/victim problems in touch with an educator who would help them to use the Method of Shared Concern (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485), but only if that was what learners wished. In addition, there was a public speaking group that addressed meetings on anti-bullying problems; a poster group that publicized anti-bullying initiatives; and a drama group that presented performances to the school to raise awareness of the problem of bullying (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485).

Other learner-based activities included visiting feeder schools to reassure future learners of their support and to welcome them when they arrived. This committee met regularly with the school counsellor during the course of the intervention.

3.3.6.2.2 Participants

A co-educational high school in New South Wales took part. There were 758 learners in Grades 7, 9, 10 and 11 in 1995 and 657 learners in those same grades in 1997 (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485).

3.3.6.2.3 Assessment

The intervention was assessed in two ways. The first method utilized a reliable self-report assessment tool, the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ) developed by Rigby and Slee (1995:9). This was administered prior to the intervention and again two years later and provided self-reported information regarding the level of peer victimization according to year and gender. The second method involved asking learners a series of questions to be answered anonymously about the effectiveness of specified components used in the intervention (Rigby & Slee, 1999:9).

3.3.6.2.4 Research design

A pre-test / post-test design was employed without a control group. The same questionnaire was administered after the programme had been running for two years. Respondents were not identified in any way and comparisons were made in relation to the same class levels in 1995 and 1997 (Rigby & Slee, 1999:9).

3.3.6.2.5 Outcomes

According to Rigby and Slee (1995:9), the results indicated that while there was no overall reduction in bullying evident, there was a significantly lower proportion of Grade 7 learners reporting being bullied by peers than was the case two years earlier. In addition, significantly more learners expressed the view that the school was a safe place for young people who find it hard to

defend themselves; more learners thought that educators were interested in trying to stop bullying; fewer learners reported being threatened with harm by other learners; fewer learners reported that they had taken part in group bullying; and fewer learners indicated that they could *use help from somebody to stop someone bullying them* (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485).

By contrast, among learners in Grade 9, there had been an increase in the proportion of learners reporting being bullied compared to two years earlier at the same class level (Rigby & Slee, 1999:9). Learners' evaluations of the effectiveness of the methods indicated that the activities of the learners' anti-bullying committee were rated highest, especially the work of the school *welcomers* programme for new enrolments. It was noted that on eight of the 10 programmes evaluated, girls responded significantly more approvingly than boys. This is consistent with previous studies that have shown that girls are more positive in supporting action against bullying (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485).

3.3.6.2.6 Critique

The absence of a control group made it impossible to ascertain whether the reported changes in the level of peer victimization were induced specifically by the intervention programme or were part of a general trend among schools in New South Wales (Petersen & Rigby, 1999:485). However, it seems unlikely that any trend towards the reduction in bullying at secondary schools state-wide would have affected the year groups differently. We need therefore to account for the significant reduction in the Grade 7 level, which was contrary to what happened among learners in higher levels of schooling.

Arguably, Petersen and Rigby (1999:485) felt the programme was of particular relevance to learners in the first year of high school. They were the principal beneficiaries of the efforts of the learner Anti-Bullying Committee. The work of older learners in providing them with support could have been effective, together with the use of a non-blaming approach to deal with bullying. This approach ensured that victims could inform when they were bullied without risking further recrimination from those who had bullied them. Younger

learners may also have been less resistant to the influence of the programme than older learners.

3.3.6.3 The Sheffield Cooperative Learning Study conducted at Australian schools

This is an unusual study in that it enabled the researchers to evaluate the impact of one particular kind of intervention on the incidence of bullying at schools (Cowie *et al.*, 1994:22). The intervention centred on the use of Co-operative Group Work (CGW) in creating positive changes in interpersonal relations between learners, which would make bullying less likely.

The rationale was that, if learners learned to cooperate well with one another in the course of their schoolwork, they would relate better (and bully less) in other contexts. There is some empirical support for this supposition. Both learners who bully and learners who are victimized by their peers have been shown to have relatively uncooperative attitudes (Rigby, Cox & Black, 1997:361).

3.3.6.3.1 Programme

In-service training and support were provided for educators involved in the Sheffield Cooperative Learning Study project over a two-year period. In the initial phase, in the course of a two-day workshop, a three member training team introduced a range of CGW strategies. These included trust-building exercises, problem-solving groups, role-playing, discussion groups, report back sessions and debriefing. Subsequently, educators were asked to adapt what they had learned and employ it as a teaching method (Rigby, 2002:50).

3.3.6.3.2 Participants

Three schools expressing interest in the project were involved. In total, some 16 classes and 149 learners between the ages of 7 and 12 years participated. Some learners were in classes that participated in the first year only, some in second year only and some in both years (Rigby, 2002:51).

3.3.6.3.3 Assessment

Rigby (2002:51) states that the assessment of bully/victim status was based upon individual interviews with learners who were shown photographs of other learners in their class. They were then asked to indicate whether they were bullied by other learners and whether they bullied other learners. Where there was a relatively high consensus pointing to a learner belonging to a particular category, he/she was classified accordingly (Cowie *et al.*, 1994:22).

3.3.6.3.4 Research design

At two of the schools involved in the intervention, classes were matched with classes receiving a normal curriculum in the same grade. The third school provided three classes for which there were no controls. Altogether, 11 classes were allocated to the condition that experienced CGW. A further set of five classes served as controls (Rigby, 2002:52).

3.3.6.3.5 Outcomes

For the most part, the results did not indicate changes in the tendency for learners to bully others. Outcomes for intervention and control groups did not differ. There was, however, some indication that fewer learners were being perceived as victims in the intervention group compared to the control group at the conclusion of the project. This suggests that there may have been some impact in helping some learners to become less vulnerable through the acquisition of social skills in the classroom (Cowie *et al.*, 1994:22).

3.3.6.3.6 Critique

According to Cowie *et al.* (1994:22), this study is unique in that it examines the impact of one particular approach to reducing bullying, that is, by providing a learning environment in which learners learn to cooperate. The assumption is that cooperation in the classroom will result in changes in behaviour towards one another in other places and at other times.

The authors (Cowie *et al.*, 1994:22) described the outcome after two years as somewhat disappointing. In their discussion of the results, the authors suggest

possible reasons for the overall lack of success in reducing bullying by CGW. Firstly, they note that some of the educators were far from convinced that the method was appropriate because it involved a lessening in their control over learner activities. It also involved the potential for disorder. Secondly, the schools chosen for the intervention were ones with a relatively high degree of racial tension, which was difficult to counter (Cowie *et al.*, 1994:22).

One implication derived from this study is that a high degree of acceptance of the appropriateness of the methods being used to produce changes in learners' social relations may be necessary to produce optimum results (Rigby, 2002:52).

3.4 JAPAN

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has become increasingly concerned with the rising number of school-related problems such as school refusal syndrome and bullying. In 1995, the MoE of Japan deployed professional school counsellors to schools to consult with learners, parents and educators in order to solve problems such as bullying (Morita, Mitsuru, Masaharu, Kanehiro & Yaichiwakai, 1999:18).

According to the 1996 and 1997 surveys, more than half of middle school learners said they did nothing about bullying (Sōmuchō, 1998:15-19). Unfortunately, the majority of bystanders are afraid of being bullied if they intervene, or because they do not care about the victims. Morita *et al.* (1999:18) points out the characteristics of bullying in Japan:

- Bullies are invisible to educators and others.
- Victims can become victimizers, and vice versa.
- Anybody can be a victim.
- There are many unidentified victimizers and a small number of particular victims.
- Very few learners try to stop bullying.

- The bullies often exhibit other types of inappropriate behaviour (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994:21-28).

3.4.1 Introduction and background to bullying in Japan

Bullying (*ijime*) has always been a fact of life, both among learners and among adults. The Minister of Education of Japan defines bullying as a physical or psychological attack against weaker ones, which brings deep suffering to the victims (Hōmushō, 1994:3).

Morita and Kenji (1994: 48) categorize four roles in bullying: victims, victimizers, the audience and bystanders. Several learners, *the victimizers*, bully a child, *the victim*, the rest of the learners are the audience who cheer for the bullying and the bystanders allow bullying without intervening (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994:48-52).

What constitutes bullying in Japan is interesting in that it covers a wide range of behaviours. This range includes (Omori, 2006:1) verbal threats, ridicule and/or name calling, hiding property, shunning by the group, *silent treatment* by the group, meddling, physical violence and coercion to obtain money.

In the general order of frequency the range is as follows (Omori, 2006:1): ridicule and/or name calling (27,8%); verbal threats (17,3%); physical violence (16,4%); shunning by the group (16,3%); hiding property (7,4%); "silent treatment" by the group (6,1%); miscellaneous. (4,3%); coercion to obtain money/food (2,9%); meddling (1,5%) (Omori, 2006:1).

In the U.S.A. some of these might not actually be considered bullying; rather, the ones involving physical violence and the threat of it would be, the others would generally be chalked up to *they behave that way at that age* type of thinking (Omori, 2006:1).

Some 37,8% of those learners who were bullied did not tell anyone, including their parents (Omori, 2006:1). 19,3% of the parents who were told complained that the educators did nothing about it, yet 96% of the educators said they

took concrete steps to end it once informed, establishing that there is a major gap in how the problem is perceived and how it is dealt with.

Usually an individual learner is targeted relating to his/her appearance, behaviour or some other aspect of his/her personality. For girls, the targets are generally dress and hairstyle-related (Omori, 2006:2).

Historically, Japan's post-shogunate education system had been designed to turn out people who had exactly the same store of knowledge, thought alike and acted alike. These were all attributes that were enormously beneficial to the pre-1945 military regime that controlled the country and for the first two-and-a-half decades after 1945, during which the government directed the rebuilding of Japan's war-ravaged economy and society (Omori, 2006:2).

By the early 1970s learners had begun to rebel against the system. Some learners began refusing to attend school, some began a pattern of violence against fellow learners' others began to attack their educators, while still others began destroying school property.

During the rest of the 1980s and continuing on into the 1990s, a new element was introduced into Japanese schools that dramatically increased the volume and vehemence of *ijime*. This was the return to Japan of thousands of school-aged learners who had been overseas with their parents and educated abroad up to that point.

All of them had developed foreign behavioural patterns that made them stand out like sore thumbs (Omori, 2006:1). In a shocking number of cases, the educators of these learners resented them and treated them badly. In virtually every case, there were stay-at-home learners, both male and female, who took their resentment of the de-Japanized learners to extremes, harassing and tormenting them endlessly.

3.4.2 Japanese initiatives to counter bullying at schools

School bullying began to receive attention after the sensational media coverage of a series of suicides related to bullying in the mid-1980s

(Hōmushō, 1994:3). One 13-year-old committed suicide, leaving a note describing how several boys had repeatedly bullied him at his primary school. He had been beaten, threatened with death and was forced to perform humiliating acts. Before his suicide, he even received a sympathy card signed by his classmates and four educators, including his homeroom educator, after they had staged a mock funeral for him in the classroom (Asahi, 1986:2).

3.4.2.1 Initiatives taken by government authorities

Since 1985, the Minister of Education has collected data on bullying cases that educators referred to the board of education. Not all educators report all bullies, so the Minister of Education's figures underestimate the incidence of bullying. In the 2002-3 school year, 39,000 cases of bullying were reported in public elementary, middle and high schools (Naikakufu, 2004:3). The number of cases peaks among fifth- to ninth-graders, and then decreases among high school learners.

3.4.2.1.1 Forms of bullying identified by the National Diet

The National *Diet* of Japan is Japan's bicameral legislature composed of a lower house, the House of Representatives and an upper house, the House of Councillors. Both houses of the *Diet* are directly elected under a parallel voting system. As well as passing laws, the *Diet* is formally responsible for selecting the Prime Minister.

In 1998, the problem was taken up in the National *Diet* (Omori, 2006:3). Then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto likened the country's schools to battlefields, and called for reforms that would end the mind-numbing competitive exams learners are required to take.

The forms of *ijime* identified by the National *Diet* include the following (Lebra, 2004:89):

- Stealing, robbery and extortion. This can include stealing school supplies and even the learner's lunch, or forcing the learner to give the offender money.

- Concealment and destruction of property. This can include hiding and/or destroying the learner's school possessions and even clothes (for example, learners have an extra pair of shoes at school they change into when they get there.) The learner's desk might be moved or damaged, along with their books, notebooks.
- Bodily violence. This is just what it says, learners being attacked physically.
- Slavery. The victim can be forced to run errands for the abuser.
- Social abuse, from humiliation to isolation. This can be verbal or written forms of abuse, can include some forms of sexual harassment and can also result in social isolation, something which would be even more important in Japan with its emphasis on the group than in the U.S. with its emphasis on individualism.

One of the unsettling aspects is the reaction of officialdom to the abuse (Lebra, 2004:94). *The homeroom educator, when she (or he) finds ijime going on in her class (some victims do tell her), may suppress the information to protect the reputation of her class and herself; the school's top administration may also deny that ijime is taking place in the school (cf. 2.2.2).*

3.4.2.1.2 Solving the Problem: Steps taken to handle bullying incidents

From 1992 to 1996 the number of arrests in relation to bullying fluctuated. In 1992 there were 322 persons involved in 105 incidents; both figures went down in 1993, then increased slightly in 1994. The figures took a jump, though, in 1995 when they went from 103 incidents in 1994 to 160 incidents, and from 372 persons to 534 persons detained or arrested. Interestingly enough, the number of incidents was almost exactly the same in 1996 (162), but the number of arrests declined to 426 (Lebra, 2004:101).

In 1994 there were, according to Management and Coordination Agency figures (Henshall, 1999:68), 396 reported cases of violence against educators by junior high school learners and 124 by senior high school learners. By

contrast, the National Education Association of American estimates that every day 100,000 learners carry a gun to class, and every day 6,250 educators are threatened with violence and 260 are actually injured. That is, in a mere two days in America there are more incidents of learner violence against educators than in an entire year in Japan (Henshall, 1999:68).

The type of bullying is much more violent in the U.S.A. and can also be sexual in nature. There is also the fact that guns are available to the learners and there are incidents like the Columbine shooting. So, although Japan still has a problem with bullying, their form of bullying is different from that experienced by American learners at their schools (Omori, 2006:5).

One of the expected reactions to *ijime*, on the part of some learners, is a growing fear of going to school, resulting in what is called *school phobia*. Learners will miss school for a short time, perhaps a few days, or just plain stop going to school altogether (Omori, 2006:3).

3.4.2.1.3 School refusal syndrome

The Minister of Education defines school refusal syndrome (*tōkōkyōhi*) as the phenomenon where learners do not go to school or cannot go to school despite a desire to go to school, due to some psychological, emotional, physical and/or social factor and the environment, with the exception of illness or economic factors (Monshibo, 1999:12). In the 1960s, those learners were diagnosed as school phobic, based on psychiatric behavioural abnormalities. These learners were distinguished from the learners whose non attendance was caused by financial and family problems (Morita & Yoshimitsu, 1991:18).

Since the 1980s, the number of learners with school refusal syndrome has been increasing rapidly and school refusal syndrome has become a nationwide school problem (Morita & Yoshimitsu, 1991:18). In 1966, the Minister of Education began to keep records of those learners who were absent from school for 50 days or more because of school phobia. However, since 1991, the Minister of Education has counted those who were absent from school for 30 days or more in terms of school refusal syndrome (Morita,

et al., 1999:18). These learners are called *the learners of non-attendance* at school (**futōkōsei**).

In many cases, bullying occurs among classmates and members of extracurricular clubs.

Two types of learners have school refusal syndrome: those who cannot go to school because of emotional or neurotic problems; and those learners who do not intend to go to school because of truancy. Truants deliberately skip school to spend time with their friends. They tend to be low-achievers, act rebelliously towards educators, are late for school, ditch classes and have family problems. About 14% of middle school learners with school refusal syndrome are truants (Monbukagakusho, 2002:38).

3.4.2.1.4 Causes of school refusal syndrome

Many learners with school refusal syndrome want to go to school and/or think that they should go to school, but cannot because of emotional disturbance, anxiety or some other neurotic problem. School refusal syndrome frequently means specifically this type of learner, not the truant. The main cause of school refusal syndrome is problems with peers, especially bullying. According to the 1988 survey, about one-third of learners with school refusal syndrome said they would not go to school because of bullying (Hōmushō, 1994:32).

One of the main forms of learner misbehaviour is called **ijime** (bullying). In the 1996-1997 school year, some 51 544 incidents were reported from 13 693 public schools (Omori, 2006:1). Overall about one-third of public school learners say they have been victims of **ijime**.

The education department felt that it was important to build a support network of educators, parents, nurse educators, counsellors, and physicians to help learners with school refusal syndrome return to school or to find an alternative means of education. Nurse educators have taken on significant roles in counselling learners with school refusal syndrome in their health-care rooms. According to a 1995-1996 survey, 28 400 learners spent their school days in

the public health-care room, instead of the classroom (Ogi, 2000:102). Since the 1995 amendment to the School Education Law (1995) nurse educators can be the chief educator of public health, and since the 1998 Amendment to the Law of the Teaching Certificate (1998), nurse educators with at least three years of experience can teach public health classes at middle schools and physical education at elementary schools (Morita, 1999:237).

According to Monbukagakusho (2002:34), the number of learners with school refusal syndrome has increased rapidly since the 1980s. As a result, public adaptation classrooms and private free schools have been established specifically for them. According to a 1999 survey, there are 779 public adaptation classrooms and more than 200 recognized private alternative schools in Japan. In the 2001-2002 school year, the number of learners who attended public adaptation schools was 11 266 (1 968 elementary school learners and 9 298 middle school learners) (Monbukagakushō, 2002:34).

3.4.2.1.5 Providing support for the victim

Since 1992, the Minister of Education has allowed the Board of Education to count attendance at private free schools as regular school attendance (Tōkōkyohi, 1992:10). In 1984, parents of learners with school refusal syndrome founded the Concerned Society for School Refusal Syndrome, which developed into a nationwide Network for Parents Who Have a Child with School Refusal Syndrome in 1990. The support networks have summer camps, group counselling, and meetings to find the best solution for their children (Tōkōkyohi, 1992:10).

The National Association for Home Schooling promotes home schooling for learners with school refusal as an alternative to school education. Furthermore, since April 2002, the educational Board of Education in Shiki City in Saitama Prefecture has sent temporary educators and volunteers with teaching certificates into the homes of learners with school refusal syndrome for one to four hours of daily instruction (Asahe, 2002:3). In 2005, the Minister of Education provided a weeklong camp for foundation and intermediate

school learners with school refusal syndrome so that they could experience group activities (Tōkōkyōhi, 1992:13).

3.4.2.1.6 Learners with *hikikomori*

Since attendance at high school is not compulsory, there are no public facilities specifically for high school learners with school refusal syndrome. In fact, there are many young adults, called *hikikomori*, who confine themselves to their homes and isolate themselves from society. Many specialists claim that the number of *hikikomori* may have reached one million (Morishita, 2000:220; Saitō, 2003:56). Among the *hikikomori*, those who have confined themselves to their homes for six months or more, almost 60% are 21 years old or older, and one-fourth had been *hikikomori* for at least five years (Ishikida, 2005:135).

Men are 2.7 times more likely than women to be *hikikomori*, and 41% had experienced school refusal syndrome (Asahi, 2001:2). Some public health centres operate day care activities for *hikikomori*. Public services for young adults with psychological and psychiatric problems are needed. According to Ishikida (2005:135), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare helps *hikikomori* to find jobs through the system of registered companies. The Minister of Education plans to offer a programme in 2005 to provide social experiences to *hikikomori* through three months of group camping so that they can experience work and volunteer activities (Ishikida, 2005:135).

3.4.2.2 Handling bullying incidents

Morishita (2000:224) states that it is important to create a more flexible educational system for foundation and intermediate school education, in order to avoid labelling learners with school refusal syndrome as socially unfit.

3.4.2.2.1 Alternative educational institutions

The government has started to recognize alternative educational institutions such as home schooling and free schools, and to grant eligibility to their graduates to attend high schools. The cooperation of parents, homeroom

educators, nurse educators, school counsellors and physicians will help learners who have school refusal syndrome to return to school. However, school administrators and educators also have to find and cure the school-related causes of school refusal syndrome, such as bullies (Morishita, 2000:225).

3.4.2.2.2 3.4.2.2.2 Provide support for the victim

Among learners who were absent from school for 30 days or more in the 1997-1998 school year, one-fourth returned to school by March 1998. Educators were advised to help these learners return to school in several ways. Educators may visit the learners at home and discuss their schoolwork and social lives with them. By calling the learners, or picking them up in the morning, educators show an interest and persuade them to attend school. Discussions with parents about the environment at home may reveal underlying issues. Finally, discussions among educators may provide insights and solutions to the problem of school refusal syndrome (Nihon, 1997:45). According to Takagake, Bunro and Yokoyu (1995a:6), educators at elementary schools are advised to show sympathy and understanding to the family of learners with school refusal syndrome so that they earn the parents and the learners' trust. It is important for Grades 1 – 3 learners to get involved with their classmates. Yet Grades 4 -6 learners tend to be sensitive to the involvement of their classmates; therefore, educators may avoid sending a classmate to their homes. The regional Centers for Educational Counseling provide services to learners with school refusal syndrome, their educators and their parents (Takagake *et al.*, 1995a:8).

3.4.2.3 Centers for education counseling in Japan

The Wakayama Education Department has opened nine Centers for Education Counseling with 63 counsellors. A manual distributed by the Center advises educators not to force learners with school refusal syndrome to go to school, and not to press them for an explanation. Instead, it suggested that educators should visit those learners once a week, play with them and tell them to relax at home (Ishikida, 2005:132).

The manual also advises educators to talk to the parents, cooperate with them and ask parents to keep a daily journal about their child. According to the manual, it is important for the learners to reintroduce themselves gradually to school, by playing with friends after school, participating in school events, visiting the nurse educator in the health-care room only in the morning or in the afternoon, and attending school once or twice a week (Ishikida, 2005:132). Mutual trust between educators and classmates helps learners to feel comfortable about returning to school. Senior primary school educators are advised to be patient, and not to pressure the learners to return to school. Educators may spend time with those learners by going out and shopping together to develop a bond. Educators may also help learners study and plan (Takagaki *et al.*, 1995:132-136; 153-165).

3.4.2.4 Initiatives taken by parents

Parents can assist their children to return to school by being accepting and understanding. Morishita (2000:84), a clinical psychiatrist who consulted more than 300 learners with school refusal syndrome and established a high school for them, has learned from his practice that learners with school refusal syndrome are cured only when parents accept them and say: *You do not have to go to school. You can take a good rest at home.*

It generally takes half a year for mothers to accept fully that their children have stopped going to school, and it takes three years for fathers (Morishita, 2000:84, 95). The Associations of Parents of Learners with School Refusal Syndrome provide an opportunity for these parents to learn how to accept their children, and encourage each other to overcome their hardships (Morishita, 2000:84).

Morita and Kiyonaga (1994:49) categorize four roles in bullying: victims, victimizers, the audience and bystanders (*cf.* 3.4). Several learners, the victimizers, bully a child, the victim, and the rest of the learners are the audience who cheer for the bullying, and the bystanders (*cf.* 3.4) who allow bullying without intervening (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994:48-52).

According to the 1996 and 1997 surveys, more than half of middle school learners said they did nothing about bullying (Sōmuchō, 1998:15-19). Unfortunately, the majority of bystanders are afraid of being bullied if they intervene, or because they do not care about the victims.

Bullying is more often psychological than physical. The types of bullying include teasing (31,6%); verbal insults (17,9%); physical violence (14,9%); ostracism (14,2%); theft (7,6%); shunning (5,2%); blackmail (2,2%); harassment (1,3%); and other forms (5,1%), according to the reports filed by educators in the 2002- 2003 school year (Naikakufu, 2003:3).

3.4.3 Reducing bullying among young learners in Japan

The Kagawa Board of Education issued a manual, informing parents of early signs of school refusal syndrome (Hōmushō, 1994:3). Learners who may be suffering from school refusal syndrome frequently complain about their friends or their educators. They may withdraw to their rooms, saying that they are tired. They may appear depressed or apathetic, and their grades may start to drop. They may delay going to school by taking an inordinate amount of time to prepare for school, and may try to avoid going to school by saying that their head or stomach hurts, especially on Mondays (Kagawa-ken, 2000:26).

The manual (Kagawa-ken, 2000:26) also mentions the early signs that learners exhibit in schools:

- They become quiet, and start to play with younger learners.
- They are isolated from their friends, and stay alone in the classroom.
- They lose enthusiasm and become passive in classes.
- They go to see a nurse educator in the health-room during recess.
- They lose their concentration and become negligent in classes.
- They forget to bring their homework.

The manual advises parents to consult homeroom educators, school counsellors, and public counselling centres when their children exhibit any of these symptoms. Parents are encouraged to be open to children and to create a warm and welcoming home environment. Moreover, they should not be too interruptive. It is also important for children to assist with chores around the house (Kagawa-ken, 2000:27).

3.4.3.1 Victimizers and victims

Those who bully are frequently the classmates and acquaintances of the victims and the same gender as their victims. Victims said that the people who bullied them were classmates (80%), learners in the same grade, but not classmates (24,%), older children (9,1%) and younger learners (2,9%). The number of those bullied by their classmates decreases as the learners grow older. About 80 percent of foundation phase learners and 70% of intermediate phase learners reported that someone they often played with or someone they sometimes played with had bullied them. The majority of victims were bullied by members of the same gender and by two or more friends (Naikakufu, 2003:4).

Morita *et al.* (1999:48) state that a third of the bullies in Japan who were surveyed (31,1% of boys and 37,5% of girls) felt guilty, and another third (29,5% and 38,7%) felt sorry for victims. One-fourth of them (21,9% and 20,4%) did not think anything of it, some (18,0% and 14,4%) worried about being scolded and others (8,4% and 12,0%) worried about their victims getting even. On the other hand, more than a fourth of the girls (26,9%) thought that the victims deserved to be bullied, compared with 13,6 % of the boys. Some thought bullying was fun (16,2% and 11,6%) and felt great (8,1% and 7,7%) (Morita *et al.*, 1999:46). Many learners take bullying as part of a game and do not feel guilty (Hōmushō, 1994:2).

Bullying is caused by various factors, including psychological stress and frustration; financial extortion; the game of bullying; sanctions against an uncooperative person; the exclusion of someone different; jealousy and envy

toward someone outstanding; and the avoidance of being a victim (Takekawa, 1993:11-13).

Adolescents have psychological imbalances between their maturing bodies and their immature minds, and struggle to build an identity. Bullies are more likely to be frustrated and to feel inferior, and to exhibit irresponsible, impatient, self-centred, flamboyant and inconsiderate behaviour (Hōmushō, 1994:22, 25-6).

Those who bullied tend to be more frustrated with educators, classmates and class activities than those who have not bullied (Morita *et al.*, 1999:94). The pressure from the competition for high school entrance examinations causes frustration and inferiority complexes among the less academically successful learners. In addition, unstable home environments and family problems cause learners to feel insecure. They derive self-esteem and relief from frustration by bullying (Hōmushō, 1994:25).

Bullies and troubled learners tend to have similar characteristics: they do not like educators, cannot fit into their classes, have troubled family relationships, have little discipline, do not cooperate and are self-centred. Physical violence, extortion, threats and destruction of property are also related to delinquency. It is important to note that bullies can be victims under different circumstances: 5,8% of the boys and 6,9% of the girls, as well as 9,7% of elementary school learners and 4,3% of middle school learners were both victims and victimizers (Morita *et al.*, 1999:45, 86).

Any learner who is different from the other learners could be a target of bullying in the Japanese school culture, which values conformity. Hōmushō, (1994:27) states that those who are bullied tend to be slow learners, those who broke a promise or told a lie, have strong personalities, pretend to be clever learners, are selfish or are new to the school. Even excellent learners can be bullied.

According to Hōmushō, (1994:27), girls (15,8%) report being bullied more than boys (13,1%). Among those who had been bullied (N=959), 58,3% of them were bullied once or twice during the trimester, 12,6% were bullied once

or twice a month, 10.1% were bullied once a week and 19,1% were bullied more than two or three times a week. Less than half (46,4%) said that the bullying lasted one week or less, and 27,9% said bullying lasted longer than the four-month trimester. As the learners grow older, the period of being bullied becomes longer (Hōmushō, 1994:27). Among those who were bullied, 16% of elementary school learners, 24% of the boys, and 16% of the girls in middle schools were bullied once or more times a week for at least one trimester. Those who were bullied a few times or more a week tended to have no friends (7,7%/1,5% of all learners) or have only one friend (8,2%/1,9% of all learners), and 37,9 % had six friends and more, compared to 61% of all learners. More victims and victimizers than those who were neither thought that they were not liked by their classmates (Morita *et al.*, 1999:20).

Furthermore, Hōmushō (1994:27) states that many victims endured bullies, without seeking help. Almost half of all boys did not tell anybody about bullying incidents while the majority of girls (54,7% of elementary school and 64% of middle school girls) told their friends, if no-one else. Less than a quarter of them told their homeroom educators. More than one-third of the girls, 28,4% of elementary school boys and 17,7% of middle school boys told their parents. About half of those being bullied did not want their parents to know. More than half of the boys and almost two-thirds of the girls wanted their friends to stop the bullying, while one-third of elementary school educators and one-fourth of middle school learners wanted their homeroom educators to intervene. However, almost one-fourth of the boys did not want anyone to stop it (Morita *et al.*, 1999:62).

Morita *et al.* (1999:204) also state that a few victims confided in their parents about the bullying. Only 13% of the girls and 10,9% of the boys who were bullied wanted their parents to stop the bullies. Older learners tended to keep their parents from finding out about bullying incidents. Less than 30 % of the victims' parents knew about the bullies, while 7,3% of the victimizers' parents knew what their child was doing. Among parents who knew about the bullying, about half discussed it with educators, and if they did, two-thirds of bullying incidents were at least reduced, if not stopped.

About 40% of the boys and 20% of the girls told their victimizer(s) to leave them alone, while 31% of the boys and 14% of the girls fought back. More girls than boys called upon friends (6,4% for boys and 27,6% for girls) and their educators (9,8% for boys and 17,4% for girls) for help. The victims who fought back (45,8%) or told victimizer(s) to leave them alone (43,9%), found that the bullying stopped within one week, in contrast to those who went to an educator (30,3%), cried (34%) or ran away (33,8%). Half of all victims came to hate their victimizer(s), and many middle school victims (31,8% for boys and 41,7% for girls) came to hate themselves. After being bullied, approximately 40% of the girls and more than one-fourth of the boys were depressed and almost half of the girls and one-fourth of the boys became unwilling to go to school (Morita *et al.*, 1999:58, 60-61, 106-107).

3.4.3.2 Maintaining an anti-bullying initiative

Morita *et al.* (1999:104) state that some homeroom classes in Japan have an environment that is conducive to bullying. These homeroom classes have several common features. Learners spread vicious rumours about the educator's pet, there are cliques that exclude and do not come to the defence of unpopular learners, learners break school rules behind the educator's back, defiance of authority is regarded as fun and learners feel compelled to blend in (Morita, *et al.*, 1999:104). It is important to create an atmosphere in the homeroom class that does not condone bullying, through instilling a sense of fairness in the learners and encouraging friendships.

Unfortunately, few classroom leaders are willing to stop bullying or can lead the class without bullying. Most bullying occurs in the presence of bystanders (*cf.* 3.4) (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994:33). Almost 45 of all learners responded that they did not stop bullying when they saw or heard about such incidents, while only one-fourth of learners told their victimizers to stop. 10% of the learners asked for help from adults when they saw or heard others being bullied. Older learners did nothing to stop bullying (Morita *et al.*, 1999:100-101). According to a 1996-1997 survey, 33% of male learners and 23% of female learners blamed the victims of bullying, while about one-fourth of middle school learners blamed the bullies (Sōmuchō, 1998:17).

According to a survey of middle school learners, bystanders are more likely to come from nuclear families with stay-at-home mothers. Masataka (1998:12) suspects that the attitudes of bystanders are caused by the childrearing style of stay-at-home mothers who spoil and overprotect their learners. Bullying violates the human rights of the victim. Bystander learners need to understand the victim's perspective and learn not to tolerate bullying by undergoing human rights education (Masataka, 1998:12).

Homeroom educators can create a homeroom class in which bullying is not tolerated. Educators need to control their learners. If the educator is too strict, the learners become frustrated and stressed, and accept the necessity of targeting the weak and vulnerable. If the educator fails to control the class, the learners are free to act as they like without fear of punishment, and tend to play at bullying their classmates (Takekawa, 1993:14-17).

Morita *et al.* (1999:142) states that Japanese educators need to keep an eye on learners who are likely to be bullied, because only one-fourth of those who were bullied spoke to an educator, in most cases a homeroom educator. In fact, approximately 40% of elementary school learners and one-third of middle school learners who were bullied wanted a homeroom educator to intervene. More than half of the victims said that their educators did not know about the bullying, although 41,8% of them said educators intervened. In these cases, more than 60% said that the educator's intervention was effective. It is interesting that bullying occurs even among educators. More than half of all elementary and middle schools have reported that bullying occurred among educators as well (Morita *et al.*, 1999:136-143, 201).

A research group established by the Minister of Education in 1994 recommended the most effective ways of preventing bullying (Monbushō, 1999:12) in its 1996 report:

- Schools should teach learners to consider bullying from the victim's point of view and to recognize that bullying is a violation of human rights.
- Educators should learn to recognize the signs of bullying before the behaviour escalates.

- Homeroom educators should cooperate with other educators, such as educators in the extracurricular activities of the learners, under the leadership of the principal to prevent bullying and discipline bullies.
- Educators should attend in-house counselling workshops.
- A nurse educator should participate in coping with bullying.
- Schools should work with outside counselling professionals.
- School counsellors should be deployed at schools.
- Schools should extend special consideration to victims, such as forgiving school absences, changing their homeroom class, transferring them to another school and suspending victimizers.
- Educators should cooperate with parents.
- Parents should discipline their children.

Educators should lead discussions on bullying with their learners, help those who bullied express their frustration and offer emotional and spiritual support to the victims (Hōmushō, 1994:49). Educators need to attend counselling training and workshops, and work closely with school counsellors. Since the 1995-1996 school year, school counsellors have been assigned to some schools. In the 2001-2002 school year, 6,6% of elementary schools, 25% of middle schools and 6,6% of high schools have school counsellors. The Minister of Education plans to assign school counsellors to all middle schools until the 2005-2006 school year. Since 1995, the National Education Center has provided a toll-free hotline for information and counselling about bullying in order to help learners, parents, and educators.

Bullying can become a criminal or legal matter if the victim is injured or killed. In 2003, police were called in to 106 bullying cases and 229 youths were arrested (Naikakufu, 2003:6). If an offender is younger than 14 years old, the Child Consultation Facilities usually take the case to the Child Welfare commissioner and committees (164/1947). If necessary, they can bring the

case to the Family Court. With children between the ages of 14 and 19, the Family Court hears the case. The young offenders may be admitted into a juvenile home, a home for juvenile training and education, or a children's shelter. If the offender is 14 or older, and the bullying was violent enough to warrant imprisonment, the Family Court decides whether or not the case should be transferred to a criminal court (Naikakufu, 2003:6).

Some parents of the victims who took their own lives or were killed because of bullying may sue the school and the parents of the offenders for compensation (Naikakufu, 2003:7). The courts can find the school guilty of negligence if the damage could have been prevented if the school had recognized the bullying and handled it appropriately. If a learner is not mature enough to predict the consequences of his/her behaviour, the parents will be responsible for the learner's crime, unless the parents prove that they have not neglected their parental responsibility (Naikakufu, 2003:6). If a learner has the ability to take responsibility, the parents are not responsible for the child's actions, unless there is a clear causal relationship between the violation of supervision obligation and the learner's behaviour. High school learners are old enough to take legal responsibility for their behaviour; therefore, parents are not held liable unless their negligence is proven to have caused the bullying (Hōmushō, 1994:73-74).

3.5 ENGLAND

Bullying and victimization is a pervasive problem at schools in England and has received widespread media coverage (Olweus, 1993:5; Bunyan, 1999:1;).

3.5.1 Introduction and background to bullying in England

The detrimental effects of bullying on concurrent mental and physical health problems and long-term adverse consequences, include lowered self-esteem (Matsui, Kakuyama, Tsusuke, & Onglatco, 1996:711), depression (Craig, 1998:4), increased anxiety (Salmon, James, & Smita, 1998:924), greater rates of hyperactivity and conduct problems (Farrington, 1993:12; Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2000:381) and more common health problems (Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2000:385)

3.5.2 Initiatives taken in England to counter bullying at schools

A study was undertaken in 2002 by ChildLine in England to determine the extent of bullying occurring at schools in England (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:5). This research revealed that bullying is widespread and that it affects learners of different ages. This is despite the fact that they introduced anti-bullying policies at all their schools.

3.5.2.1 Research results

Results of the research (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:5) show that just over half of both primary and secondary school learners thought that bullying was a *big problem* at their schools. 51% of Grade 5 learners reported that they had been bullied during the term, compared with 28% of Grade 8 learners. Girls were almost as likely as boys to have been bullied in both age groups (Oliver & Candappa, 2003).

The most common forms of bullying at school in England are name-calling and, less often, physical aggression. Social isolation such as gossip and rumour spreading is also common (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:6).

Oliver and Candappa (2003:6) discovered that according to learners' perceptions the findings indicated that participating schools were more likely to approach bullying by introducing one-off initiatives, such as discussing the topic during assembly or lesson time, than by more targeted and on-going approaches, such as appointing anti-bullying counsellors or educators designated with specific anti-bullying responsibilities.

Over 60% of learners in England expressed positive views about their school's attempts to deal with bullying. However, secondary school learners were less likely to give their school a glowing report (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:6).

3.5.2.2 The most effective responses to bullying

Oliver and Candappa (2003:6) discovered that the three most helpful factors in preventing or helping learners to deal with bullying were friendships,

avoidance strategies and learning to *stand up for yourself*. Approximately a quarter of the learners in Grade 5 thought that communicating verbally in an assertive way with the bully would *always or usually* work. Older learners were more likely to believe that physical retaliation had a better chance of success (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:6).

A large majority of learners in Grade 5 and Grade 8 reported that they would find it easy to talk to a friend if they were being bullied, although according to Oliver and Candappa (2003:6), younger learners were more likely to talk to their mothers. This suggests that anti-bullying initiatives that take friendship networks into account are likely to be of considerable value to learners.

Oliver and Candappa (2003:7) discovered that having a group of friends was identified as an important protective factor in preventing and helping learners to cope with bullying. Unlike educators and other adults, friends were in a position to witness bullying in and outside school, and to provide support when needed. The main risk in involving a friend was that they might also start to be bullied.

Just over 51% of the learners in Grade 5 in England reported that they would find it easy to speak to an educator about bullying. Telling educators was associated with a wide range of risks, particularly in relation to possible breaches of confidentiality, failure to act on reported incidents of bullying and an inability to protect learners from retaliatory behaviour on the part of perpetrators (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:6). On the other hand, 51% of the learners reported that telling educators could help to stop the bullying or that armed with relevant information, educators might be less likely to punish a learner should they decide to take matters into their own hands.

According to Oliver and Candappa (2003:8), most learners could identify an educator that they would be most likely to speak to if they were being bullied. Such educators were reported by learners to be demonstrably better at listening to learners, more prepared to take learners seriously, ready to take appropriate action and to be *firm but fair*.

Parents were identified by Oliver and Candappa (2003:8) as offering a potentially valuable source of help, advice and moral support. In particular, learners reported that parents who listened to them and took their experiences seriously, helped them to cope with bullying. The risk of not being believed by parents was identified as potentially very hurtful. Some were also concerned that, by talking, they might start a family argument. Other learners in England said that they would not tell a parent if they were bullied because they would not want to worry them or put them under pressure.

Oliver and Candappa (2003:6 & 9) discovered that learners would seek outside advice from ChildLine. 39% said that they would consider this option. 33% of the learners in England would consider contacting the police about bullying (Oliver & Candappa, 2003:6). When asked if they would contact a counsellor a number of learners stated that, as there were no risks associated with this, it was an option that they were willing to consider.

3.5.3 Anti-bullying interventions in England

Schools in England are required by law to have a behaviour/school management policy, within which they are required to make reference to bullying in terms of promoting respect for others and intolerance of bullying and harassment (Woods & Wolke, 2003:381; cf. 1.1). In England, educators have a duty to state clearly what their position is regarding anti-bullying initiatives (Woods & Wolke, 2003:381). However, apart from guidelines, there are no universal policies that need to be implemented.

According to research conducted by ChildLine (2003:2) in England, more than two-thirds of learners in England would not find it easy to tell a educator if they were being bullied, because they believe they would not be taken seriously or would suffer reprisals as a result of *telling*. This disturbing finding comes from major new research on bullying, commissioned by leading children's charity ChildLine. The charity set out to uncover why, despite the mandatory introduction of anti-bullying policies by schools, ChildLine still speaks to around 20,000 learners every year whose lives are made miserable because they are being bullied.

Researchers (ChildLine, 2003:1) consulted almost 1 000 learners to find out what action they believed ought to be taken at schools to tackle bullying: the first time such a significant piece of research on bullying has focused on the opinions of young people. Bullying has been a key issue for policy-makers in recent years, but despite policy developments, the problem continues. For the last six years bullying has been the single biggest reason for learners to call ChildLine. This new research has enabled ChildLine to come up with recommendations to help schools find ways of dealing with bullying. The charity is calling on schools across England to act now and alleviate the trauma suffered every day by many of their learners (ChildLine, 2003:2).

ChildLine's Chair, Esther Rantzen, said: '*Bullying simply should not exist in the UK's schools. Since 1998 every school has been legally obliged to have an anti-bullying policy in place, yet, as ChildLine hears every day, bullying is still rife. The message that children are giving through this research can be heard loud and clear – many schools are simply not doing enough to tackle a problem that can be addressed. Interestingly, the research found that there is no single factor that makes a school more likely to have a bullying problem than others. It doesn't matter whether the school is a small rural primary school or a sprawling inner-city comprehensive – what matters is whether the school takes bullying seriously and enables children to feel that they can talk to educators who will take effective action to stop it*' (ChildLine,2003:2).

3.5.4 Results of the research conducted by ChildLine

- More than two-thirds of learners said they would not feel comfortable talking to a educator about being bullied, saying they were concerned that they wouldn't be taken seriously or would suffer reprisals as a result. Learners believe that some educators are better at dealing with bullying than others. Those they would be likely to speak to were *firm but fair*, better at listening to learners, more likely to take learners seriously and more likely to take appropriate action to deal with the bullying (ChildLine, 2003:3).

- Friends topped the poll of people learners said they would talk to if they were being bullied. 70% of learners said that friends were crucial in preventing bullying and helping them to cope with its effects. Unlike educators and other adults, friends were said to be in a position to witness bullying in and outside school, and to provide support when needed (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- Primary school learners were far more likely than older learners to talk to a parent about being bullied, but, overall, learners were divided on the question of whether parents were helpful in dealing with bullying. While parents were valued for offering emotional support and for raising children's concerns with educators, there was a fear that they might over-react and make matters worse. Mothers were felt to be more approachable than fathers (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- On the whole, siblings were unlikely to be the first point of contact for learners to talk to about bullying. Less than four in ten learners said they would find it easy to talk to a brother or sister. However, almost half of black and Asian secondary school learners said they would approach a sibling to talk about bullying (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- Some learners pinpointed confidential counselling services as a valuable source of help, a means of reducing emotional tension, and enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem. While learners were concerned about parents and educators breaking confidentiality, they perceive counselling services as allowing them to deal with the bullying at their own pace (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- More than half of primary school and a quarter of secondary school learners said they had been bullied in the present school term. Fifty-one per cent of primary and 54% of secondary school learners believe bullying is *a big problem or quite a problem* at their schools (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- Around 60% of the learners expressed positive views about their school's attempts to deal with bullying. Secondary school learners were less likely

to give their school a glowing report: more than a third (36%) of primary school learners thought that their school was *very good* at dealing with bullying, compared with 12% of secondary school learners (ChildLine, 2003:3).

- There are no significant gender differences in types of bullying among primary school learners. Boys and girls are likely to suffer from physical bullying, such as being beaten up, and social bullying, such as being ostracized, taunted or gossiped about, in equal measure. However, some forms of physical bullying were higher among secondary school boys than girls and secondary school girls reported higher levels of sexualized bullying than boys (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- No single factor makes learners more susceptible to being bullied, although excuses for bullying generally identified a point of difference as the impetus: physical appearance, religion, language, race, signs of poverty and wearing the 'wrong gear' were all identified as 'weak spots' (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- Nearly 60% of secondary school learners said they would like to be involved in developing their school's anti-bullying initiatives. Those schools where learners were not involved had a higher level of bullying (ChildLine, 2003:3).
- Both primary and secondary school learners identified *standing up for yourself* as a helpful strategy for dealing with bullying, but the means by which they would do this differed. Around a quarter of primary school learners thought that assertively communicating with the bully would *always* or *usually* work, whereas older learners pinpointed physical retaliation as having a better chance of success - almost a third (31%) said that learning a martial art might help reduce the risk of bullying (ChildLine, 2003:3).

ChildLine's Chief Executive, Carole Easton, commented: '*Bullying leaves learners feeling worthless, traumatised and too frightened to go to school and*

often has long term effects on their mental health and self-esteem right into adulthood. ChildLine is at the forefront in the fight against bullying - through our helpline and ChildLine in Partnership with Schools (CHIPS) programme we've built up extensive experience of helping schools and learners deal with bullying (ChildLine, 2003:3).

For more than 10 years, ChildLine has been telling educators that anti-bullying policies must be constantly revised and that a one-off initiative such as a talk in assembly is no good. They have recommended that the appropriate action be taken to deal effectively with cases of bullying and that learners should be believed and involved in designing anti-bullying initiatives that suit their school. These tenets are fundamental to ChildLine's work at schools and they have been borne out in the results of this important research (ChildLine, 2003:3).

The ChildLine conference *Bullying: How to Beat It* (ChildLine, 2003:4) offers a unique opportunity to hear from major figures in education about what options schools have in tackling bullying. More than 100 young people from schools across the UK will join experts, including the Minister, for young people and adult skills; Ivan Lewis and the Norwegian Ombudsman for children; Trond Waage to explore practical solutions to the problem (ChildLine, 2003:3).

3.5.5 Recommendations made by Childline

From the research (ChildLine, 2003:3), a set of recommendations have been made to help schools prevent bullying. These include:

- Putting measures in place so that learners can participate in forming and implementing anti-bullying strategies, for example through school councils and the curriculum.
- Training educators to incorporate learner's participation in all areas of the school and monitoring their success annually. OFSTED should check that this process is being adhered to through regular inspections.

- Addressing the realities of learner's experiences in anti-bullying strategies, paying attention to the importance of friendships and equipping learners with the necessary emotional and social skills to help them combat problems like bullying.
- Building on friendship networks to create peer support, befriending and buddying programmes: creating supportive environments in which learners can thrive.
- Minimizing the risks learners face in telling educators about bullying and giving urgent attention to making confidential sources of advice and support more widely available.
- Listening to learners as part of a whole-school approach to tackling bullying that also involves introducing regular anonymous questionnaires to map the problem, developing a positive school ethos, regular reviews of anti-bullying policies and working in partnership with parents (ChildLine, 2003:3).

3.5.6 School refusal and school phobia

Many bullied learners go on to refuse school, and may develop *school phobia*. The parents may be unable, or unwilling, to force them to continue attending school. The phobia may extend beyond the original school and make it impossible for the learner to be re-integrated into any school environment (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

According to Hamilton and Thomas (2006:14), schools often do not accept the validity of a learner's absence on the basis that he/she is suffering from school phobia brought on by bullying and as a result, work is not provided or marked. The condition of school phobia is rarely acknowledged by local authority medical examiners. Learners absent from school for this reason may not, therefore, receive the alternative education that an authority should provide for sick learners.

Local authority education welfare officers often pressurize the parents to force their children to return to school. Parents may be prosecuted or face an application by the authority for an education supervision order (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

School phobia is rarely the basis for a Statement of Special Educational Needs, even when the learner has missed long periods of education and is, therefore, far behind his/her peers academically (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

3.5.7 Tackling school bullying in England

On 15 July 2004 the British Government launched a national alliance to tackle bullying (*cf.* 1.1) It was announced that anti-bullying experts would be based in every region of the country to provide schools, local education authorities and parents with practical help, advice and support in tackling all forms of bullying at schools.

The national Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) of over 50 expert organizations will act as a national agency to;

- work with educators, schools and local education authorities to promote anti-bullying practices across all schools, including the use of peer mentoring schemes;
- develop innovative, practical approaches to tackling bullying, including the modern menace of bullying by text messaging, e-mail and internet chat;
- provide support for parents in severe cases of bullying, including mediation and referrals across the Alliance's regional and national network, where all other avenues to resolve the bullying have been exhausted;
- develop and oversee anti-bullying resources and information for schools and parents, including an anti-bullying website containing practical support and advice; and

- run an annual national anti-bullying week of events and activities at schools across England to teach young people that all forms of bullying are wrong and suggest active ways in which to show no tolerance to it.

3.5.7.1 Anti-bullying Charter

An Anti-bullying Charter was made available to all schools to assist in the eradication of bullying at their school. This is to be used together with an anti-bullying policy:

Anti-bullying Charter

We are working with staff, learners and parents to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated.

Our school community:

- *Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis. Good practice suggests the policy should be reviewed on average every two years.*
- *Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.*
- *Ensures that learners are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that learners feel safe to learn; and that learners abide by the anti-bullying policy.*
- *Reports back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.*
- *Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilizes the support of the LA and relevant organisations when appropriate.*

Bullying – A Charter for Action

Chair of Governors

Headeducator

Representative of learners

Date

3.6 SUMMARY

In the above chapter it has become clear that there are strategies in place to combat bullying in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England. The strategies do vary, and some appear to be more effective than others.

In South Africa, there is an awareness of the need to combat bullying at school, but there is as yet no official policy that has to be implemented by all schools. The different provincial departments appear to have introduced different means of dealing with bullying at schools, but there is no consistency within the National Education Department.

Australia has conducted various research projects to determine the extent of the bullying in that country. Australian schools do have a better understanding of the problem and the schools appear to be more proactive with regards bullying at their schools. Seminars are run for educators, which empower them to handle the situation in their classrooms and this ensures that bullying is not ignored due to staff ignorance. Well-planned interventions at Australian schools have reduced the occurrence of bullying at certain schools.

Japan has a very complex phenomenon known as school refusal syndrome (*tokokyo*). In many cases, this refusal to attend school is a direct result of bullying. Centres have been introduced for the learners who refuse to attend school and are providing counselling for these victims. These learners are not pressurised to attend school, but they are encouraged to reintroduce themselves gradually to school. In Japan, attendance of high school is not compulsory and therefore there is no support for high school learners who are bullied. Educators in Japan seem reluctant to stop the bullying in their classroom and in many cases educators themselves are bullied.

England has a policy which ensures that all schools develop anti-bullying strategies and yet there is still a problem with bullying at schools.

In the next chapter, the researcher will look at the role of Education Law with regard to bullying in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY IN COUNTERACTING BULLYING AT SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

All the countries that were discussed in the previous chapters have a number of legislative processes in place to ensure that learners at schools are not harmed. A number of them have gone so far as to have laws passed regarding the treatment of learners at schools.

According to section 10 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108/1996: hereafter Constitution) all people have inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. This has a major influence on educational practice in South Africa as it led to the abolishment of corporal punishment at schools. The South African Schools Act (SA, 1996b) section 10(1), states that no person may administer corporal punishment to a learner at a school (84/1996).

The influence of the Constitution can also be seen in section 3(1) of the South African Council for Educators' Act (31/2000). The Code of Conduct states that *an educator respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children*. Furthermore it states in section 3(5) that the educator avoids any form of humiliation and refrains from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological.

Malherbe (2004:4) states that human dignity can be considered an extremely fragile component of the different relationships in the educational environment. Learners must be treated with dignity and respect. This may be difficult in certain circumstances, but, as professionals, educators can remain in control at all times.

4.2 SOUTH AFRICA

All education legislation is based on the Constitution (108/1996). According to section 2, it is the supreme law of the country and all other laws are subjected to it.

4.2.1 Supremacy of the Constitution

The following paragraphs will indicate the different sections of the Constitution (108/1996) and their influence on bullying in South African Schools.

As the Constitution (108/1996) is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa, it must influence education practice in South African schools. Parliament and all other government bodies are subordinate to the Constitution and their laws and actions are invalid if inconsistent with it. Education institutions have to bear this in mind when they are making policies or drawing up a Code of Conduct. The validity of any of the South African laws can be tested against the Constitution.

Numerous provisions contained in the Bill of Rights (108/1996) protect the rights of learners to study in a safe environment, which, if it is to be free from all forms of violence, includes bullying. These provisions include section 9 – Equality; section 10 – Human dignity; section 20 – Citizenship; section 24 – Environment; section 29 – Education. Learners have the right to freedom from racial and gender discrimination. The rights of learners who are bullied, are being infringed upon. This cannot be permitted to continue (*cf.* 2.2.2).

Section 12 of the Constitution (108/1996) guarantees every person the right to freedom and security of his/her person, as well as the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. This right is of particular relevance to education as the prohibition of cruel, inhuman and degrading behaviour directly concerns corporal punishment and other forms of punishment at schools enforced by educators or other learners (Malherbe, 2004:11).

According to Roos and Wolhuter (2004:9), the right to freedom and security not only acts as a prohibition to educators and schools, but also requires certain obligations from learners. Just as educators are prohibited from treating them cruelly or torturing and degrading them, or even humiliating them, learners themselves are prohibited from treating other learners in such a way. Learners have to realize that any form of bullying constitutes a breach of this right and that they are also directed to resort to non-violent and non-degrading behaviour (Malherbe, 2004:13; Roos & Wolhuter, 2004:9).

Section 14 of the Constitution (108/1996) states that everyone has the right to privacy. This includes the right not to have their person, property or home searched, their possessions seized or the privacy of their communication infringed. In some instances learners have had compromising photographs taken of themselves in change rooms and these have been sent by cell phone or email to other members of the grade or class. This is a clear violation of the right to privacy. Bullying can take many forms and can be very intrusive with regard to one's privacy. Educators must take this into consideration.

De Waal (2004:5) states that parents have the right to safe schools for their children and educators have the right to uphold authority. De Waal continues by saying that people taking care of learners have the responsibility of ensuring their well-being, while learners simultaneously carry the responsibility of adhering to specific standards that ensure, *inter alia*, their safety and health.

4.2.2 Children's Act 38 of 2005

In section 1 of the Children's Act (38/2005, as amended by Government Gazette 28944, 19 June 2006), abuse in relation to a child means any form of harm or ill-treatment deliberately inflicted on a child, including assaulting a child or inflicting any other form of deliberate injury on a child, sexual abuse of a child or allowing sexual abuse of a child, bullying by another child, labour practice that exploits a child, or exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally.

Section 2 of this Act (38/2005) states that one of the objectives of the Act is to give effect to the constitutional rights of the child, specifically relating to protection from maltreatment, neglect and abuse or degradation. Section 6(2) of this Act states that all proceedings, actions or decisions in a matter concerning a child must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the child's rights set out in the Bill of Rights.

Section 6(2) of the Children's Act (38/2005) states that the child's inherent dignity must be respected, children must be treated fairly and equally, and protected from unfair discrimination on the same grounds as set out in the Constitution. Moreover, it includes grounds of health status or disability of the child or a family member of the child.

Section 7 of the Children's Act (38/2005) focuses on the best interest of the child as principle and contains a number of factors to be considered of which the learner's need for protection against physical and psychological harm is of particular relevance to bullying.

However, section 16 of the Children's Act 2005 (38/2005) refers to the responsibilities of children and states that every child has responsibilities appropriate to the child's age and ability towards his/her family, community and state.

It is thus clear that learners do have the responsibility to know what behaviour is acceptable and to behave accordingly.

4.2.3 Education Policy Act 12 of 1998

According to the Education Policy Act 12 of 1998 (12/1998) the Member of the Executive Council is responsible for making policy on any education-related matter for the province, but the governing body of any education institution may make education policy for its institution.

This Act (12/1998: section 5) continues by stating that the following guidelines must be used to contribute to the development of an education system which promotes democracy and human rights by:

- respecting the right to basic education;
- protecting learners against unfair discrimination within or by the provincial department or by an educational institution; and
- fostering the freedoms of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression and association within education institutions.

Learners are therefore protected by this Education Policy Act against bullying by learners or educators at schools.

4.2.4 School Education Act (Gauteng) 6 of 1995

According to the School Education Act (Gauteng) (6/1995), the Member of the Executive Council shall determine school education policy in the Province within the framework of the following principles:

- There shall be a duty on the department to protect learners and educators from all forms of physical and mental violence at schools and centres of learning.
- Every learner and educator shall have the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, speech and expression and the education process shall promote a culture of tolerance.

4.2.5 South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (84/1996), section 8), every school must adopt a Code of Conduct for learners. A Code of Conduct is a statement that sets rules that must be followed by members of the school community. The rules are usually negotiated, and apply to particular conditions and problems at that school. The School Governing Body is the most appropriate body to draw up a code of conduct as legislation and departmental notices have identified it as a role of the governing body. These Codes of Conduct are to be seen as instruments of change in the national education system of South Africa and should therefore reflect the new democratic order in South Africa.

4.2.6 South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000

According to the preamble of the South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000, (31/ 2000) educators who are registered with SACE must acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa. Section 3(5) states an educator must avoid any form of humiliation and refrain from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological. Section 3(7) states that the educator must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the learner (31/2000).

4.2.7 Department of Education

The objective of the school safety project of the Department of Education is to create a safe and tolerant learning environment that celebrates innocence and values human dignity (Department of Education, 2000:17). This safety project strives for all schools to be free from crime, violence and sexual harassment. In this regard, The Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners (SA, 1998) refer to the school environment as follows: *Learners have the right to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education. Security of property, well-cared school facilities, school furniture and equipment, clean toilets, water and a green environment, absence of harassment in attending classes and writing tests and examination, all create an atmosphere that is conducive to education and training.*

On a day-to-day basis, South African educators are confronted with learners' use of bullying and other anti-social behaviour. National policies developed by the Ministry of Education, circulars and statements issued by the National Department of Education and provincial departments of education all accentuate the importance of discipline in maintaining a safe school environment. It is assumed that Codes of Conduct, rules and regulations and disciplinary procedures will automatically provide a safe and secure environment for learners at schools. Consequently, all learning institutions are expected to develop their own safety policies and procedures that they

clearly communicate and disseminate to their school community in a culturally appropriate and inclusive way (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001:3)

The law imposes corresponding duties and responsibilities on each individual to respect the rights of others. If by speech, behaviour or other conduct, a person fails to respect these rights, thereby damaging another, a delict has been committed and the offending party may be held liable (Alexander & Alexander, 2005:550).

4.3 AUSTRALIA

There is no written constitution or comprehensive Bill of Rights; Australia's constitution is to be found partly in conventions and customs and partly in statute. The Act known as the Bill of Rights 1689 (AU/1900) deals with the exercise of the royal prerogative and succession to the Crown.

4.3.1 Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act of 1900

This Act may be cited as the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (AU, 1900). Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not a legally binding document, the UN General Assembly adopted, in 1966, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and political Rights*.

Australia is bound by the Council of Europe's 1953 *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. The Convention allows individual petitions against governments to the European Commission on Human Rights, if all possible domestic remedies have been exhausted. Since 1966, Australia has accepted the right of individual petition under the Convention and the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. The outcome of some cases has led to changes in Australian law to improve human rights, for example the abolition of corporal punishment at state schools.

In Section 3 Human Dignity (AU, 1990), all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, endowed with reason and conscience, and should

act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. This implies that bullying at schools cannot be permitted.

Section 4 (AU, 1990) states that everyone is equally entitled to all rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Bullying at schools cannot possibly be allowed under the umbrella of the Constitution of Australia.

4.3.2 Government and school initiatives

Responses by Australian Government authorities to the problem of bullying date back to 1994 when the Commonwealth Government published a major report known as *Sticks and Stones*, compiled by a committee of the House of Representatives (Sticks and Stones, 1994). This report focused mainly on aggression and violence, but also paid attention to the more specific problem of bullying (cf. 5.3.3).

In 2000, the Commonwealth Department of Education provided a short booklet for parents suggesting how they might help in countering bullying at schools (Rigby, 2002:19).

New South Wales appears to have been the first to promote specific anti-bullying policies at schools, with Education Minister Aquilino emphasizing in 1995 the rights of every learner and every educator to be free from being bullied at school, in a booklet *Good Discipline and Effective Learning* (Rigby, 2002:19). Subsequently, the New South Wales Education Department provides a series of practical resources to help educators address the problem. These included a peer mediation training package; a booklet promoting a whole school approach involving parents, learners and educators; and a publication on how playgrounds could be improved to reduce bullying at primary schools effectively.

The department also produced the APEEL programme (Rigby, 2002:19) – a *partnership encouraging effective learning* – programme (NSW, 1999). This programme aims at promoting greater interpersonal competence among

young learners. It focuses on the teaching of social skills especially at early primary school. It is aimed at helping learners to feel safe at school, especially those who have few friends and are particularly vulnerable to being victimized by peers. The programme consists of three modules: an educator training module; a learner lesson module; and a parent module, consisting of a series of four workshops for parents and suggestions for a parent network. It is based on the premise that the development of social competence in young people is an effective antidote to the development of enduring anti-social behaviour patterns which would include bullying (Rigby, 2002:20).

In 1998, Education Queensland produced a package of materials for educators to help in addressing bullying at primary and secondary schools. This included a video and an accompanying instructional booklet called *Bullying – No Way* (Rigby, 2002:20). These were intended as a means of promoting professional education for educators identifying and responding appropriately to cases of school bullying. Education Queensland also provided a website to publicize what state schools in Queensland are doing to counter bullying.

The Victorian Education Department has produced a booklet with extensive information on counteracting bullying – *Addressing bullying: It's our responsibility* (Rigby, 2002:20). In 2001, all Victorian Government schools were to report on the success of their anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies, together with any relevant data in their year 2000 report (Rigby, 2002:20).

In April 2000, the Education Department of Tasmania produced a booklet for educators called *Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy support materials* and a website with information for educators on countering bullying and ideas for classroom activities (Rigby, 2002:20). The booklet has sections on a range of matters in which discrimination is involved, such as racism, homophobia, sexism, disability and physical stereotyping. It does not, however, appear to recognize or treat in any detail bullying of a personal nature that is unrelated to the above social categories.

South Australia has since 1997 provided schools with information on addressing bullying as part of its Behaviour Management Policy (Rigby, 2002:21). A more comprehensive treatment is planned in a booklet to be called *Out of Bounds*.

In the Australian Capital Territory, The Department of Education and Community Services has provided a Safe Schools Policy Framework, which, among other things, seeks to provide support for continuing initiatives to eliminate harassment (Rigby, 2002:21). These include: programmes related to protective behaviour; the development of school anti-bullying policies; the training of playground mediators or peacekeepers; anger management and conflict resolution programmes, as offered by school counsellors; and peer support and buddy programmes to assist learners who are victims of bullying or harassment (Rigby, 2002:21).

In 1998, the Education Department of Western Australia required all state schools to have a *behaviour management plan* which included the treatment of bullying as a specific issue to be addressed (Rigby, 2002:22).

The Education Department of the Northern Territory expects state schools in the Territory to implement *bullying and anti-harassment prevention policies* intended to protect learners from all forms of harassment (Rigby, 2002:22).

4.3.3 The National Anti-bullying Website Project

In June 1999, the Conference of Education System Chief Executive Officers (CESCEO) endorsed a proposal for states and territories to undertake a national scan of approaches to minimize bullying and violence at schools; to develop a framework for sharing workable solutions to these issues; and to investigate the use of technology and hypertext to maximize accessibility to educators and schools (Rigby, 2002:22).

Education Queensland is now working to develop the national website on behalf of a working group under the auspices of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). The working group represents each state and territory government education

system, as well as the National council of Independent Schools of Australia, the National Catholic Education Commission and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. The project is supported and monitored by the MCEETYA Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce (Rigby, 2002:22).

The role of the website is to provide information about the nature of bullying and harassment and to indicate what resources and practical methods are available for schools to address the problem of bullying. It is envisaged that school communities will be invited to make contributions to this resource (Rigby, 2002:22). One innovative aspect of this website is the provision of a so-called *chill out* area where learners can learn about the issues associated with bullying and become activists for positive change in their own lives and their school communities. In keeping with current rhetoric about bullying, it is claimed that the problem will be addressed at *whole school and multidimensional levels to match local needs and social justice expectations* (Rigby, 2002:22).

4.4 JAPAN

Education in Japan has been conducted under the fundamental ideology of realizing equal opportunities in education, in which opportunities for education are equally assured in accordance with capability, aptitude and will, and regardless of birth, household income or class status. It has spread remarkably, promoted by a nation that has set great store by education and the improvement in income levels of the Japanese people to among the highest in the world.

The remarkable dissemination of education itself has served as the engine for what we can only call Japan's miraculous development. At the same time, a dwindling birth rate, nuclear families and the advancement of urbanization have now borne witness to a striking decline in the educational strengths of the home and local community-which had always shouldered the responsibilities of teaching children how to behave with people, cultivating self-discipline and collective spirit, and passing on culture and traditions.

Such circumstances have formed a backdrop against which various problems have emerged, including bullying, non-attendance at school and the worsening issue of juvenile delinquency. Indeed, with the excessive emphasis placed on equal opportunities in education, the original concept of education in accordance with the individuality and capabilities of each and every child has not been taken into full consideration. These are many points that must be considered when looking at Japanese legislation regarding bullying at schools.

4.4.1 The Constitution of Japan of 1947

According to Article 98 of the Constitution of Japan (JP, 1947), the Constitution shall be the supreme law of the nation and no law, ordinance, imperial precept or other act of government, or part thereof, contrary to the provisions hereof, shall have legal force or validity.

Article 11 of the Constitution of Japan (JP, 1947) states that the people shall not be prevented from enjoying any of the fundamental human rights. These fundamental human rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be conferred upon the people of this and future generations as eternal and inviolate rights.

Article 13 states that all the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

Article 14 states that all people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.

Article 23 states that academic freedom is guaranteed.

Article 26 of the Constitution (JP, 1994) states that all people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law. All people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their

protection receive ordinary education as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free.

4.4.2 Fundamental Law of Education of 1947

The Fundamental Law of Education (JP, 1947) is a Japanese law, which sets the standards for the Japanese education system. It is a law concerning the foundation of Japanese education. As it acts as the basis for the interpretation and application of various laws and ordinances regarding education, it is also known as *The Education Constitution* and the *Charter of Education*. It was brought into effect one month before the Constitution of Japan was, on 31 March 1947.

Article 1 of this Fundamental Law of Education (JP, 1947) states that education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labour, have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with an independent spirit, as builders of peaceful state and society. Japanese learners do not esteem individual value but rather any individuality on the part of learners in Japan tends to invite bullying.

Article 2 says that the aim of education shall be realized on all occasions and in all places. In order to achieve the aim, we shall endeavour to contribute to the creation and development of culture by mutual esteem and cooperation, respecting academic freedom, having a regard for actual life and cultivating a spontaneous spirit. Learners in Japan are bullied if they do not conform to the norm. This is against article two as it states the learners should cultivate a spontaneous spirit.

Article 3 is entitled *Equal Opportunity of Education* and ensures that the people shall all be given equal opportunities of receiving education according to their ability, and they shall not be subject to educational discrimination on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position or family origin. The state and local public corporations shall take measures to give financial

assistance to those who have, in spite of their ability, difficulty in receiving education for economic reasons.

4.4.3 Government Panel on Bullying

On 29 November 2006, the Government Panel on Bullying released the following list of proposals to combat bullying at Japanese schools.

- Clarify the standards for warning and punishing learners who bully schoolmates.
- Convince learners that those who turn a blind eye to bullying are also perpetrators.
- Educators who turn a blind eye, spur or get involved in schoolyard bullying should be subject to disciplinary measures.
- The proposal emphasized that *schools that solve bullying problems are excellent schools*, thereby warning educators against covering up such incidents
- The panel said that schools could make bullies engage in social service activities and study in separate classrooms.
- The panel, however, has dropped the idea of suspending bullies from school, saying that no learner should be excluded from an education.
- The panel called on educators, boards of education and parents of learners to cooperate closely in eliminating schoolyard bullying, and recommended that education boards set up teams to support schools' efforts to prevent bullying.
- Schools and education boards should notify the parents of learners that learners are allowed to move to another school to avoid schoolyard bullying.

The Prime Minister of Japan, Minister Shinzo Abe, (2007:1) told the education minister that he was to make use of a policy suspending bullying learners from

schools. He stated that *they were to speedily notify every education board to implement what can be done under current laws.*

4.5 ENGLAND

At present, the options for a learner or parent who wishes to complain about bullying, or the failure of the school to address the bullying, are limited. Where a learner alleges that he/she has been bullied, either the learner or a parent may raise this matter with an educator. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, a complaint may be made successively to the Head Educator, and then to the governors of the school. Section 29 of the Education Act (UK, 2002) provides that governors of a maintained school shall establish a complaints procedure to deal with complaints not covered by existing statutory requirements.

In producing their complaint procedures, governing bodies are required to have regard for any guidance given out by the Secretary of State. This section replicates the earlier legislation contained in section 39 School Standards and Framework Act (UK, 1998). The Secretary of State for Education has never exercised his functions in this regard, and has not, up to the present time, issued any regulations relating to complaints. A draft of the Education Regulations was issued for consultation in February 1999, but no further steps were taken and no Regulations were ever published. Governors are, however, given advice on how to deal with complaints in *A Guide to the Law for School Governors* and in a toolkit available on the government website (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:2).

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after a hearing before the governors of the school, it is possible to take the complaint further and complain to the local authority (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:2). However, the normal response of the local authority is that the complaint relates to a matter of internal discipline within the school and the local authority has no basis on which to intervene. A final complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education (UK, 1996) if the complainant believes that the governing body or local authority has acted unreasonably or is failing to carry out its duties properly. However,

to the best of the authors' knowledge, no such complaint has ever been upheld by the Secretary of State, making this a rather unsatisfactory remedy (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:2).

Apart from the making of complaints, the only other options open to a learner or parent who feel aggrieved at the bullying, are a negligence claim against the school (although few such claims have been successful) or an application for judicial review where the disciplinary action taken is, in the view of the complainant, insufficient (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:3).

4.5.1 The Current Complaints Process

Many schools work very hard to resolve parental complaints relating to bullying. However, there are serious difficulties with the current complaints process. Parents frequently regard the process as ineffective in addressing the bullying, feel that they are unable to obtain a satisfactory hearing of their complaint and do not regard the process as independent. In addition, from the parents' perspective, the outcomes are often unsatisfactory (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:10). The following options are available to parents.

4.5.1.1 The Governing Body

The first formal level of complaint is to the school governors. In some cases, the Governing Body has been known not to respond to the complaint at all. In such situations, there is little a parent can do (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:10). A complaint could be made to the local authority in such a case, or technically, there would be an option to seek leave to bring an action for judicial review. However, the latter course of action could be expensive. In addition, where a parent qualifies for legal aid, it is likely to be difficult to persuade the Legal Services Commission to fund such an application. If the parent pursues the issue, complains about the governors' conduct and forces a hearing of the complaint before the Governor's Committee, it may be difficult to find governors who are neutral and whose views have not already been affected by the parents' complaint against them (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:10).

Hamilton & Thomas (2006:11) states that in other cases, the governors may simply respond by making a formal assertion that the school has taken all possible action or a denial that any bullying has taken place. There is no *hearing* at which parents or learners may express their views and put forward their evidence for consideration. In such instances, the parents rarely feel that an independent view of the situation has been taken (Hamilton & Thomas 2006:10).

Hamilton & Thomas (2006:11) states that where parents are given an opportunity to put their case to a Committee of the Governing Body, there may not be an *investigation* of the complaint beyond the hearing of oral evidence. This makes it difficult for the Governors Committee to decide whether the school has taken all reasonable action to address the bullying. The remedies available to the Governors Committee are also limited. The Governors may request the school to take some further action to address the bullying, but it does not have a wide range of powers. For instance, the Governors do not have the power themselves to exclude a learner who has undertaken the bullying, though it may make such a recommendation to the Headeducator. According to Hamilton and Thomas (2006:11), the Governors do have power to provide some redress: for instance, where the bullying has been perpetrated by a staff member, it can recommend that the staff member apologize, it can recommend disciplinary proceedings or make a small award of compensation (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

If a parent is dissatisfied with the response from the governors, they can complain to the local authority (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11). The most common response to such complaints is that no action can be taken as the complaint relates to an internal school management issue. The local authority has little power to force a school to change its policies and practice (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

Hamilton and Thomas (2006:11) state that a further complaint to the Secretary of State usually meets with the same response. Only in extreme cases is there any action by the Secretary of State against the school.

When a school is inspected by Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), parents are asked to express any concerns to the inspectors. It seems to be rare for the parents' concerns about inadequate response to bullying to be reflected in the OFSTED report. There have been recent changes to the inspection process that enable parents to raise concerns with OFSTED and trigger an inspection either of the whole school or of one area within a school. This option may prove helpful to parents of bullied children. However, few parents seem to be aware of this possibility. It would be helpful if schools were obliged to refer to this option in their published complaints policies (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

4.5.1.2 Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in England has no jurisdiction in relation to schools even when the school is exercising a public function delegated by the local authority. If a school fails to follow its published anti-bullying policy or to comply with statutory duties, there is no recourse to the LGO (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:12).

The LGO currently deals with public sector complaints. For many years, it has been a major concern that while the LGO has jurisdiction in relation to maladministration in education, it does not have any jurisdiction over what are termed *internal* disciplinary matters. There would be a number of advantages to giving a wider jurisdiction to the LGO to cover the way schools address parental complaints. These include (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11):

- The LGO system is well known and established, and has a high level of credibility and trust.
- It is an independent, impartial and free service.
- The LGO is completely independent of the Government and local authorities.
- The LGO has extensive powers to obtain the information it needs to make decisions.

- The LGO is able to recommend the payment of compensation.
- The LGO uses the complaints received to promote change and good practice to ensure that similar problems of maladministration do not happen again.

There are also, however, a number of obstacles which would impact on the effectiveness of the LGO as an appeal body where parents feel dissatisfied with the way that schools handle complaints. These include (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11):

- Applications can only be made to the LGO when other complaints procedures have been exhausted.
- There is currently an issue of delay in dealing with complaints. The LGO office is overstretched and would require additional staff to take on any extra work.
- The remit of the LGO is confined to the investigation of complaints of maladministration. It could, if given power over matters of internal discipline at schools, address the issue of whether the school had followed its own policies and any requirements set down in legislation, but could go no further than that.

4.5.1.3 Limited redress through the court system

In theory, Hamilton and Thomas (2006:13) states that a learner or parent can seek judicial review of a school that fails to protect the learner from bullying. However, it is difficult to obtain funding from the Legal Services Commission for such an application. Even where funding is obtained, few applicants succeed in obtaining permission, as there is often insufficient objective evidence of the school's failure for a judge to grant permission. The only exception may be cases where the learner has suffered serious physical harm on more than one occasion (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:13).

Where there has been persistent bullying, a learner who suffers loss may have a claim in educational negligence. This, of course, does not provide a

remedy at the time of the bullying and, once again, it is difficult to obtain funding from the Legal Services Commission for such proceedings. In addition, of those claims that have reached court, few have been successful. The learner must satisfy the court that there was persistent bullying, that loss resulted from the bullying, that the school owed a duty of care and that the loss was reasonably foreseeable by the school. This is a high standard to satisfy. Even if the claim is successful, the level of damages would generally be low (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

Bullying may amount to a criminal offence where it involves assault or harassment. The recently arrived technological forms of bullying (*cf.* 2.5.2), for example by e-mail and text, may also amount to criminal offences under the Telecommunications Act 1984 (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11). However, schools are reluctant to involve the police, and there appears to be equal reluctance on the part of the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute for bullying incidents at school. Any private prosecution is generally impractical due to cost. A further difficulty is that bullied learners are often emotionally fragile and parents, in an attempt to shield the child from further stress, are unwilling to pursue or be involved in criminal proceedings (Hamilton & Thomas, 2006:11).

When the Human Rights Act 1998 passed into British law, it was hoped that the prohibition on degrading and inhumane treatment in Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (UN, 1950) would provide some recourse for bullied learners. The right to privacy and family life contained within Article 8 could also have been helpful. However, the courts have chosen to interpret most of the rights narrowly in the current decided case law. There is little prospect that a freestanding claim under the HRA for a declaration of breach of human rights and damages as a result of bullying would succeed.

4.5.2 Minister of Education

Former Education Minister Ivan Lewis (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2004:1) launched a national Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) of over 50 expert organizations to act as a national agency to:

- work with educators, schools and local education authorities to promote anti-bullying practices across all schools, including the use of peer mentoring
- develop innovative, practical approaches to tackling bullying, including the modern menace of bullying by text messaging (*cf.* 2.5.1), e-mail and Internet chat (*cf.* 2.5.2).
- provide support for parents in severe cases of bullying, including mediation and referrals across the Alliance's regional and national network, where all other avenues to resolve the bullying have been exhausted;
- develop and oversee anti-bullying resources and information for schools and parents, including an anti-bullying website containing practical support and advice; and
- run an annual national anti-bullying week of events and activities at schools across England to teach young people that all forms of bullying are wrong and suggest active ways in which to show no tolerance to it.

Lewis (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2004:1) went on to say that England's commitment to tackle bullying in all its forms is unprecedented and that he was delighted to announce the creation of the first ever national alliance to underline this commitment at schools across the country.

"Unkindness has no remedy at law" (Proverb)

The Alliance's national lead on anti-bullying and the regionally based experts that will support schools, parents and local education authorities will be a crucial part of our action to show no tolerance to bullying (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2004:1). It will build on the *Make The*

Difference campaign in which around 5 000 headeducators, educators, learners and anti-bullying experts have already participated.

He continued by saying that bullying is not a *part of growing up*. Bullying is not *character building*. Bullying is physical or emotional assault, and can lead to the most tragic consequences. The Government (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2004:1) will continue to support schools which take tough action against violent learners who use physical violence against others, with permanent exclusions even for first-time offences, and the use of new parenting contracts to focus the minority of parents on measures to improve their child's behaviour when they have previously been unwilling to make the effort (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2004:1).

4.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter it has become evident that South Africa, Australia, Japan and England all have legislation in place that should prevent bullying from occurring at schools.

The Constitution of South Africa is the supreme law of the Republic and states in numerous sections that bullying is not acceptable under any conditions for any learners. This is backed up by The Children's Act and the Education Policy Act, the School Education Act, the South African Schools Act and by SACE.

Australia does not have a Bill of Rights, but the majority of delegates felt that the traditional rights and freedoms of British subjects were sufficiently guaranteed by the Parliamentary system and independent judiciary which the Constitution would create. The laws pertaining to bullying at school are therefore mainly introduced by each of the territories independently. Australia does recognize the right of every learner and every educator to be free from being bullied at schools.

Japan's Constitution (Article 11) states that every citizen must enjoy all the fundamental human rights, and that they are to be respected as individuals. Section 26 states that all people are to receive an equal education

correspondent to their ability. The Fundamental Law of Education (1947) which sets the standards for the Japanese education system. This law does not allow for bullying at Japanese schools and enables bullies to be suspended from schools.

Schools in England are required to have an anti-bullying policy in place at their schools, but unless it is effectively managed by the entire school, it is not effective. There is also very little recourse for learners in England who continue to be bullied at school.

In the next chapter the focus will be on the findings that have become evident in the research, as well as recommendations that will be made concerning anti-bullying strategies that may be suited to the South African school situation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a summary of the preceding chapters will be given. The findings that have become evident in the comparison of the strategies used to counteract bullying in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England will be discussed. Recommendations will then be made regarding anti-bullying strategies that may be suited to the South African school situation.

5.2 SUMMARY

In chapter 1, the problem leading to the research was discussed (*cf.* 1.2). The aims of the research were determined (*cf.* 1.3), the research methodology was identified (*cf.* 1.4) and the division of the chapters was finalized (*cf.* 1.6). The research method consisted of (*cf.* 1.4.1 & 1.4.2)

- a literature study of pre-primary, primary and secondary school educational and legal sources concerning bullying; and
- a comparative educational law perspective relative to bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England (*cf.* 1.4.3).

Chapter 2 provided an overview of bullying at school level (*cf.* 2.2). Definitions of bullying at schools such as, the repetitive behaviour that always involves an imbalance of power and inflicted verbally, physically or psychologically (Batshe & Knoff, 1994:12), were provided. Six defining factors of bullying were identified, intent to do harm, intensity and duration, power over the victim, vulnerability of the victim, lack of support and consequences (*cf.* 2.2.1). The extent of bullying at schools was discussed (*cf.* 2.2.2) and the reluctance to report bullying was highlighted (*cf.* 2.2.2.1).

Secondly, a number of general features of school bullies (*cf.* 2.2.4) were highlighted, as well as the different types of bullying occurring at schools (*cf.* 2.2.5). The characteristics of school bullies as well as their victims were

discussed (*cf.* 2.2.6 & *cf.* 2.2.7). The causes of bullying (*cf.* 2.3) were expounded and the locations of bullying were discussed (*cf.* 2.4). Finally a new form of bullying, cyberbullying was highlighted (*cf.* 2.5).

In chapter 3, the strategies used to counteract bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England were expounded on (*cf.* 3.2.2; 3.3.2; 4.4.2 & 3.5.3). The initiatives introduced by the South African Education Department such as the Safer Schools programme in partnership between the South African Police Service and the Department of education were discussed (*cf.* 3.2.2 & 3.2.3) and a number of different strategies to counter bullying were mentioned (*cf.* 3.2.5).

This chapter also discussed the dynamics of bullying (*cf.* 3.2.3.3.8). These include the fact that learners gully to gain status or poser within the group and the fact that bullies often have high self-images. Anti-bullying initiatives at South African schools such as the *No Blame Approach* were discussed (*cf.* 3.2.3 & 3.2.4). Chapter 2 furthermore contained methods used to counteract bullying at Australian schools (*cf.* 3.3.3) and the results of research carried out at Australian schools (*cf.* 3.3.5). Methods use to counteract bullying among young learners in Japan (*cf.* 3.4.2) were discussed, as well as the school refusal syndrome (*tokokyohi*) that is a serious problem there (*cf.* 3.4). Finally, the anti-bullying interventions (*cf.* 3.5.3) in England and recommendations made by Childline (*cf.* 3.5.5) were investigated.

In chapter 4, an international perspective on the role of legislation and policy in counteracting bullying at schools was given. Concerning South Africa, the supremacy of the Constitution was discussed (*cf.* 4.2.1) as well as a number of other Acts pertaining to education (*cf.* 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 4.2.5; 4.2.6 & 4.2.7). The Australian perspective on bullying was dealt with (*cf.* 4.3.1), as well as a number of different approaches to bullying (*cf.* 4.3.1). The roll of Japanese Law on bullying at schools (*cf.* 4.4.1) was probed. Policies relating to bullying at schools in England were also set out (*cf.* 4.5).

5.3 FINDINGS

From the research, specific findings come to the fore. These findings will be presented in terms of the original research aims.

5.3.1 Findings based on research objective 1: Determine the nature of bullying at school level.

- Bullying is one of the most underestimated problems at our schools today (cf. 2.1; 2.2.2; 3.2). Educators still tend to ignore it and parents consider it to be part of the process of growing up.
- Bullying causes trauma and psychiatric injury (cf. 2.1).
- Bullying is intentional and consists of repeated hurtful acts, words or other behaviour (cf. 2.2.1).
- Learners experience different types of bullying. These include physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name-calling and slugging (cf. 2.2.5).
- There are numerous causes of bullying at schools. They include family background, stress, socialization patterns, frustration, lack of role models, abuse at home and conduct disorder (cf. 2.2.4.2 & 2.3).
- Most learners do not report bullying to adults (cf. 2.2.2.1).
- Parents are often unaware of the bullying problem (cf. 2.2.3; 3.4.6).
- The causes of bullying are varied and may depend on the culture and upbringing of the learners (cf. 2.3 & 3.4.6).
- School playgrounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying (cf. 2.4). It is relatively easy to single out and harass another learner as the noise level on the playground masks much of what is going on.

- The use of electronic messaging to ostracize, threaten and harass an individual at school, known as cyberbullying, is becoming more and more prevalent at schools around the world (cf. 2.5).
- Victims of cyberbullying may experience many of the same effects as learners who are bullied in person (cf. 2.5.3).
- A learner who bullies in a school situation and has not been identified and assisted could very possibly become a serial bully (cf. 2.6). This is a person who is a convincing and practiced liar and will make up anything spontaneously to fit his or her needs at that moment. This person may also appear glib, shallow and superficial with plenty of fine words and lots of form, but without substance.

5.3.2 Findings based on research objective 2: Document the strategies that are used to counteract bullying at schools in South Africa, Australia, Japan and England.

Schools in South Africa have taken steps to help ensure relative security and safety at schools (cf. 3.2.1). The Department of Education of Kwazulu Natal has issued a Manual providing a number of suggestions on how to deal with bullying at schools. School safety regulations have been made available to all schools in South Africa and a template for a code of conduct will be made available to all schools.

The Minister of Education launched a programme called *TiisaThuto* to help fight school-based crime (cf. 3.2.4).

The *No Blame Approach* has been used in South African classrooms with some success (cf. 3.2.5.1). There are a number of steps that are to be applied by the educator such as isolating the bullying behaviour and providing support for the victim. This approach involves changing the behaviour of the bully, and mediating through peer programmes.

Counselling interventions have been used at South African schools (cf. 3.2.6). Buswell (2007:14) for example suggests interviewing the victim, arranging a

meeting with all learners who are involved, explaining the problem and sharing the responsibility. Solutions are then identified and learners take action themselves. These stakeholders then meet again to discuss the results.

Bullying behaviour at Australian schools can be reduced by well-planned intervention (cf. 3.3.2). These interventions include development of specific anti bullying policies, use of drama to help learners to understand the nature of bullying and use of counselling methods to work with learners involved in bully/victim problems.

The Friendly Schools Project (cf. 3.3.12.1), Mind Matters (cf. 3.3.12.2), From Bullying to Responsible Citizenship (cf. 3.3.12.3) and Peer Support (cf. 3.3.12.4) have all been used at Australian schools to combat bullying.

Japan has a serious problem relating to bullying at schools. It is known as **tokokyohi** – school refusal syndrome (cf. 3.4.2.1.3). This is the phenomenon where learners do not go to school or cannot go to school despite a desire to go to school, due to some psychological, emotional, physical and or social factor. Bullying forms a large part of the reason for **tokokyohi** among learners in Japan.

Bullying (**ijime**) in Japan has always been a fact of life, among learners and among adults (cf. 3.4.1). Bullying in Japan constitutes verbal threats, ridicule and/or name calling, hiding property, shunning by the group, silent treatment by the group, meddling, physical violence and coercion to obtain money.

Any learner who is different from another learner could be a target of bullying (cf. 3.4.5).

Homeroom educators can create a homeroom class in which bullying is not tolerated (cf. 3.4.3.2). If the homeroom educator is too strict, the learners become frustrated and stressed, and accept the necessity of targeting the weak and vulnerable.

The Minister of Education in Japan has issued a report on the most effective ways of preventing bullying at schools (*cf.* 3.4.4).

Bullying and victimization is a pervasive problem in schools in England (*cf.* 3.5.1).

Schools in England are required by law to have a behavioural/school management policy (*cf.* 3.5.3).

More than two-thirds of learners in England would not feel comfortable talking to an educator about being bullied (*cf.* 3.5.4).

5.3.3 Findings based on research objective 3: Compare the role that education law plays in counteracting bullying at schools in South Africa , Australia, Japan and England

5.3.3.1 South Africa

- As the Constitution (108/1996) is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa it has an influence on all educational practice in South Africa (*cf.* 4.2.1) as the South African Schools Act must be based on it.
- Numerous provisions contained in the Bill of Rights (108/1996) protect the rights of learners to study in a safe environment (*cf.* 4.2.1).
- The Children's Act of 2005 (12/1998) does not allow for any form of deliberate injury to a child – physical or psychological (*cf.* 4.2.2).
- The Education Policy Act of South Africa (12/1998) ensures that learners are protected against unfair discrimination (*cf.* 4.2.3).
- The School Education Act (6/1995) states that the Department of Education of South Africa has a duty to protect learners and educators from all forms of physical and mental violence at schools (*cf.* 4.2.4).
- The South African Schools Act (84/1996b) states that every school must adopt a code of conduct for learners (*cf.* 4.2.5).

5.3.3.2 Australia

- The Commonwealth Government of Australia published a major report known as *Sticks and Stones*, compiled by a committee of the House of Representatives to prevent bullying at schools (cf. 4.3).
- The department also produced the APEEL programme (Rigby, 2002:19) – *a partnership encouraging effective learning* – to reduce bullying at schools in Australia (cf. 4.3.1).
- The National Anti-bullying Website Project was launched in 1999 to help minimize bullying at schools in Australia (cf. 4.3.2).
- In 2000, the Commonwealth Department of Education provided a short booklet for parents, suggesting how they might help in countering bullying at schools (cf. 4.3.1).

5.3.3.3 Japan

- Article 11 of the Constitution of Japan (1947) states that the people shall not be prevented from enjoying any of the fundamental human rights. This includes the right not to be bullied (cf. 4.4.1).
- Article 26 of the Constitution of Japan (1994) states that all people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law (cf. 4.4.1).
- The fundamental Law of Education of Japan does not allow for any discrimination but aims at the full development of all learners (cf. 4.4.2).

5.3.3.4 England

- Section 29 of the Education Act (2002) provides that governors of a British school shall establish a complaints procedure to deal with complaints not covered by existing statutory requirements (cf. 4.5).

- Schools in England are required by law to have a behaviour/school management policy. This includes drawing up an anti-bullying policy suitable for their school (*cf.* 4.5).

5.3.4 Findings based on research objective 4: Suggest a strategy best suited to the South African school situation

The intervention programmes were, in some respects, similar. They typically included:

- Education of the school staff about bullying. Meetings were held to share and discuss what is known about bullying at schools. Generally, surveys were undertaken to find out about the nature and prevalence of bullying behaviour at each school in any programme and the results were discussed at staff meetings (*cf.* 4.5.2; 3.3.2.2 & 3.3.2.5).
- Involvement of the wider community, especially parents and learners at the school. Educators are expected to talk with learners about the problem and seek their support (*cf.* 3.2.2.2 & 4.5.2 & 3.3.4.16).
- The inclusion of content relevant to bullying in the curriculum. With younger learners, this typically involved social skills training, especially learning to be assertive and not aggressive, and developing greater empathy and anger control. Among older learners there must be emphasis upon training in conflict management and in mediation (*cf.* 3.2.2.2 & 3.2.3.3.7 & 3.3.4.10).
- Increased monitoring of learner behaviour during recesses to identify and intervene when bullying occurs (3.3.4.11).
- Encouragement of learners to seek help if they are being bullied (*cf.* 3.2.3.2 & 3.2.3.3.1).
- A plan to deal with cases of bullying (*cf.* 3.2.3.3 & 3.2.3.3.2).

5.3.4.1 Divergences between the programmes

The main divergence between programmes appeared in approaches to dealing with cases of bullying. Some programmes emphasized the need for clear rules about how learners should treat one another and the need to apply sanctions when rules were broken. The sanctions could include detention, loss of privileges and suspension, the sanction depending on the seriousness of the bullying. Some of the programmes placed greater emphasis upon problem-solving approaches in dealing with bully/victim cases. These included the use of mediation between bullies and victims and the use of the *No Blame Approach* and the Method of Shared Concern.

5.3.4.2 How successful were the interventions?

With several minor exceptions, the interventions were successful in reducing bullying. The outcomes varied widely. One study reported a 50% reduction in bullying after two years. Most showed a modest improvement: about 15%.

A reduction in bullying occurred mainly among the younger learners – interventions with older learners were generally less successful.

Reductions occurred much more often on measures of being victimized than on measures of bullying others.

Outcomes were closely related to how thoroughly the programmes were implemented at a school. Schools that put in more time and effort were generally more successful in reducing bullying (Smith & Sharp, 1994).

Cooperative teaching methods appear to have resulted in a small improvement in learners' relationships.

Teaching young learners to be assertive, manage their anger and behave more empathetically reduces levels of observed aggressiveness.

5.3.4.3 Which programmes are best?

At present time, no definite answer can be given to this important question. It may depend, in part, on the learners and the readiness of a staff to implement the programme rigorously.

- There is a need for clearly understood rules and associated sanctions with regard to bullying at schools (*cf.* 3.2.2.1; 3.3.12.3).
- A sense of ownership of the bullying programme is necessary and must be emphasized in an anti-bullying programme (*cf.* 3.3.11).
- Staff commitment to the programme is essential (*cf.* 3.3.11 & 3.3.4.18).
- The education department must get involved and formulate a policy that must be implemented at every school in South Africa (*cf.* 2.2.2.2).
- A programme must be formulated that contains all information required to inform the educators of the seriousness of bullying at schools and the consequences of not implementing an anti-bullying policy (*cf.* 3.2.3.3).
- Staff must be trained to administer the anti-bullying programme effectively (*cf.* 3.2.3.1).
- The principals of all schools must be involved and committed to the programme (*cf.* 3.3.4.18 & 2.2.5).
- This programme can possibly be linked to the IQMS programme.
- This programme cannot be a once-off programme, but must be carried throughout the year and reintroduced the following year (*cf.* 3.2.3.2 & 3.5.4).
- It must form part of the Life Orientation learning area (*cf.* 3.5.5).
- It must be introduced from Grade R to Grade 12, if bullying is to be substantially reduced at all schools (*cf.* 3.5.4).

- Comprehensive records must be kept in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme (cf. 3.3.2.2).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- An anti-bullying policy should include a strong statement of the school's stand against bullying. A declaration of the rights of the individuals in the community must be made. The responsibilities of members of the community must be clearly stated and a general description of what is to be done must be included in the policy (cf. 3.5.3; 3.5.7; 3.5.7.1; 3.3; 3.3.2.2 & 3.3.4.17).
- Learners must be educated about bullying. This includes the following: knowledge and understanding of bullying, attitudes and values around bullying, and skills to deal with bullies and bullying behaviour (cf. 3.5.5; 3.5.7.1 & 3.3.2.2).
- Learners need to be taught how to be assertive. They must learn how to say *no* to another learner's unacceptable demands. This can be done by role-play (cf. 3.3.2.2 & 3.3.2.3.2). Learners must be taught how to intervene when interactions seem headed for trouble and suggest ways to compromise or express their feelings in a productive way. Learners must be taught to seek help when confronted by the abuse of power by other learners or adults (cf. 3.2.2.2 & 3.3.2.3.3).
- Learners should be taught to ask for things directly and respond directly to one another. After a conflict between two learners, they can be asked to replay the scene and shown how to resolve the problem firmly and fairly (cf. 3.3.2.2 & 3.3.2.3.3).
- Learners must be taught how to stand up to bullies and how to tell bullies to stop hurtful acts. Learners need to be encouraged not to give up objects or territory to bullies. Preventing bullies from getting what they want, will discourage aggressive behaviour (cf. 3.2.3.3.7; 3.3.2.3.3; 3.3.14.1 & 3.3.15.5).

- Learners must be shown the rewards of personal achievement through standing up for themselves (cf. 3.2.3.3.8; 3.2.4.6 & 3.3.13.7).
- Educators must express disapproval of bullying whenever it occurs, not only in the classroom, but also on the school playground. They should listen sympathetically to learners who need support when they are victimized and then take action according to procedures approved by the school (cf. 3.2.3.3.2).
- Educators must encourage cooperative learning in the classroom and not set a bad example with their own behaviour, by refraining from sarcasm or mean-spirited humour (cf. 3.5.6).
- Educators must talk to learners about bullying and mobilize support for action to reduce bullying (cf. 3.2.3.3.3; 3.3.4.13 & 3.3.14.5).
- Schools must make it safe for learners to report bullying. They must implement a clear and effective plan to make bullies understand the consequences of bullying. They must help victims identify all forms of bullying behaviour and bullies and mobilize the masses of learners who are neither victims nor bullies to take action against bullying (cf. 3.2.3.3 & 3.2.3.5).

5.5 SHORTCOMINGS OF THIS DISSERTATION

- There is no one country's policy or study that can be implemented as is, at South African schools.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Cyberbullying and its influence on the South African learner
- Race-related bullying in South Africa
- Verbal bullying at schools where educators (white) do not understand the vernacular of the learner (African)

5.7 CONCLUSION

This study set out to gain insight into the strategies used to counteract bullying at schools in four countries. It provided an African, European, Asian and Oceanian perspective on bullying at schools.

The effects of bullying can be serious and even fatal. A large number of victims of bullying suffer long-term psychological damage and stress related disease later in their lives. Furthermore it has been proven that if aggressive behaviour is not challenged in childhood there is a danger that it may become habitual and that these bullies are at risk of criminal behaviour and domestic violence in adulthood.

While various strategies to deal with bullies have been put forth in this study, research has shown that it remains the responsibility of the school and all its relevant parties to ensure that bullying is prevented at school level. The involvement of the principal cannot be stressed enough if this is to be successful. Both the victim and the bully need to be addressed in order to ensure that the chain of bullying is broken at school level.

The research concludes that bullying remains a problem as South African, Australian, Japanese and English schools even though there are numerous laws in place that should prevent bullying occurring in schools. If bullying in South African schools is to be eradicated, schools must implement their own policies that clearly define the intention to take bullying seriously and manage it effectively.

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