SCHOOL SAFETY

An inquiry into the safety of students at school

Dr Janis Carroll-Lind

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Dr Janis Carroll-Lind
Office of the Children's Commissioner

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Foreword

This is the first inquiry involving education from the Office of the Children's Commissioner. We undertook this inquiry into the safety of students at school because bullying consistently rates as one of the biggest concerns for children and young people in New Zealand. We hear this through our engagement with children and young people and through both our office advice lines and advice lines run by other youth-focused organisations. The safety of children at school is essential if they are to learn while attending school.

Not only is it an everyday problem for some children and young people in New Zealand, but bullying can have long-term effects on self-esteem and educational achievement and has the potential to impact on their ability to develop their potential.

Every school grapples with bullying among students. How they handle it varies across New Zealand. In this inquiry, we have focused on where we can learn from schools that have developed an effective response to bullying, and tried to make this available to everyone. A specific resource for schools and teachers will be prepared and distributed to schools later this year.

Bullying behaviour is complex and bullying occurs in every school. The purpose of this inquiry is to find ways to improve students' safety at school – the evidence showing us how to do this, an explanation of what bullying, violence and child abuse are, and suggestions for positive change are included.

The rapid advances in technology development have extended the reach of bullies to cyberspace where so many more people can participate in the humiliation and bullying of children and young people. While parents may have been on the receiving end of a small group of bullies in their days at school, their children are potentially exposed to hundreds or thousands of bullies via mobile phone and Internet technology. This may make the bullying more debilitating, isolating and humiliating.

Disturbingly, New Zealanders have a high tolerance for violence and while schools cannot be held responsible for the ills of society, schools can make a difference in how violence is dealt with. Without intervention bullies learn that using aggression is an acceptable way to deal with interpersonal conflict. It is not.

In the course of this inquiry it was disappointing to find that while many students either were bullied or knew about others who were being bullied, most of them felt that there was no point in speaking out. Parents and teachers need to encourage and empower children to speak out about bullying. Other children who witness this also play an important role by not condoning the behaviour. Bystanders can and do make a difference.

Schools are part of our communities and we all have a vested interest in the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. Involvement and education of parents increases the effectiveness of schools' anti-bullying measures.

The challenge ahead is to alter the school environment rather than focusing on the perpetrators and victims alone. Schools that work to improve their whole school

environment, culture and ethos are the most effective. There are ripple effects from this approach including improving educational outcomes, self-esteem and conflict resolution skills across the school population.

One of the special things about teachers' relationships with our children and young people is their influence on shaping the people they become as adults. Their role in contributing to safe environments for children and themselves is invaluable.

Thanks to Dr Janis Carroll-Lind, Principal Advisor, Office of the Children's Commissioner, who undertook this inquiry. Many hours of interviews in schools with children and young people, parents, counsellors, individual teachers, non-government organisations and organisations working with children, have led to this comprehensive guide to understanding and successfully dealing with bullying and violence in schools. My thanks go to all of those who contributed so richly to this inquiry.

Nau te rourou	*With your basket*
Naku te rourou	*And my basket*
Ka ora nga tamariki	*May our children be satisfied*

Dr Cindy Kiro
Children's Commissioner

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NB: Parts of the literature review were drawn from the author's unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Executive summary

Following a number of recent high profile incidents and ongoing complaints about bullying and violence to our advice lines[1], the Children's Commissioner decided to undertake an inquiry into the safety of students at school.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises a child's right to a safe environment and protection from all forms of physical and emotional harm, including bullying on the way to and from school and while on the school's premises during school hours. In accordance with the Government's National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), New Zealand school boards of trustees are legally required to:

- Provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students – NAG 5(i)
- comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the safety of students and employees –NAG 5(iv).

While most schools endeavour to provide a safe learning environment, indications are that school is not always a safe place for students. Violence and bullying-related incidents are a major threat to student wellbeing and contribute to a significant number of school suspensions in New Zealand. For some children and young people in New Zealand, bullying is part of their childhood. Research studies reveal high levels of physical and emotional bullying compared to other countries. For example, the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS 2006/07) rated New Zealand schools among the worst category in the world for bullying, with rates more than 50 percent above the international average (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2008).

Severe school violence is rare in most parts of the world. Of all forms of youth violence, emotional violence (bullying) is the most common. Technological advances have introduced the added dangers of text-bullying. Besides the negative messages, mobile phones can be used to gather a large number of students in a very short time, for example, to the 'top field' to witness a fight. Furthermore mobile phones can film the fight

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[1] The Office of the Children's Commissioner has a child rights advice line and contracts the Wellington Community Law Centre to provide free legal advice to parents on education matters (PLINFO).

so victims can potentially be re-victimised over and over when the video footage is circulated among a wide network of 'spectators'.

There is consensus among researchers that bullying is a deliberate misuse of power that makes the victim feel afraid and uncomfortable. Bullying causes harm, whatever form it takes, whether it be physical abuse, stand over tactics or less obvious behaviours such as text bullying, gossip, suggestive comments, practical jokes, name calling, humiliation, or exclusion from groups and games.

Studies indicate that victims of bullying have higher than normal absenteeism (school avoidance) and early school exit (dropout rates) among older students. This evidence provides further justification for the need to ensure time and resources are focused on this area.

The objectives of this inquiry were to:

1. Examine the nature of violence and bullying on students attending New Zealand primary and secondary schools;
2. Determine the extent to which anti-violence policies, procedures, and practices facilitate the safety and security of students at school;
3. Identify barriers and enablers to school safety;
4. Build teacher capability and capacity in developing a positive school culture and ethos by exploring elements of effectiveness;
5. Identify guidelines for effective responses to issues of violence and bullying; and
6. Provide a range of strategies and guidelines for the development of future policy and practice around school culture and safety.

The inquiry included several elements: (1) a review of the literature; (2) consultation with children and young people; (3) document analysis; (4) identification of success case study criteria and schools that met those criteria; (5) visits to success case study schools; and (6) analysis and integration of data collected to identify elements of best practice.

Key findings

Many schools operate effectively and have clear policies and procedures to ensure the issue of bullying is addressed. More schools than not are committed to providing a safe learning environment. This report should be read with the proviso that the Office of the Children's Commissioner does not typically receive calls about "things going well" for children. Almost all of the telephone and written communication involved people (parents, principals and other professionals) seeking advice and advocacy for students when there were issues of concern. Nevertheless, those concerns are legitimate and by the time they reach this office are usually quite serious and may already involve a breakdown in the relationship between home and school.

The findings of this inquiry reveal inconsistencies in the ways that bullying, violence and abuse are defined. That schools *defined* these terms differently and in some cases *responded* differently to the various incidents they experienced has identified inconsistencies and gaps in the reporting procedures of some schools, eg. notifying the Police in cases of serious assault.

Clearly in some instances there are schools that, for whatever reason, choose not to acknowledge the bullying that has occurred or to report specific incidents of violence and abuse. This has implications for all students in that both perpetrators and victims in one school might receive different consequences for a similar incident that occurred in another school. There seems to be no consistency in the way that schools across New Zealand deal with issues around safety. There have been instances where serious assaults occurred at some schools and warranted police intervention yet the Police were not notified. This report proposes that schools, wherever possible, follow the same broad guidelines, while recognising the individuality of each school to make their own informed decisions.

The key concern of parents that informed this inquiry was the slow response of schools and the perceived inaction of teachers. Consistent with the research literature, children and young people consulted for this inquiry consider that one reason students choose not to disclose incidents of bullying to teachers is because they perceive that the bullying will not be addressed. However, most incidents of bullying and violence happen 'beneath

the radar of teachers' at school. Teachers cannot respond to bullying if they do not know about its occurrence. Usually bullying is not reported to teachers – and if students disclose to anyone, it is usually to friends. While bullying usually happens outside the classroom and away from teachers, there may be cues that students are involved in bullying, which can be picked up from their behaviour and demeanour in the classroom. Research studies confirm the experiences and perceptions of some of the children and young people consulted for this inquiry – that some teachers at their schools might be either unable or unwilling to control bullying behaviours.

No school is immune to bullying. Classrooms are dynamic social settings and each year brings together a new cohort of students. Incidents that happen in one school could also happen in another. There were enough participants in this inquiry to show that bullying can happen to any student. Being victimised by hurtful teasing, untrue gossip and exclusion from friendship groups were common occurrences for many of the students who participated in the inquiry.

Peer ecologies are complex. Most bullying incidents have witnesses and bullying can occur only if the bystanders allow it to happen by not intervening. But if peers are part of the problem they should also be part of the solution. Effective schools understand the importance of involving their students in a whole school approach to eradicate bullying. Other than the students themselves, teachers are a school's most valuable resource for combating bullying and victimisation. Teachers can make a difference because they lie just outside the peer ecology and help shape, intentionally and unintentionally, the social interactions of their students.

Most importantly, exemplary practices are highlighted in the report. The only programmes that are effective in addressing the problems of violence and aggression in schools are those that attempt to alter the school environment rather than focusing on the bullies and victims alone. The success case study schools that participated in this inquiry into school safety had all worked over time to build a strong culture and ethos of school community. A whole school approach encourages students, teachers and parents to share responsibility for changing the school culture and developing positive school climates that discourage bullying and encourage students to care about each other. This approach is underpinned by anti-bullying policies (including common definitions of

bullying, violence and abuse), effective procedures for responding to bullying and violence, and preventive programmes integrated into the school curriculum. Helping young people fully develop their personal and social values and skills is considered by some schools to be as important as participation in violence prevention programmes. A comprehensive education in human rights not only provides knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, but also imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life.

Adopting restorative approaches instead of the more punitive and exclusionary response to school discipline develops a more positive whole school culture. Restoring relationships rather than attributing blame and exacting retribution are an effective response to relational aggression type behaviours. Bullied students just want the bullying to stop and tend to be less worried about making sure the bullies are punished.

To maximise success, schools, before implementation, and no matter which programme is introduced, must first have effective policies and procedures in place. The school community should be involved and prevention made a publicly announced priority. No school should be complacent about bullying because it can happen in any school at any time. Preventive approaches will help to reduce school bullying and violence, but it will still happen despite schools' best efforts – and teachers need to know how to deal with it when it does occur. Effective schools acknowledge this fact and constantly review their school's environment. Appropriate intervention requires immediate action and the majority of whole school approaches view professional development of teachers as a prerequisite to building a safe school culture.

Recommendations for schools

The following recommendations are made in this report and grouped under four categories:

1. Whole school approach

- Perceive bullying to be a whole of community response
- Involve the school community. The principal should publicly announce the school's commitment to the prevention of violence and bullying
- Ensure that prevention and intervention strategies and programmes consider the school climate as a potential contributing factor in promoting or inhibiting bullying
- View bullying as a group phenomenon that recognises the diversity of experiences along the bully/victim continuum, including students as bystanders and reinforcers and the contribution of peers in relational aggression
- Implement whole school approaches and violence prevention programmes
- Adopt a zero tolerance *attitude* to violence and bullying, but do not adopt exclusionary zero tolerance *policies.*

2. Policy and procedures

- View bullying, violence and child abuse separately according to the agreed on definitions
- Adopt consistent procedures as suggested in the flowcharts
- Develop crisis procedures for rapid response to serious incidents of violence
- Implement procedures around mobile phone use at school
- Know the appropriate legislation and policies relevant to students' safety at school
- Establish a confidential reporting system for students
- Establish a safety web and safety advocates
- Integrate anti-violence strategies into the existing school curriculum
- Consider employing a school counsellor in primary schools to manage the restorative practices and anti-bullying approaches, and the children wanting "a safe place" during interval and lunch times.

3. *Ongoing review and professional development*

- Conduct regular and ongoing self-reviews of anti-violence policies and procedures. This should also involve an assessment of the school's safety and subsequent implementation of correction procedures in light of the review
- Undertake professional development for teachers. This training should also be available to teacher education students to ensure that all teachers know how to identify bullying and how to intervene
- Conduct staff training on the school's anti-violence and bullying policies and procedures
- Be discerning about which anti-bullying programmes to use.

4. *Collaborative responses*

- Respond immediately so that students and their families feel confident about the school's commitment and response to issues of bullying and violence
- Use the police and other agencies when the need arises (eg. serious incidents involving assault)
- For less serious incidents, invite the school's Youth Aid officer to the restorative conference (ie when schools run a restorative conference, as opposed to a Youth Justice one). This will forge good school/police partnerships
- Access support and coaching on how to deal with the media.

This report should be viewed positively. While there is always room for improvement, statistics suggest that schools are becoming safer for students. Findings from *Youth 07 The Health and Wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand* show students rated their school climate as being safer in 2007 than in 2001. Statistics from the *What's Up* telephone counselling service released at the end of 2008 reveal that although the proportion of calls did not change between 2007 and 2008, the actual severity of the bullying decreased. However, this is not the time to be complacent. Continuing to focus on prevalence and incidence is not the answer. Nor will isolated prevention efforts reduce the incidence of violence. We know what works: shared ownership of a whole school approach, underpinned by clearly stated policies and procedures that incorporate

a common definition of bullying and violence, clear guidelines for reporting and recording, established systems for disclosures within a culture of safe-telling, planned prevention and intervention programmes, with the effectiveness and impact of the anti-bullying initiatives evaluated they implement through a regular self-review programme.

Creating safer schools is not dependent on money. Instead, facilitating change requires a shared ownership and commitment to a whole of community response in order to establish a responsive school culture able to address the issues of bullying, violence and abuse when they occur. For the same reason that violence, bullying and abuse are not caused by a single factor, prevention and intervention must involve a coordinated system of services, directed at individual, familial, classroom, school and societal levels.

List of tables and figures

Chapter one: Introduction

Students' safety at school is of increasing societal concern. For optimal learning to occur, students must feel safe and secure at school (Education and Science Committee, 2008). In a New Zealand report Safe Students in Safe Schools, the Education Review Office (2000) stated:

> The educational and social development of students at school is closely linked to their physical and emotional safety. Students cannot learn effectively if they are physically or verbally abused, victims of violence or bullying, or if their school surroundings are unsafe (p. 1).

The Children's Commissioner shares this view. The Office of the Children's Commissioner aims to ensure that children's and young people's rights and interests are recognised and widely supported and that children and young people are treated with respect, dignity and fairness. The education section of the Office of the Children's Commissioner helps to achieve the goals of the office by endeavouring to: (1) provide positive outcomes for schools and students by keeping students within the education system; (2) reduce barriers to learning which are created by conflict between schools, students and parents; and (3) improve relationships between the school sector and the community. Examining issues around school safety has the potential to address all three goals because indications are that violence and bullying-related incidents are a significant threat to student wellbeing and are a major reason for school suspensions in New Zealand (Maharaj, Ryba, & Tie, 2000; MoE, 2007; Towl; 2008).

Background to the school safety inquiry

The *What's Up* telephone counselling service, for children and young people aged five to 18, has consistently reported bullying as one of the main concerns for callers since the service began in 2001. Similarly, the Office of the Children's Commissioner's two enquiry lines have received a high proportion of both telephone and written concerns about bullying and violence in schools, including boarding hostels. Concerns have also been raised at the office's nationwide community education forums with non-government organisations. Consultation with children and young people, including the commissioner's

Young People's Reference Group (2006-2008) has consistently identified bullying as a key concern for them.

To date, a growing body of literature reports that bullying by pupils and teachers continues to undermine the safety of some children in New Zealand (Adair, 1999; Adair, Dixon, Moore, & Sutherland, 2000; Adolescent Health Research Group, 2007, 2008; Barwick & Gray, 2001; Browne & Carroll-Lind, 2006; Carroll-Lind, 2006; Carroll-Lind & Kearney, 2004; Human Rights Commission, 2007; Maxwell & Carroll-Lind, 1997; Nairn & Smith, 2002, 2003; Raskauskas, Carroll-Lind, & Kearney, 2005, 2006; Sullivan, 2000; Watson et al., 2003). Research studies reveal high levels of physical and emotional bullying in New Zealand compared to other countries. For example, the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS 2006//07) rated New Zealand schools among the worst category in the world for bullying, with New Zealand's rates more than 50 percent above the international average (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2008).

Besides the harm done to students, violence and bullying are problems for schools. Ongoing parental concern regarding their perceptions of the "systemic failure" of State agencies to protect students from school violence and bullying resulted in a complaint being submitted to the Ombudsman and Human Rights Commission in 2008. In addition the media, whether rightly or wrongly, consistently fuel anxiety about school safety with 'sensational' reporting of specific incidents of violence or bullying that have happened at school. Indicative headlines include: *Schoolyard sex, drinking, drug taking, and bullying* (Sunday News, 2008); *Boy pulls knife in schoolroom* (Marlborough Express, 2008); and *Probe into 'bullying' death* (NZPA, 2008). Incidents of physical violence have been reported. For example, *Dealing with violence. High schools investigate knife incident and 'fight club'* (Gillespie, 2008). On 17 November 2008, TV 3 aired a story on *Campbell Live* that detailed how a violent and unprovoked attack on a 15-year-old male student was recorded on a mobile phone by a female student and then widely disseminated around the students' secondary school. Inter-school rivalry and the influence of gangs have been linked to violence between schools (e.g., *200 in school brawl. Rivalry leads to violence,* Hawkes Bay Today, 2008). Videos released on YouTube have raised the question of "fight clubs" operating within some schools (Eriksen, 2008; Sloan, 2008).

Incidents of sexual violence in schools have also been reported (e.g., McKenzie-Minifie, 2008; Nicols, 2008; Tahana, 2008).

Girls too have been implicated in incidents of school violence and bullying, including girl gangs, with media headlines such as: *Violence among girls increasing* (Marlborough Express, 2008); *'Pack' girls in school bullying* (van Wel, 2008)*; The fairer sex fights back in the bullying stakes* (Johnston, 2008); *Girl bullies increasing* (Carroll, 2008); and *School attack leads to charges* (Booker, 2008).

Allegations have been made about the safety of students living in boarding schools (McKenzie-Minifie, 2008; Shepherd, 2008). A number of reported incidents that were sensationalised have since been proven to be unfounded. However, some cases have highlighted ongoing and persistent levels of concern among school communities, as reflected in media headlines such as: *School's neglect amounts to child abuse* (Nicols, 2008).

The numbers of reported incidents in the media have heightened awareness around bullying issues. For example, *Firm action needed on bullying* (Marlborough Express, 2008); *Schools need to face up to realities of bullying* (Moore, 2008); *Bullies need help too: Principal* (Low, 2008); *Minister gets heavy over bullying* (Nicols, 2008); *Principals welcome probe into bullying* (Young, 2008). Awareness has also been raised around the changing nature of bullying with the introduction of new technologies, eg. *Beating cyber bullies* (Heather, 2008; Whelan, 2008); and *Cyber-bullying can be deadly* (Northern Advocate, 2008).

These progressively promoted public perceptions of increased rates of school violence and bullying heightened the need to ascertain the nature of these experiences for students attending school in New Zealand. In their presentation to the New Zealand House of Representatives, the *Education and Science Committee* (2008) called for further research on the extent to which being bullied, or feeling unsafe at school, contributes to underachievement. It was therefore timely, for the Office of the Children's Commissioner to engage in an inquiry that focused on school safety.

Children and young people have the same basic human rights that adults have, but as a vulnerable population group, children have the added need for protection and promotion of their rights. This inquiry, as indeed any investigation engaged in by the Office of the Children's Commissioner, references children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). UNCROC contains 54 articles involving the protection, provision and participation rights of children.

This is the first Office of the Children's Commissioner inquiry involving education. The purpose was not to produce outcomes on reported school incidents, but rather to draw on the experiences of those schools as "windows" to the wider systemic analysis of school safety and to offer effective whole school responses as a way forward.

Other education stakeholders (e.g., Ministry and former Minister of Education, Hon Chris Carter, ERO, PPTA, and NZEI) have also made recent contributions to improving the behavioural outcomes for students in New Zealand schools. Those publications are listed in the resource section of this report. This report is intended to complement those initiatives as well as extend knowledge on this issue of shared concern.

While the primary objective is to provide a systemic analysis of school safety, the specific outcomes of this inquiry are:

1. Examination of the nature and impact of violence and bullying on students at school (in both state and private schools);
2. Consideration of the extent to which anti-violence policies, procedures, and practices facilitate the safety and security of students at school;
3. Identification of barriers and enablers to school safety;
4. Increased teacher capability and capacity in developing a positive school culture and ethos by exploring elements of effectiveness through a combination of evaluation approaches;
5. Identification of guidelines for effective agency response to issues of violence and bullying; and
6. Provision of a range of strategies and guidelines for the development of future policies and practices around school culture and safety.

By learning from both effective and ineffective practices, the aim is to highlight exemplary practices so that schools are enabled to offer positive responses to violence and bullying in their domain.

Report structure

This report argues that bullying is a set of behaviours and not about labeling the person, however, for ease of reading and to better understand the social dynamics, the terms '*bully*' and '*victim*' are used to identify an individual's status. Furthermore, without meaning to portray students who are bullied as 'victims', the term *victimisation* has been used to consistently denote the impact of bullying.

The report is organised into seven chapters. This first chapter states the problem situation and the focus of concern around school bullying. It introduces the background to the inquiry and the purpose and objectives of this inquiry into school safety.

The next chapter reviews the literature and related research that informed and supported the inquiry. In particular, it examines the definitions of violence, bullying and abuse, including the definitional issues associated with these terms. The impact of school violence and bullying on victims, bullies, and bystanders is outlined, along with the difficulties involved with identifying students linked to bully/victim problems. Children's rights to safety at school and the legislation and policies underpinning these rights are also examined.

Chapter three presents the methods and procedures used to conduct the inquiry. This includes information on how the views of children and young people were obtained. Also described is the success case study methodology employed to examine the whole school anti-bullying approaches and programmes highlighted by the participating schools. The fieldwork and data analysis that was undertaken is also described.

Chapter four reports the overall findings of this inquiry by presenting the results of the data analysis, and in chapter five the implications of these results are discussed. Chapter six identifies the whole school approaches and anti-bullying programmes

adopted by the case study schools to improve their school cultures and the safety of their students.

The final chapter critiques the findings within the context of the existing literature as well as summarising and drawing conclusions about the project. Recommendations are made for consideration of how schools might reduce their levels of violence and bullying and respond effectively to such incidents when they occur.

Chapter two: Literature review

A clear picture of school safety requires better information on the nature of violence and bullying that students are exposed to. A review of the relevant research literature informed this inquiry into the wider systemic analysis of school safety in New Zealand (and the identification of whole school responses to develop effective policies, procedures and practices). A key construct was to determine how the ethos and culture of schools might provide both prevention and intervention, particularly for students whose feelings of safety have been undermined, and to identify a range of approaches that schools might adopt to ensure the safety and security of their students.

Literature on the nature and impact of violence and bullying at school provides a descriptive overview of the breadth of research studies in this area. A full literature review has been developed as a stand-alone document and will be available on request from the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

This section has been divided into four parts. The first part sets the context by examining the nature and extent of school violence and bullying. Introductions to the terminology and the definitional issues around violence and bullying are presented. Second, the impact of school violence and bullying on children is reviewed. Identification of students involved in bullying is discussed next. The fourth part sets this inquiry within a child rights framework. Alongside this inquiry, the Human Rights Commission has produced a stand-alone paper examining whether legislation, policies and guidance about managing bullying, violence and abuse within schools reflects a human rights approach.

Definitions of violence, bullying, and abuse

There are definitional issues related to the concepts of violence, bullying and abuse. While some studies separate violence from abuse (eg. Devine & Lawson, 2003), more often than not these terms are used interchangeably within the research literature so it would be impractical to only cite studies on violence and ignore the research on abuse. Furthermore, definitions of violence in the literature have been widened to include aspects of emotional violence and bullying (eg. Furlong, Morrison, Chung, Bates, &

Morrison, 1997; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1993, 2002; WHO, 2002), with bullying mostly being the preferred term for describing emotional violence in schools.

Violence

Violence is typically defined by adult conceptions of violence. A lack of consensus regarding the various definitions of violence and usage of terms has contributed to confusion. Terms such as abuse and maltreatment, are often used synonymously. The World Health Organisation (1996, 2002) was purposely broad (Krauss, 2005; Smith, 2003) in its definition of violence as:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

Other definitions describe the nature of the violent act. Olweus (1999) for example, stated that violence or violent behaviour is "aggressive behaviour where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body or an object (including a weapon) to inflict (relatively serious) injury or discomfort upon another individual" (p. 12). Seminal New Zealand work by Jane and James Ritchie defined violence as any act which harms another (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1981). Over the ensuing years Ritchie and Ritchie elaborated their definition to include threats, psychological assaults, and institutional violence (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1990, 1993). Considering violence to occur when someone is violated they stated, "a violent act is a violent act, whether intended or unintended, whether conscious or unconscious, whether direct or hidden, whether physical or psychological... Not all coercive acts are violent – for example, bribery – but all violent acts are coercive" (1990, p. 7). A later definition by Ritchie and Ritchie described the nature of violence as being:

> Any action which harms another when it is inflicted by a person or by social rules or practices which harm people. It is often physical, sometimes not, sometimes horrific, dramatic and attention grabbing but more often slow, insidious, constant and hidden (Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002, p. 8).

These definitions imply that violence occurs when someone harms, using power to induce another person to do, or submit to, something against their wishes which violates the victim's rights through the use of fear, force, intimidation and manipulation (Hilton-Jones, 1994; Ministry of Health, 1997; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1993). The New Zealand Domestic Violence Act 1995 includes a groundbreaking definition of violent acts. Violence constitutes: physical abuse; sexual abuse; and psychological [emotional] abuse, which includes but is not limited to intimidation; harassment; damage to property and threats of physical violence, sexual abuse or psychological abuse.

Abuse

A number of studies identify definitional issues around terminology, with the terms violence and abuse often used synonymously, as seen in the New Zealand Domestic Violence Act 1995. This situation has remained unchanged since Straus and Gelles (1986) first highlighted the difficulty that most definitions do not detail the severity of violence required for an act to be considered abuse and the term abuse covers other forms of abuse as well as violence. In addition, the general term maltreatment is commonly used in the international literature, and refers to all types of abuse and neglect (Amaya-Jackson, Socolar, Hunter, Runyan, & Colindres, 2000; Cicchetti, 1989; Groves, 1997; Lowenthal, 2001). Mostly used to describe adult-to-child abuse, maltreatment is defined in American legislation as "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment of a child or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 years by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened hereby" (Lowenthal, 2001, p. 1). Researchers tend to divide maltreatment into two categories: (1) parental acts of omission (neglect) and (2) parental acts of commission (emotional and physical abuse).

Similarly, most definitions in the literature consider child abuse to mean the harming of children, whether physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect as seen in Section 2 of New Zealand's Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1994, which describes child abuse as the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

The terms violence and abuse, in particular, constitute an exploitation of power, however, direct and indirect forms of violence and abuse are also described in the literature as traumatic events, together with other overpowering events that constitute trauma (Atwool, 2000; Garbarino, 2001). Although violence and abuse constitute trauma, trauma does not necessarily constitute violence and abuse. Three elements are required for an event to be considered traumatic. The event must be experienced as (1) extremely negative; (2) uncontrollable; and (3) sudden (Carlson, 2000). There are a number of definitions used to describe trauma but they all share the common theme that trauma is "an overwhelming event or series of events which render the individual helpless" (Atwool, 2000, p. 56). While discussion on child neglect or deprivation is beyond the scope of this study physical, sexual and emotional violence is now further defined because it is applicable in the context of both family and school violence.

Physical violence

Sattler (1998) defined physical abuse as inflicting injuries by hitting, kicking, pinching, choking, shaking, burning, and cutting, that is, hurting an individual in a physical way. The operational definition of physical abuse in the United States is the infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or otherwise harming a child. The parent or caregiver may not have intended to hurt the child and the injury may have resulted from over-discipline or physical punishment (American Office of Child Abuse and Neglect - OCAN - 2000). New Zealand's statutory child protection agency, Child, Youth and Family (2001), describes physical abuse as any act that results in inflicted injury to a child or young person. It may include but is not restricted to: bruises and welts; cuts and abrasions; fractures and sprains; abdominal injuries; head injuries; injuries to internal organs; strangulation and suffocation; poisoning; burns and scalds. Whether these injuries are deliberately inflicted or the unintentional outcome of rage, the result for the child or young person is physical abuse (Children's Commissioner & UNICEF, 2004, p. 20; CYF, 2001, p. 8).

Sexual violence

Nunnelley and Fields (1999) state that sexual abuse occurs when an adult uses a child for sexual gratification, or permits someone else who is an adult to use a child for sexual gratification. However, any unwanted sexual contact, or intrusive sexual behaviour can constitute sexual abuse. In the United States sexual abuse is the employment, use,

persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct. Sexual abuse can include fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials (OCAN, 2000).

In New Zealand, Child, Youth and Family (2001) describe sexual violence as any act or acts that result in the sexual exploitation of a child or young person, whether consensual or not. Sexual violence can involve a variety of both contact and non-contact behaviours. It may include, but is not restricted to: (1) non-contact abuse (exhibitionism, voyeurism, suggestive behaviours or comments, exposure to pornographic material); (2) contact abuse (touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, object, finger or penile penetration of the anus or vagina, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator; and (3) involving the child or young person in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution (Children's Commissioner & UNICEF, 2004, p. 20; CYF, 2001, pp. 8-9).

Emotional violence

Emotional violence or abuse is being shamed, put down, ridiculed, yelled or laughed at. New Zealand's Child, Youth and Family (2001) define emotional or psychological abuse as any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual and/or emotional functioning and development of a child or young person. It may include, but is not restricted to: (1) rejection, isolation, or oppression; (2) deprivation of affection or cognitive stimulation; (3) inappropriate or continued criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations, expectations, of, or towards, the child or young person; (4) exposure to family violence; (5) corruption of the child or young person through exposure to, or involvement in, illegal, or antisocial activities; (6) the negative impact of the mental or emotional condition of the parent or caregiver; and (7) the negative impact of substance abuse by anyone living in the same residence as the child or young person (CYF, 2001, p. 9; Children's Commissioner & UNICEF, 2004, p. 20).

In the United States the operational definition for emotional abuse (psychological/verbal abuse/mental injury) includes acts or omissions by the parents or other caregivers that

have caused, or could cause, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders. Serious emotional abuse against a child might be the confinement of a child in a dark closet and less severe acts could include habitual scapegoating, belittling, or rejecting treatment (OCAN, 2000).

Some researchers prefer to use the term psychological abuse rather than emotional abuse because they consider psychological abuse to be more wide-ranging in describing the affective, behavioural and cognitive effects of this type of violence (Lowenthal, 2001). Similarly, the term emotional violence describes all forms of verbal and psychological violence and abuse.

Bullying

Of all the forms of violence against children, emotional abuse is the most common. A major form of emotional violence or abuse, particularly within the school context, is bullying (Carroll-Lind, 2006; Geffner, Loring, & Young, 2001). Bullying is often defined in the literature as deliberately harmful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, by a person or group, who target a less powerful person as the victim. In other words, bullying occurs when one child consistently targets another for negative treatment and the victim feels powerless to stop the interaction (Olweus, 2001). The hurtful actions can be: (1) physical, such as hitting and punching; (2) verbal assaults, for example, teasing, taunting, threatening and name-calling; or (3) indirect, such as psychological exclusion from friendship groups or spreading rumours (Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Olweus, 2001).

Another term used to describe school bullying is peer victimisation, which has been described as repeated exposure to negative actions by one or more peers (Holt & Keyes, 2004), causing discomfort and involving a power imbalance between the aggressor and victim (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). A relatively new form of peer victimisation is called relational aggression because it involves psychological exclusion and manipulation and damage of peer relationships (Coleman & Byrd, 2003; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick & Nelson, 2002). Relational aggression includes behaviours that harm others through damage (or threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendships or group inclusion (Crick et al., 2001). This indirect, yet deliberate social exclusion is sometimes neglected because it takes subtle forms and there is little outward sign of harm (Sullivan, 2000).

Teasing is a common and problematic event in the lives of some children (Lightner, Bollmer, Harris, Milich, & Scambler, 2000). Teasing is difficult to define because the intent of the teaser and the interpretation by the one targeted has to be taken into account. Adults and children may perceive teasing differently but indications are that childhood teasing is overtly hurtful and the more hostile and negative aspects of teasing can be classified as a form of bullying (Lightner et al., 2000).

Besides the more traditional forms of bullying, such as taking lunches or destroying schoolbooks, more recent forms (and arguably the most insidious) include technological text and cyber-bullying. This can be viewed as both verbal and relational bullying – except it is committed by electronic means. Many young people use their mobile phones as a vehicle for building social relationships, but a negative outcome can be text bullying, where adolescents use text messages to threaten, harass, and/or intimidate a peer. Perpetrators send text messages to spread rumours or secrets, call the victim 'mean' names, and to organise the exclusion of the victim from social activities (Laughren, 2000).

Lodge (2008) describes cyber-bullying as posting destructive text or images on the Internet via personal websites, web logs (blogs), email messages, discussion groups, message boards, online personal polling sites, chat services or instant messaging (IM); or on mobile phones using short message service (SMS) or multimedia messaging (MMS). Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Bebo have become the online 'hang out' among teens, but conversely also host bullying activities (Keith & Martin, 2005; Wojtas, 2008).

Mobile phones have also been implicated in other ways too. Besides the texting of negative messages, mobile phones at school can be used to gather a large number of students in a very short time to, for example, 'the top field to witness a fight'; and to also film that fight so victims can be re-victimised over and over when the video footage is circulated among a wide network of 'spectators'.

Family and school violence

This discussion has so far focused on the concept of violence and the different forms it may take (physical, sexual, and emotional). Should a distinction be made between family violence and school violence?

Family violence

According to Child, Youth and Family (2001), family violence represents:

> A serious abuse of power within family, trust or dependency relationships. It undermines the basic rights of people who, because of their gender, age, disability or dependence, are most vulnerable to abuse. Family violence is a serious social and criminal problem that can result in the death or disablement of its victims. It can involve killing or physical and sexual assault. It also involves other forms of abusive behaviour, such as emotional abuse, financial deprivation and exploitation, and neglect. Family violence often remains a hidden problem that has long-lasting effects on its victims. The main victims are women, children and older people. The abuse and neglect of children and young people by their parents or caregivers is family violence. The exposure of children and young people to other forms of family violence is also abusive and may have long-lasting and negative effects (p. 7).

Child, Youth and Family's (2001) definition broadly encompasses any members of a given family (eg. the elderly) and includes all forms of familial abuse. However, while sibling violence and adult-to-child abuse is situated within the family context (just as adult-to-student and student-to-adult violence, as well as student-to-student violence occurs within the school environments) those forms of violence are beyond the scope of this inquiry, which primarily provides an examination of peer (student-to-student) abuse.

School violence

By including individual, social, economic, political, and institutional factors, Furlong and colleagues (1997) offered an ecological perspective on school violence by situating children within a system or network of social and environmental relationships. They defined school violence to be:

A public health and safety condition that often results from individual, social, economic, political, and institutional disregard for basic human needs. It includes physical and nonphysical harm which causes damage, pain, injury, or fear, and it disrupts the school environment and results in the debilitation of personal development which may lead to hopelessness and helplessness (p. 246).

Although school violence might previously have referred to acts of assault, theft and vandalism, other definitions of emotional violence and bullying have now been widened to include aspects of emotional violence and bullying, with bullying mostly being the preferred term for describing emotional violence in schools. Therefore, school violence can include "any conditions or acts that create a climate in which individual students and teachers feel fear or intimidation in addition to being the victims of assault, theft, or vandalism" (Batsche & Knoff, 1994, p. 65, as cited in Ma, 2001).

Fight clubs

Allegations have been made that "fight clubs" are contributing to violent incidents at some schools. Fight Club is the name of a 1996 novel, published by the author Chuck Palahniuk. In 1999 the book was made into a movie (directed by David Fincher) and soon established itself as a pulp culture phenomenon because of the explicit violence depicted in the movie (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fight_Club).

Definitional issues

While some studies separate violence from abuse (eg. Devine & Lawson, 2003), more often than not these terms are used interchangeably, as is the term aggression. For example, although generally associated with physical force, many studies assert that emotional or relational aggression also constitutes violence (Furlong et al., 1997; WHO, 2002). Connor (2002) explains that one-way violence differs from aggression, is that it does not necessarily involve a living agent, i.e., "A hurricane may be violent, but only animals, primates and human beings can be aggressive" (Connor, 2002, p. 4). Similarly, definitions of violence in the literature have been widened to include aspects of aggression of a non-physical nature, such as emotional violence, relational aggression, and bullying (eg. Furlong et al., 1997; Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002; WHO, 2002), with bullying being the preferred term for describing emotional violence in schools.

There are also definitional differences between countries over how the terms bullying and school violence are operationalised (Devine & Lawson, 2003; Smith, 2003). In many countries, including New Zealand, bullying is viewed as school violence. Severe school violence is rare in most parts of the world (Devine & Lawson, 2003; Grossman, 2004) and consequently, researchers tend to only describe bullying when writing about school violence in their countries. The notable exception to this is the USA, where distinctions are made between bullying and school violence (eg. Devine & Lawson, 2003; Grossman, 2004). Inconsistencies in reporting make comparing international research findings problematic. Notwithstanding the definitional difficulties, emotional violence or bullying is usually reported in the literature on school violence and demonstrates a growing recognition that bullying remains a pervasive problem facing schools and needs to be addressed (Ahmad, Whitney, & Smith, 1991; Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003).

Impact of bullying

Studies indicate that violence experienced by children can impact on their physical, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and social functioning (Finkelhor et al., 2005; Garbarino, 1992, 2001; Groves, 1997, 2002; Perry, 2004; Morgan & Zedner, 1992; Rigby, 2000, 2001, 2003; Wolfe et al., 2003). School bullying also interferes with students' social, emotional, and academic development. There is a consensus among researchers (eg. Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Olweus, 2001; Raskauskas, 2005; Smith, 2003; Sullivan, 2000) that bullying is a deliberate misuse of power that makes the victim feel afraid and uncomfortable. Bullying causes harm, whatever form it takes, whether it be physical abuse, stand over tactics or less obvious behaviours such as text bullying, gossip, suggestive comments, practical jokes, name calling, humiliation, or exclusion from groups and games (Darlow, 2008).

Victims

Being bullied can be a physically harmful, psychologically damaging and socially isolating experience (Lodge, 2008). Children have a need for social connectedness and the social dynamics of peer ecologies determine whether children feel a sense of belonging to the group or not. Groups are a natural part of school life and to be excluded from the peer group can be traumatic for children (Carroll-Lind & Raskauskas, 2008).

Yet, while it is well documented that exposure to violence and bullying has damaging affects on children and young people, children can also exhibit a range of physical and emotional reactions due to a variety of factors (eg. severity). The severity level of the impact is also determined by a number of factors. The more that it disrupts their normal life the more likely it is that the violence or bullying will have a detrimental impact on children's wellbeing.

Bullying and aggression, which are related to negative school climate, are known to contribute to lower academic performance. Studies indicate that victims of bullying have higher than normal absenteeism (school avoidance) and early school exit (dropout rates) (Furlong, Sharma & Rhee, 2000).

According to the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (2008) frequent bullying is associated with a range of negative outcomes including increased rates of mental health issues, relationship difficulties (with peers and family members) and an elevated risk of violence towards others (p. 154). Similar outcomes of lowered health and wellbeing have been confirmed by a number of longitudinal studies (as cited by Lodge, 2008). Outcomes include: physical symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunction, depression, school failure, risk-taking behaviours (eg. alcohol and substance abuse), and decreased self-esteem. The effect of bullying on mental health status is perhaps more enduring for girls and Lodge and Feldman (2007) associated appearance-related teasing with lowered self-esteem.

Although research on text and cyber-bullying is still developing, indications are that the impact of these new forms of bullying are the same as for traditional bullying. There are strong links between cyber-bullying and in-school (real world) bullying. Students who are bullied in cyberspace are also likely to be bullied at school. (Maher, 2008). The health and wellbeing of students who are frequently victimised can be severely compromised, with adverse effects on student outcomes and engagement in education (Wojtas, 2008).

Cyber and text-bullying is often very serious and in New Zealand suicides have been linked to these forms of bullying (Raskauskas, 2007). Furthermore, the anonymity of text and cyber-bullying means that people can write things that they would never say face-to-face, and the victims of this form of harassment are often revictimised over and over

again, particularly when the young person's mobile phone and "most treasured possession" allows a bully to have 24 hour access to the victim (Raskauskas, 2005).

Bullies

Bullies tend to drop out of school early (Lodge, 2008) and in New Zealand, bullying-related suspensions have been steadily increasing (Towl, 2008). Poor long-term outcomes for bullies have been recognised for some time (see Eron, Huseman, Dubow, Romanoff, & Yamel, 1987; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Olweus, 1979; Robins, 1978). Bullies may experience peer rejection, academic failure, and/or low self-esteem (Sullivan, 2000). Eron and colleagues (1987) and Hoover and Oliver (1996) confirmed that children who display aggressive and dominating behaviour at the age of eight are far more likely to be engaged in crime and violence at the age of 30. Seminal research by Olweus (1991, 1992, 1993) found that students identified as school bullies become aggressive adults with a four times higher than average chance of incurring multiple criminal convictions. More specifically, 60 percent of boys identified as bullies in Grades 6-9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24 and by 34 years of age, 40 percent had three or more convictions, compared to 10 percent in his control group. Raskauskas (2007) argues that there is a relationship between bullying and later delinquency and offending because, without intervention, bullies learn that using aggression is an acceptable way to get what they want.

As always, early intervention is critical. Patton (2007) confirms that on reaching adulthood, some children with early onset conduct problems will be responsible for the majority of crime (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2002) with longitudinal studies showing that 71 percent of all chronic juvenile offenders followed a developmental pathway that included preschool antisocial behaviour (Patterson, Reid, & Eddy, 2002, as cited in Patton, 2007). Blair, Denham, Kochanoff, and Whipple (2004, p. 420) further advise that developing social competence is a key task in early childhood, as it predicts social and academic outcomes later in life.

Bystanders

In addition to the bullies and their victims, bullying can also have a major effect on the spectators. These students may not take the initiative to bully, but they observe the bullying and sometimes follow the bully's lead and become colluders for a number of

reasons: they fear they will be the next target if they do not; they want to show a sense of belonging to the group; or they are more likely to use aggression themselves when they see no negative consequences for the bully. Studies indicate that many New Zealand students perceive the teachers at their school are either unable or unwilling to control bullies' behaviour (Adair et al., 2000; Carroll-Lind & Kearney, 2004). Certainly those students who regularly witness bullying at school must experience a less secure learning environment – and students who perceive their school environment negatively tend to be involved with bullying and report more absenteeism and less interest in performing at school (Buhs & Ladd, 2001).

Identification of students involved in bullying

Identifying students involved in bully/victim problems through direct observations is not easy. Most bullying happens away from home and 'beneath the radar of teachers' at school. Relational aggression often occurs within friendship groups. Furthermore, as stated by Simmons (2002) "covert aggression isn't just about not getting caught; half of it is looking like you'd never mistreat someone in the first place" (p. 23).

Usually bullying is not reported to teachers – and if children and young people disclose to anyone, it is usually to friends (Adair et al., 2000; Carroll-Lind & Kearney, 2004). More often bullying happens outside the classroom and away from teachers. But there may be cues that students are involved in bullying that can be picked up from their behaviour and demeanour in the classroom (Yoneyama & Rigby, 2006). Teachers may notice that a particular student seems negative about being in class. This may be revealed by a reluctance to participate in school activities, wagging/skipping classes, inability to concentrate, decline in academic performance, and in the case of bullies, hostility towards teacher authority (Yoneyama & Rigby, 2006, p. 34).

Teachers should pay particular attention to students if they appear to be especially unhappy when they are with other students and carefully observe their behaviour in the playground where the most overt bullying occurs. Yoneyama and Rigby's study suggests that if teachers pay closer attention to such behaviour they may be able to identify the students involved in bully-victim problems and thus be better placed to take the appropriate action.

To summarise, bullying has been shown to be prevalent in all schools, and the serious negative consequences for the health and wellbeing of students who are frequently victimised are becoming well recognised (Rigby, 2003). But whether it is through direct or indirect violence, victimisation in childhood and adolescence has an impact on the children who experience this, which can lead to future disorders by "etching an often indelible signature on the individual's development" (Schwarz & Perry, 1994, p. 311).

Safety at school: A basic human right

In 2004 the Human Rights Commission produced *Human Rights in New Zealand Today: Nga Tika Tangata o te Motu,* the first comprehensive assessment of human rights in New Zealand. It states:

> Human rights recognise and aim to protect the dignity of all people whatever their status or condition in life. They are about how we live together and our responsibilities to each other. In particular, they set a basis for the relationship between the individual and the State. (p. 9).

Human rights are (1) inherent, in that they belong to all people because of their common humanity; (2) inalienable, in that people cannot give them up or be deprived of them by governments; and (3) universal, in that they apply regardless of such distinctions as ethnicity, gender, language or religion (HRC, 2004, p. 28).

Children and young people also have the same basic human rights that adults have, but as a vulnerable population group (because of their dependency), children have the added need for protection and promotion of their rights. In other words, even though children are autonomous rights holders, they are dependent on adults such as their parents and teachers, to give effect to those rights by acting on their behalf (HRC, 2004).

Conceptualisation of children's rights provides a framework on which to hinge some key perspectives. For instance, Smith and Taylor (2000) contend that incorporating socio-cultural theory with the sociology of childhood adds meaning to a children's rights conceptual framework because within both theories children are respected as citizens in their own right. The view of children as social actors able to contribute to society in their

own right provides a sound rationale for listening to and respecting children's perspectives (Smith, Gollop, Taylor, & Marshall, 2004) and lends further weight to the philosophy of children's rights. Furthermore sociology of childhood and socio-cultural philosophies fit well with children's rights discourse as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Smith, 2001).

Children's rights and international contexts

New Zealand is a signatory to a range of international treaties that recognise and confirm the human rights of children. By signing and ratifying these international treaties, the New Zealand Government is responsible for conferring all the rights contained in them to its citizens. Two of these international treaties are directly relevant to this report and are now discussed.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)
The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) in 1989 and New Zealand ratified this Convention in 1993.

UNCROC is the first human rights treaty to bring together a universal set of standards and is an innovative and holistic approach to children's interests, welfare and development. In 54 articles, UNCROC recognises the human rights of children and provides an explicit statement about the inherent value and dignity of children. It provides a child-focused perspective and emphasises the importance of promoting a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral perspective in favour of children.

UNCROC and its two Optional Protocols (the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography) explicitly relate to the best interests and wellbeing of children and young people in New Zealand. Under UNCROC the government is responsible for the prevention of all forms of violence against children, whether perpetrated by parents, carers, teachers, or other children (Hodgkin & Newell, 2007, p. 250). Moreover, UNCROC recognises a child's right to a safe environment and protection from all forms of physical and emotional harm, including bullying on the way to

and from school and while on the school's premises during school hours (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2008).

Article 19 of UNCROC states that children and young people have the right to protection from all forms of violence. Articles 28 and 29 grant children and young people the right to education that develops respect for their human rights, their identity and democracy. Article 29 goes on to say that a child's education must be delivered in a spirit of peace, clearly anticipating non-violent and wholly supportive places of learning.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Similar to UNCROC, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights requires education to demonstrate respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This covenant states that education experiences should be offered in situations and environments that are consistent with human dignity.

By agreeing to sign and ratify these instruments the Government has committed itself to protecting and ensuring the rights of all children in New Zealand, especially as they pertain to their formal learning environments. While this means the Government must ensure its policies, legislation and practices are consistent with these instruments, it also means that it will be held accountable both domestically and to the wider international community for the safety and wellbeing of all children engaged in primary and secondary education.

Domestic factors and policies

Treaty of Waitangi
The Treaty of Waitangi is a founding document of New Zealand. In essence it forms the basis and defines the relationships and responsibilities Maori and the Crown have to one another.

Central to the Treaty relationship is a common understanding that as tangata whenua and citizens of New Zealand, Maori have a right to develop and implement policies and services for Maori. Articles one and three give all people the right to live as equal citizens in New Zealand while affirming the right of Maori to live as Maori.

Together these three articles reflect the concept of turangawaewae, the right to belong, which is a core element of human rights (HRC, 2004). Within the school context this "right to belong" is consistent with New Zealand's philosophy of inclusive education.

Ethical considerations

A Code of Ethics established by the New Zealand Teachers Council places an ethical obligation on registered teachers to "promote the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of learners". The code may be used as a basis to challenge the ethical behaviour of a teacher and could provide grounds for complaint if a teacher's practice falls seriously short of these standards (refer www.teacherscouncil.govt.nz)

New Zealand education policy

A strong human rights theme runs through New Zealand's Education Act 1989, National Education Goals, National Administrative Guidelines, and Curriculum statements. Much of the policy language known to New Zealand educationalists can be traced back to Clarence Beeby, the Director General of Education. In the 1940s the goal of good education for all New Zealand children was an integral and explicit part of the Government's overall human rights agenda, and the language – "every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right as a citizen to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers" – was part of the same human rights discussion. Some years on, the statement of official policy continues to affirm a rights-based philosophy:

The *New Zealand Curriculum* applies to all English-medium state schools (including integrated schools) and to all students in those schools, irrespective of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, belief, ability or disability, social or cultural background, or geographical location (2007, p. 6).

School guidelines

Responsibility for students in the care of schools rests with the board of trustees of state and integrated schools and governing bodies of independent schools. In accordance with the Government's National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), boards of trustees are legally required to:

- provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students – NAG 5(i)
- comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the safety of students and employees – NAG 5(iv).

Thus, schools are bound to provide a safe "bullying-free" learning environment. If schools fail to achieve a safe physical and emotional environment due to bullying, then the Secretary for Education, in consultation with the Chief Review Officer has the power to "enforce" the charter (Kazmierow & Walsh, 2004).

Domestic legislation and regulations

Like home, school is also a key environment for realising the rights of children and young people. Given that education is a fundamental human right, as is a child's right to safety, a range of legislation and regulations pertaining to these issues are now discussed.

Education Act 1989

In terms of the right to education, the Education Act 1989 states it is against the law for any school to treat a student differently. Sections 60A and 61(2) of the Education Act 1989 refer to NAGs in relation to the national education guidelines and school charters respectively.

Section 60A of the Education Act 1989 (that relates to the National Education Guidelines) requires teachers/schools to report to parents any matters that may put a student at risk of not achieving (NAG 1). Section 77 also relates to schools' obligations to parents, and requires every principal of a state school to take all reasonable steps to ensure parents are told of matters, which are preventing or slowing the student's

progress through school or are harming the student's relationships with teachers or other students.

Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992

Amended in May 2003, schools have obligations under the Health and Safety Act 1992 to take all practicable steps to ensure no harm occurs to people at school who are not employees. This includes students. In fact, schools are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of any person who is permitted to come onto the school grounds. Harm means illness, injury or both, including "physical and mental harm" (section 2).

Boards of trustees and governing committees (eg. of boarding hostels) are also obligated to take all practicable steps to prevent hazards harming people, arguably including in the vicinity of the school (section 16). Hazards can be anything that may cause physical, emotional, or psychological harm, therefore a person's behaviour may also cause harm. Section 16 outlines the "practicable steps" that need to be taken into account as being:

- The nature and severity of harm suffered
- current knowledge of harm, likelihood of harm and nature of severity
- current knowledge of harm prevention and efficacy
- availability of means of preventing harm and costs (Kazmierow & Walsh, 2004).

Schools must comply with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and the Ministry of Education's Health and Safety Code of Practice for state and state-integrated schools. Furthermore, they are required to be proactive to prevent physical and emotional dangers to students, rather than simply reacting to any incidents that may happen (PPTA, 2007).

A school permitting bullying to occur due to the inaction of teachers, with students suffering harm could be in breach of a duty and face prosecution under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (Darlow, 2008). Guidelines and the Code of Practice are available on the Ministry of Education's website and outline these amendments and subsequent implications for schools arising from this legislation.

Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005

The Code of Practice relating to management of hostels details requirements for written policies and operating procedures, including giving boarders:

- Respect and dignity
- positive guidance and control
- protection from discrimination, degradation, ill-treatment, solitary confinement or deprivation
- protection while on leave from the hostel or on hostel excursions.

Guidelines are provided on: record keeping; staffing, security and supervision of boarders and visitors to hostels; health protection; food safety and nutrition; general safety; and parents' contact with or access to boarders. The Complaints Policy provides guidelines for responding to formal and informal complaints received from boarders, parents, and staff.

Other sections of the Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005 are also relevant. Section 67 states that a boarder, boarder's parent, or board may complain to the owner of a hostel about non-compliance. Section 55 requires a policy on hostel relationships (eg. relationships between the boarders, or between them and staff) and the protection of the boarders from ill treatment. Section 58 relates to the abuse, harassment, or serious neglect of boarders. This regulation applies to the owner of a hostel who believes on reasonable grounds that a person (irrespective of whether or not they are a member of the hostel's staff or a boarder) has (a) harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually) or (b) ill-treated a boarder. The owner must ensure that the person does not, so far as practicable, come into contact with the boarder concerned, and must, so far as practicable, require the person to stay off the hostel premises if the owner regards a requirement of that kind as necessary to ensure no boarder is ill-treated.

In terms of supervision, staffing and security, Section 61 requires the owner of a hostel to ensure that, at all times while boarders are present at the hostel, those boarders, or the staff members who supervise those boarders, are supervised by a responsible person.

Common law principles

In New Zealand, boards of trustees are legally responsible for the students in their care. This responsibility exists even when other individuals or organisations outside the school provide lessons to its students. The following is a discussion of some of the common law principles to be considered in relation to the safety and wellbeing of students in primary and secondary schools.

Duty of care

It is a well-accepted principle that schools owe a duty of care not to cause injury to students whom they accept for enrolment. This duty of care is based on the assumption that the school is acting *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent) and is therefore required to act like a prudent parent (Kazmierow & Walsh, 2004). It should be noted however, that some commentators have argued that the duty of care owed by the school to the student goes beyond that of a parent (Hay-Mackenzie, 2002). This raises the possibility that a school will be held to a higher duty of care than a parent and would therefore be in breach of its duty in the event a student is injured while in their care.

This means that a school needs to take reasonable care to provide suitable and safe premises for students. The school must ensure that no student is exposed to unnecessary risk and must be more vigilant where students are placed in dangerous or hazardous situations (Hay-Mackenzie, 2002). While duties of care and civil actions for negligence are applicable in New Zealand, the Accident Compensation Scheme limits claims arising from these actions to physical injuries (Darlow, 2008).

The issue of whether teachers can be considered professionals also raises important questions regarding duty of care and other legal responsibilities. If they are professionals, then presumably they should be held to professional standards. Moreover, the Court could find that a teacher (in addition to the board of trustees) owes a duty of care to students who are bullied. The consequence of this would be that a student could have a claim against three parties – the board of trustees, the teacher and/or the Ministry of Education. Key questions would then be: Was the school aware of the bullying? If yes, were appropriate steps taken to protect the bullied student from future bullying and to mitigate the effects?

Fiduciary obligations

As previously stated, it is generally accepted that while children are at school, teachers stand in the place of their parents and are therefore responsible for their safety and wellbeing. Kazmierow and Walsh (2004) argue that this *loco parentis* role therefore forms the basis for the establishment of a fiduciary relationship between teachers and their students. Kazmierow and Walsh (2004) argue that:

A fiduciary is a party who via a particular relationship has the special ability to exercise rights and powers to affect another party, for better or worse. As a result of these powers, the nature of the relationship and the vulnerability of the other party, the fiduciary is under a duty to act in good faith, trust and confidence (p. 114).

Should the question of fiduciary duty be argued, a Court could potentially hold schools and/or the Ministry of Education liable for breaching this duty when a student is bullied at school. While a novel issue, and currently untested in regard to a fiduciary duty owed a teacher to their students, there is academic support for this course of action. Indeed, recent incidents at some schools have prompted the New Zealand Secondary Principals' Association to explore issues of legal liability and parents' right to sue (McKenzie-Minifie, 2008).

Children's Commissioner roles and functions

The role of the Children's Commissioner was established in the Children, Young Persons, And Their Families Act 1989, and was part of a worldwide move toward having Commissioners or Ombudsmen for children. In 2003 the Children's Commissioner Act was passed, setting out the Commissioner's powers and functions in a stand-alone statute. It encompassed all children and young people up to 18 years and was not restricted to those who were to the subject to the provisions of the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989.

The Children's Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to be an independent advocate for children and young people in New Zealand. Advocacy in an education context involves the recognition of basic rights, as is the right to education. It also recognises a student's rights to have disciplinary matters dealt with in accordance with

the principles of natural justice. These rights are referred to explicitly in the Ministry of Education Guidelines to Principals and Boards of Trustees (Darlow, 2008, p.5).

The Children's Commissioner's Act 2003 retains the monitoring and review functions in relation to Child, Youth and Family. However, the 2003 Act requires the commissioner to take cognisance of the diversity of children in New Zealand. Other functions arising from this Act include responsibilities to: promote understanding of, and advocate for, children's interests, rights and welfare; raise awareness and understanding of UNCROC; and to promote the participation of children and young people in decision-making that affects them.

The Children's Commissioner has a statutory right to investigate any matters affecting children and young people (unless the issue is before the Court). Furthermore, the Crown Entity Act 2004 means that in the core functions of advocacy, monitoring or investigative matters, the commissioner must, by law, form a view independently of the government.

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature relating to definitions and terminology about violence, bullying and abuse. The impact and identification of school violence and bullying was examined, along with the legislation and policies that underpin children's right to safety at school. The review of literature therefore informed this inquiry and provided the office with a mandate to undertake the project. Chapter three outlines the steps and procedures subsequently undertaken.

Chapter three: Data gathering method

This inquiry into school safety in New Zealand could have taken many forms. In the main, it was driven by the role and statutory obligation of the Children's Commissioner, as the advocate for children, to investigate this issue given the growing evidence that school violence and bullying was affecting the welfare of a large number of New Zealand students.

The decision to employ the strategies used was made on the basis of the Terms of Reference and the resourcing and funding available to undertake the study. The Office of the Children's Commissioner is a small organisation and only one staff member (the Principal Advisor, Education) could be allocated to this project.

The inquiry included several elements: (1) a review of the literature; (2) consultation with children and young people; (3) document analysis; (4) identification of success case study criteria and schools that met those criteria; (5) visits to success case study schools; and (6) analysis and integration of data collected to identify elements of best practice.

Student voice

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises children's right to express their views in matters that affect them. A key function of the commissioner's role is to promote the participation of children and young people in decision-making affecting them. Therefore, it is appropriate that students' perspectives were gained throughout this project. Consultation was undertaken with a diverse range of students. First, the office's Young People's Reference Group (YPRG) was involved. Ten young people, aged between 12 and 17 years, make up the YPRG. They come from diverse backgrounds and represent rural and urban communities. Their role is to give advice to the commissioner; assist in the strategic direction of the office; assist in the achievement of office goals; facilitate consultation with children and young people; and inform the Children's Commissioner of regional issues. The 2006-2008 YPRG was surveyed and later participated in a focus group interview. A document analysis was

undertaken to gather data on the perspectives of previous YPRG groups in regard to their views on school safety.

Where appropriate, individual and group perspectives were also obtained from students who attended the case study schools (around New Zealand). In addition, other class groups (both primary and secondary) from non-case study schools participated in a questionnaire survey. The views of vulnerable student groups were also sought, eg. students of different gender/sexual orientations and students with disabilities. Children attending after-school care also participated in a questionnaire survey and later engaged in a general discussion about their bullying experiences at school and in after-school care. The junior children participated in a whole-group discussion only. The results of all the surveys were written up as full reports and disseminated to the persons who coordinated the implementation of the questionnaire at their respective school or after-school care centre.

In one region a small group of principals, teachers and Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) participated in a forum day on bullying and their perspectives are included in this report also.

Information regarding students' experiences of bullying at school was also obtained from the Office of the Children's Commissioner's advice lines. There are two arms to this advocacy service:

1. The Office of the Children's Commissioner child rights advice line is accessed by phone, letter, or email (Contact details: Telephone 04 471 1410 or 0800 A Child (224 453), or via the website www.occ.org.nz).

2. The Parents' Legal Information (PLINFO) line is a nationwide free-phone helpline, with legally trained volunteers available to discuss issues parents have with their children's schools. The Office of the Children's Commissioner contracts this service out to the Wellington Community Law Centre from funding it receives from the Ministry of Education (Contact details: Telephone 0800 499 488 or www.communitylaw.org.nz/plinfo).

Both advice lines provide information and advice, suggest ways of resolving disputes, assist by contacting schools on behalf of parents, connect parents with local advocacy services, and provide resources on request (e.g., *Schools and the Right to Discipline* and *Respectful Schools*).

Document analysis

To gain an understanding of the nature of bullying and violence in New Zealand schools, this inquiry aimed to examine both effective and ineffective practices. In other words, consideration was given to what has been found to work well and to learn from examples of where bullying and violent incidents have not been handled as well as they could have been. From a child advocacy perspective, it was important that the analysis examined the gaps between policy and students' realities in terms of school safety. First, a document analysis of focus schools was undertaken to ascertain the gaps between policy and practice. Documents included confidential files lodged at the Office of the Children's Commissioner relating to child rights advice line and PLINFO complaints; as well as correspondence and documentation already in the public arena, eg. ERO reports; school records; external independent reports; media reports.

Examination of the policies, procedures and practices of the focus schools of concern elicited rich data that will be included in the findings section. While lessons may be learnt from the various incidents examined, this inquiry was not about "naming and shaming". No school is immune to bullying. Incidents that happen in one school could also happen in another. Issues around privacy and confidentiality underscored the importance of maintaining anonymity of specific cases and schools.

Examining effective practices is perhaps a more useful way to extend learning on this topic. Therefore the school safety inquiry has focused on examples of exemplary practices and anti-bullying approaches. While there were not the same issues around naming effective schools, some schools asked to remain anonymous and so the decision was made to highlight successful practices without naming specific schools. Where individuals gave permission to publish their names as reference points regarding specific approaches or programmes, this has been done.

Evaluative research methodology, and specifically the Success Case Study Method, was employed to gather information regarding the approaches and programmes exemplified by the participating schools.

The Success Case Method

The Success Case Method (Brinkerhoff, 2003) is a carefully crafted, simple, and proven way of quickly finding out how well a new organisational initiative (such as an anti-bullying initiative) is working. Using the Success Case Method (SCM), people can get useful and accurate information about new initiatives: what results are being achieved using new approaches, what is working, what is not, and how it can be improved (p. viii).

The SCM addresses four key questions about a new change initiative (eg. in this case introducing an anti-bullying programme in to a school). The questions are:

1. What is really happening?
   - Who's using what, and how well?
   - Who's not using things as planned?
   - What's getting used, and what isn't?
   - Which people and how many are having success?
   - Which people and how many are not?

2. What results is the programme helping to produce?
   - What good, if any, is being realised?
   - What goals are being met?
   - What goals are not being met?
   - Is the change delivering the promised and hoped for results?
   - What unintended results are happening?

3. What is the value of the results?
   - What sort of value or other value can be placed on the results?
   - Does the programme appear to be worthwhile?
   - Is it producing results worth more than its costs?
   - What is its return on investment?

- How much more value could it produce if it were working better?

4. How could the programme or initiative be improved?
   - What's helping?
   - What's getting in the way?
   - What could be done to get more people to use it?
   - How can everyone be more like those few who are most successful?

Although evaluation methodology is the most rigorous method for examining how well programmes are working, the SCM approach offers an easier alternative – while still producing credible and useful evidence about what is working. The SCM is a carefully balanced blend of the ancient art of storytelling with more modern methods and principles of rigorous evaluative inquiry and research (Aitken, Bruce Ferguson, Piggot-Irvine & Ritchie, 2008). In this way, sound principles of inquiry are employed to seek out the right stories to tell, and then backed up with solid evidence. The SCM searches out and surfaces these successes, "bringing them to light in persuasive and compelling stories so that they can be weighed (are they good enough?), provided as motivating and concrete examples to others, and learned from" in order to gain a better understanding of why things worked, and why they did not (Brinkerhoff, 2003, p. 3).

The SCM has a simple, two-part structure. The first part of a SCM entails locating potential and likely "success cases" that apparently have been the most successful in using some new change or method. The second part involves interviewing the identified success cases to determine and document the actual nature of success being achieved. Most SCM studies employ simple survey methodology (usually questionnaire and interview) and undertake an inquiry process of the key informants to ensure that the corroborating evidence and documentation demonstrates that the success story is defensible and reportable. Thus the SCM richly explores elements of effectiveness through a combination of current evaluation approaches (Brinkerhoff, 2003, 2005). The present inquiry adopted those procedures.

Consideration of the methodology and methods adopted in the Unitech research study on teacher induction (Aitken et al., 2008) guided the design of this school safety inquiry. Next, informed by the literature review, the establishment of criteria for effective

responses to school violence and bullying guided the identification of a range of schools that might demonstrate effectiveness in this area of school life.

Matrix of Success Criteria

A literature review was initially undertaken to inform the school safety inquiry. Based on that literature review, and similar to a study by Aitken and colleagues (2008), a matrix of success criteria for safe schools was developed. The goal was to develop an evidence base for the development of policies and practices to support schools in providing a safe learning environment for their students. The table below presents the key criteria that were extrapolated from the research literature. These criteria helped in the evaluation of the approaches and programmes showcased by the identified success case study schools and guided this inquiry into schools that successfully address the issues of bullying and violence.

Table 1: *Success criteria and indicators of safe schools*

Success criteria	Success indicators
Bullying is approached as a community problem rather than an individual behaviour problem	• Acknowledgement that bullying happens • Recognition that bullying is unacceptable behaviour • Viewed as a social rather than behaviour practice • Strategies address the school and community culture • Parental awareness and involvement.
Whole school approach	• Whole school philosophy and ethos underpins the specific culture of the school • A clear vision of a safe and violence free school community is strongly articulated and people know how to contribute to make this vision happen • Anti-violence/bullying policies have been developed that are commonly understood by staff, pupils, board of trustees and wider school community • Whole of school community approach was undertaken in the development of these policies • Commitment and input was gained from the whole school (ie. students, teachers, parents, local community and education authorities) • Policies and procedures are applied consistently throughout the whole school • Teachers follow clear guidelines and procedures when reporting incidents • Educational programmes reinforce the whole school approach, thus providing "tools for the toolkit".

Culture of "safe telling"	• Students are encouraged to disclose abuse, violence, and bullying • A confidential reporting system facilitates disclosure • Two-way communication between home and school is encouraged, ie. schools act on parents' complaints about bullying and schools report incidents involving their child to parents • Bystanders are empowered to intervene and report incidents witnessed by them • A climate has been created so that when victims or witnesses of violence or bullying do speak up, they know they will be listened to • Teachers take seriously all incidents reported to them and respond appropriately • Restorative conferences contribute to victims feeling heard and the healing of relationships • Incidents are further reported when appropriate (eg. text or cyber-bullying is reported to the network or mobile phone provider) • Peer mediation programmes support the safe telling culture of the school • Incidents are reported to outside agencies when the need arises (eg. Police, Child, Youth and Family).
Peer, family, and teacher support	• Families and friends of bullies support them but refuse to condone their actions • Bullies are helped to interact positively with others • Victims of bullying are supported • Victims are helped to understand that bullying is not the victim's fault.
School climate/ethos	• The school is a place conducive to learning • Orderly and safe climate encourages learning and teaching • Positive school environment keeps bullying and harassment from flourishing • Students enjoy warm, caring, positive relationships with their teachers • Teachers apply firm, clear, consistent limits to unacceptable behaviour with non-hostile, non-physical sanctions • Teachers provide active monitoring and supervision • Staff to student interactions do not insinuate messages about the acceptance or rejection of particular students • Students learn new skills in settings where it is safe to practise them • Students' "connectedness" to school reflects their involvement in relationships, contexts, and activities they find worthwhile and important • The school provides emotional safety that comes from an environment that is structured, predictable, mutually respectful of all individuals, and free from

	• any harmful activity or comment • Teachers model the attitudes and values they teach and practise respectful teaching • There is school and community cooperation • Interaction and cooperation by students and school personnel is demonstrated.
Procedures to identify the nature and extent of bullying	• School self-reviews are regularly undertaken • Student surveys are conducted • A confidential reporting system works effectively.
Effective leadership	• Principals practise collaborative styles of working, which set a school tone that facilitates the development of a whole school anti-bullying philosophy • School leaders facilitate the changing of the school's culture • Professional development for teachers is provided.
Anti-violence/bullying strategies	• School wide anti-bullying policies • Systematic school wide intervention approaches • Effective responses to reported incidents • Tougher sanctions against bullying • Counselling for students • Involvement of students • Tackle violence and bullying through the school curriculum.

Consultation

In the first instance schools were nominated as a consequence of the wide consultation with stakeholders in the education sector during June and July 2008. Information letters were sent to the following:

- Government (Minister of Education)
- Ministry of Education (Secretary for Education, Student Support National Operations, Group Special Education)
- Education Review Office (ERO)
- New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA)
- New Zealand Secondary Principals' Association (SPANZ)
- New Zealand Teachers Council
- Te Akatea Maori Principals' Federation
- New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI)
- New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA)

- Independent Schools of New Zealand
- Independent School Teachers Association of New Zealand
- New Zealand Catholic Education Office
- Human Rights Commission
- Police Youth Education Service
- Wellington Community Law Centre
- IHC
- UNICEF
- Human Rights in Education

Throughout the duration of this project regular meetings with key education stakeholders and the Human Rights Commission provided a forum for further consultation, advice and guidance.

There was an overwhelmingly positive response from the public following the media coverage when the project was launched on 3 July 2008 so the first task was to reply to all of the correspondence and phone calls received by the office. The media coverage also prompted some schools and organisations to register their interest as a potential success case study. Schools were then selected to participate if they (1) met the criteria identified on the matrix, and (2) the approaches or programmes being showcased had undergone rigorous evaluations, ie. they were "tried and true" programmes.

Fieldwork: School visits

The first stages of the school safety inquiry focused on consultation with stakeholders and then gathering data from a range of children and young people by the employment of survey methodology procedures (eg. focus group interviews and questionnaires). The latter part of 2008 involved visiting the various case study schools around New Zealand to examine the successful strategies adopted for building a safe learning environment for their students. A number of other schools were visited to observe programmes in action that had been promoted as being effective in reducing violence and bullying in schools. In all, 13 schools (primary and secondary) participated in this project. Interviews relating to school culture and anti-bullying approaches were conducted with a range of teachers;

programme facilitators and coordinators and their students participated in group or class discussions.

Limitations

This inquiry was not designed to obtain prevalence and incidence rates of bullying and violence across schools. Although the full literature review presents statistics of actual prevalence and incidence rates from a range of research studies, there is now a general recognition that bullying occurs in all schools and it is more important for teachers to gain information on how to deal with bullying when it happens rather than simply collecting more data on prevalence and incidence.

The results of the data gathered during the consultation with diverse groups of children and young people are not able to be generalised across the whole student population. Furthermore only one or two schools were visited in relation to each programme or approach examined, so the number of students, principals, teachers, programme coordinators and facilitators consulted is limited. As with the studies by Buckley and Maxwell (2007) and Aitken and colleagues (2008) the case study schools in this inquiry were not randomly selected; rather they were selected for their apparent success in making changes – and in the context of this inquiry – to bring about the reduction of bullying in their schools.

While every effort was made to address ethical and methodological requirements, this inquiry into school safety was never intended to be a formal research study. Therefore, this report details the Office of the Children's Commissioner's project rather than a research study per se. Nevertheless the statutory powers granted to the Children's Commissioner allowed the office to undertake its first educational inquiry through the employment of a methodology that was acceptable to schools, yet at the same time provided rich data that enabled an independent examination of school safety in New Zealand.

Chapter four: Findings

The results of the analyses, for the school safety inquiry conducted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner, are presented in this section of the report. For the purpose of all consultation with children and young people, bullying was consistently defined as being either:

- Hitting, kicking, or the use of force in any way
- teasing, making rude gestures, name-calling, or leaving you out of things on purpose
- physical (being shoved around), verbal (as well as text or cyber-bullying) and non-verbal (left out).

And means that:

- These things happened more than once and were done by the same person or persons
- it hurts, either physically or emotionally, so that you feel very bad.

Student views

Too often the voices of the students themselves are excluded from the data gathering. As previously stated, the Children's Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to be an independent advocate for children and young people and to investigate matters affecting them. To ensure that children and young people were able to speak out on this issue, a range of students from diverse backgrounds and ages contributed their views on school safety (in addition to the students consulted at the case study schools). Those contributions are included in this section of the report, however no school or its students will be identified.

Young People's Reference Group (YPRG)

Since it began in 2002, members of the Young People's Reference Group for the Office of the Children's Commissioner have consistently identified bullying to be a key issue of concern for them. In the previous national application round (2006) to appoint members on to the YPRG, applicants were given the opportunity to identify three issues each that they felt were most important to children and young people in New Zealand. In total there were 85 issues raised. Bullying was mentioned by 21 percent of applicants, which made it the fifth most popular issue (out of 85 issue categories). Thirty eight percent of applicants aged 12 or under raised bullying as an issue (second only to health) and 13-14 year olds identified bullying as their number one issue (25 percent) with alcohol/drugs a distant second (16 percent).

Applicants noted that bullying affects students' confidence, ability to perform at school and in social situations. As one young person said, "*Fear. I didn't know what to do about it [the bullying]. I was really upset and confused by it.*" Comments were also made that bullying does not just happen in the school and that where it does occur inside the school, often it is carried out into the community. Text bullying was also singled out: "*Everyday thousands of New Zealanders are text bullied and are too scared to say anything. I think that more awareness needs to be made to this issue and young people need to be encouraged to talk to someone*". While there was a sense of the pervasiveness of bullying, the applicants did not perceive this issue to be insurmountable:

> *Bullying comes in so many different forms that some people don't even realise bullying when it's right in the face…No matter what we do, the cycle will not break but I feel that if we were to pull together somehow we could overcome bullying.*

Throughout the year representatives of the 2008 YPRG were invited to give their views about the nature and extent of their experiences of bullying at school. First, the YPRG became a point of reference at the beginning of the school safety inquiry. In this initial focus group discussion an intensive and, at times, personal discussion was carried out on the topic of violence in our communities and more specifically around bullying in schools. This topic was "dear to their hearts" as they had either: (1) experienced bullying themselves; (2) continued to experience bullying; or (3) knew of other students who had experienced bullying. The YPRG's observations about bullying were as follows:

- *The bully has probably been bullied themselves – this means that the bully and the victim are in fact both victims of this kind of behaviour.*

- *For some bullies, what they do becomes a habit; it's just something they have always done – some bullies do not even know they are bullying others and this means they often do not know how the victim is affected by their behaviour.*

- *Sometimes when students talk about bullying, or when they ask for help, nothing happens. Some teachers, but especially principals, do not accept that bullying happens in their school. Sometimes it feels like some teachers just "pass the ball" on to another teacher or someone else. Nobody is designated to take responsibility for the bullying in schools and it is important that somebody does take responsibility. Some students are ashamed to talk to teachers or other staff at school about bullying. Some student guidance counsellors are not as supportive of students as they should be.*

- *Sometimes students get mixed messages from schools (eg. sometimes the school ignores the bullying and sometimes their responses seem to go too far). Sometimes teachers or other staff bring in things that are not relevant, such as asking about what is going on at home. Sometimes schools are more concerned about injuries that happen on the sports field, but do not express the same level of concern for someone who has injuries from bullying.*

- *Younger children may be more likely to tell someone if they are being bullied. As children get older they think they can work it out for themselves. Even older students look for help, but usually it is with a teacher they trust or like.*

- *Too much pressure is put on the victim, when the bully needs to take responsibility for their behaviour. It is really hard, especially when it is one student's word against another student's and often proof is needed about the bullying. Sometimes the bully is also popular or in a sports team, so nothing happens to them when they do something wrong.*

- *It is not just boys that are bullies. Girls are also fighting each other. A bully often has other friends with them and the victim is usually alone when the bullying happens. All kinds of bullying happen, including physical, psychological and verbal bullying. Some bullying is racially motivated.*

- *What needs to happen? School counsellors need to sit down and talk to the bullies and the victims. Counsellors also need to understand that it may be*

difficult for some students because there is a stigma attached to a student going to see a counsellor. In order to help students there is a need to establish relationships. Peer mediation can help [and two YPRG members are/had been peer mediators at their schools]*. Where a school has values, these help to set the tone for students.*

- *Sometimes bullies can feel there is nowhere to go and nobody who will listen to them. The impact of bullying is that students may not go to school for a period of time.*

The general consensus of this group meeting was that it is a sad indictment on our schools that such environments exist. Of even more concern is that YPRG members spoke of following what they considered to be school policy (eg. tell a teacher, inform the Dean etc) but often to no avail. One YPRG member confirmed this through his own experience where he suffers *"almost a daily barrage of bullying which is often hard to define, but nevertheless exists".* He too had informed teaching staff but with little effect. A disabled student reflected on her journey through bullying (which was ultimately discriminatory), and how the more people got to know her and who she was, the better things became. She also acknowledged, however, other occurrences of bullying among her non-disabled peers at school.

To obtain information on their own experiences of violence and bullying at school the current YPRG was invited to participate in a confidential questionnaire survey. The worst experience was reported by a male YPRG member who wrote, *"people tried to start a class fight by attacking me".* Consistent with the research literature, all of the participants had observed others being bullied, and more than one form of bullying in both the classroom and playground settings. Suggestions as to other ways that might help schools to deal with bullying included:

- *Be willing to take responsibility more often. A lot of "baggage" shifting happens*
- *provide counselling for the children and families*
- *open kind teachers, willing to listen and do something about it. Support idea that there is not a 'bully', it is a problem separate to the two people – there are always two sides of the story*

- *be real about their individual situations, confront the people involved and have the appropriate people available to deal with the situation*
- *be hard and harsh when it comes to it.*

As a follow-up to the questionnaire survey, a focus group interview was held with the YPRG during their noho marae on 14 September 2008. Bullying was considered to be a major issue for schools and students by all of the YPRG members. Discussion centred on the culture of high schools being such that one person was always left out or talked about. All types of bullying were considered to be pervasive in schools. These students thought bullying was normalised by teachers, *"like it is supposed to happen so they don't do anything"*. There was also a perception that some schools are based around sports *"and if you are not into sport it can be difficult because you are made fun of if you don't conform"*.

Bullying was thought to be age-related, with the consensus being that most bullying occurs at intermediate school. Primary school bullying was considered to be *"still innocent, while secondary school students will go further to upset people"*. Comments were made regarding "status-driven bullying" at secondary school. Furthermore, the senior common room was viewed as a sanctuary for senior students – and regulated by senior students – with little chance of teacher awareness that bullying may be occurring inside that space.

While mobile phone and Internet bullying was not deemed to be a problem for this group of young people, or their circle of friends, there was an acknowledgement that mobile phones contribute to bullying in two ways: (1) texting enables students to congregate more quickly; and (2) school fights are captured on mobile phones, which means the young person may be repeatedly victimised. Some participants considered that fights between two people was not bullying and (depending on which school they went to) regarded fights between girls to also be commonplace.

When asked how schools might overturn the youth culture of "not telling" and empower students to intervene in bullying related incidents, these students were clear that schools must make bullying a key issue and challenge bullying if they see it happening. These young people indicated, *"pretty much, teachers don't confront it".* They had a sense that

teachers focus on issues that have less impact, such as graffiti and being late for school or assembly. Sometimes when the bullying overtly happened in class, teachers still did nothing to either help the victim or stop the bullying behaviour. Subsequently, the YPRG considered that schools take no responsibility for the person doing the bullying and it is the "kid who hits back that gets into trouble". Sometimes it was easier just not to say anything. As one young person said, "*Didn't bother"* [in the belief that] *"nothing would happen about it"*.

The participants queried what, if anything, could change bullying, because it happened "beneath the radar". From their understanding of youth culture it seems likely that students agree with some of the behaviour they witness – but if they do not, they still do not intervene for fear of losing friendships. For some students too, *it is "an outlet for a huge situation"* and allows them to regain some of the power they have lost. For other students it may be the *"only thing they know, so it is hard to tell them to stop or change their behaviour"*.

Because young people are embarrassed to tell someone if they are being bullied, seeking help via the Internet was suggested as an easier way for students to report bullying (either as witnesses or victims) because they did not have to feel afraid to talk about it. The benefits of installing cameras were also discussed at length. In some of the schools attended by these students, cameras were already installed to monitor vandalism, so they saw no reason why the cameras would not work for bullying as well. While some students might feel safer with cameras, the YPRG cautioned that their presence might anger other students, even though it did not bother them.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Young People's Reference Group identified the following recommendations to reduce bullying:

1. Set up an email system whereby students could talk to a staff member about their experiences at school privately.
2. Currently the responsibility seems to lie with the victim and not the bully, therefore resources could be developed that focus on the bully's behaviour, rather than the victim's.

3. Implement a no-blame peer mediation system where there is: "here's a problem that we can work on together".

4. Install cameras to help detect the occurrence of bullying in corridors and toilet blocks.

Rainbow Youth

Given research indications that students are often bullied because of sexual orientation or gender identity, the questionnaire was distributed through groups with networks to these students. A small group representing Rainbow Youth confirmed their vulnerability to bullying via email communication (previously arranged through their support networks). All reported both direct and indirect experiences of bullying. When asked to describe their worst experiences during the past year, students reported the following incidents:

- *Bullied this year by two girls for just being me. They turned all my class on me and surrounded me in the school gym. One girl had a craft knife but didn't use it. I was punched in the face but quickly called the cops before anything further could be done.*
- *The people I hang around with are targeted for being gay/different. We constantly get food thrown at us and the teachers mostly ignore or don't notice it.*
- *I think the worst is kids throwing things at us (girlfriend had rock thrown at her).*
- *Some people trying to punch me in my middle parts to see what I have (if I'm a boy or girl).*

One student admitted being too afraid to go to school at some time during the year because of bullying. Their indicative comments illustrated the invisibility of the bullying they experience. When asked about times they chose not to tell anyone about the bullying, one student responded, *"no one ever listens anymore as it happens too often"*.

The experiences of these students varied in how their respective schools dealt with the bullying. Their responses were:

- *Depends how bad it is. In my case the girls had to write a statement of why they did it and had a 20-minute detention.*
- *Nothing, no one believes it is happening.*
- *They talked to them personally.*
- *Nothing in our case. If it's the general "we don't like you" bullies, teachers give detentions. But if it's "you're gay, not a 'real' girl or boy" then teachers act as if nothing happened.*

Students with disabilities

The small group of students with disabilities who shared their experiences of bullying was mainly exposed to 'mean' teasing. One student reported experiencing text bullying, being purposely left out and having nasty remarks made about his disability, although he described the bullying as not serious*: "No bad experiences. Just from people that can't take the fact that I'm different."* Likewise another student chose not to tell anyone about the bullying *"because the people that did it just wanted to be cool".* These secondary students perceived the levels of bullying to be different at their respective schools, with one student considering the bullying to be "really bad" and only "sometimes" feeling safe at school. None of the students reported feeling too afraid to go to school during the past year because of bullying, however, all had witnessed bullying happening to others, the most common forms being mean teasing, hitting, punching, kicking or shoving, nasty comments (including homophobic and racial remarks), as well as observing students' property being damaged or stolen. A suggestion for how schools might deal with bullying included *"getting parents involved".* One student seemed resigned to the inevitability of bullying with his remark: "*They can't really [teachers can't deal with it]. It's in South Auckland's blood and family. Students have grown up with it".*

Students attending after-school care

Parental consent was obtained to conduct a questionnaire survey with students attending after-school care. First a focus group discussion was held with all the children to seek their perspectives on bullying. When asked for their perspectives on the nature of bullying, some indicative comments included:

- *It's when children are mean to each other*
- *And it happens over and over again*
- *Punching, kicking, and scratching*
- *Shoved*
- *Swearing at me*
- *My brother bullies me sometimes*
- *When you get to highest grades in the school, people usually stop bullying you When you are the oldest*
- *I don't get bullied at my school because I am the oldest*
- *When someone calls you names and carries on doing it*
- *Hurting your feelings*
- *Bully you until you cry*
- *Screaming abuse and swearing*
- *Make fun of a condition you might have*
- *An adult bullied me. He said I had to be under arrest just for stealing this fake crystal.*

The five to six-year-old children who were too young to complete the questionnaires instead participated in a focus group discussion. The majority understood the consequences of bullying and almost all of them put their hands up to indicate they had experienced children saying to them, *"I'm not going to be your friend anymore".* Indicative comments around friendships were: (1)*"In my classroom [name of child] said she doesn't like me anymore";* and (2) *"He says he won't be my friend if I don't do it, so I have to do it because I want him to be my friend".* Both the boys and girls provided examples of being excluded, e.g., not being allowed to play or join in with a game. These young children also made reference to mean teasing involving their siblings. Most examples centred on verbal and emotional forms of bullying, (eg. "*They call you names which make you feel bad, or they tell the duty teacher when you haven't done anything*").

However, they also recounted incidents of physical bullying, with objects such as flax, sticks, and bark being used as weapons against them.

Most reported being bullied by either their classmates (school) or older children (after-school care). When asked why they chose not to tell someone or try to seek help, some of their responses were:

- *They might do something worser* [sic] *to you*
- *I was too scared*
- *I didn't feel like it*
- *I ignored them*
- *He would kick or punch me*
- *Some kids might be too shy*
- *Don't want to get in trouble.*

Some children were sensitive to bullying-type behaviours from teachers. Indicative comments included:

- *They might tell you that you're not doing the right thing in an angry voice*
- *When they say your work isn't very good*
- *When I was blowing my nose I got one minute taken off my Golden Time!*

Nineteen students, aged six to 10 years, participated in the questionnaire survey. During the 2008 year at school, three participants reported they had never been bullied. Eight children said they had been bullied 'once in a while', and four said they were bullied 'about once a week'. Four children reported being bullied most days, with equal numbers reporting classroom and playground bullying. Five children reported being bullied in after-school care. Those children also reported being bullied at their respective schools. This may indicate that the children who bullied them at school also attended after-school care, or alternatively that these children were being victimised in both settings.

The main forms of bullying experienced by these children (as identified on the questionnaire items) were: "mean teasing"; "purposely left out of things"; "hitting, punching, kicking or shoving"; "being horribly sworn at"; "threats", and "rude gestures or

mean faces". When asked to describe their worst bullying experience during the year, the following incidents illustrate the nature of their bullying.

- *I have been sworn at with the worst swear word*
- *Someone was blackmailing me in the toilet*
- *Fighting with pocket knives*
- *When my friend didn't let me play with my best friend*
- *[Name of child] calling me a girl and being mean*
- *Kicked in the back*
- *When I got pushed out of a tree*
- *Bullied by my brother*
- *People putting mandarin skin and kiwifruit skin in my water*
- *Sprayed with chemicals [perfume]*
- *Shoved*
- *Someone said to my friends that I would quit the talent show so everybody went up to me and said I am quitting the talent show*
- *Tripping me up.*

Equal numbers of bullies were reported to be in either the same class as their victims or in an older class and six children reported that the bullies were the same age as them but in a different class. This finding can be explained by the fact that these participants attended both school and after-school care – seven children reported that the children who bullied them also attended after-school care. While most children reported feeling safe most of the time in both locations, four reported that at some time during the current year they had felt too afraid to go to school because of bullying. Two children reported feeling too afraid to go to after-school care because of bullying. One of those children also reported feeling fearful of bullying at school, but the other was only afraid of being bullied in after-school care.

Intermediate school students

A composite Year 7-8 class of 27 students, aged 11-13 years, participated in a questionnaire survey, whole class discussion and small focus group discussions. Of those students, 14 were girls and 13 were boys.

During the 2008 year at school, eight students said they had never been bullied, 15 said they had been bullied once in a while, and two students reported being bullied most days. The following table shows the way they were bullied and whether it happened in the classroom or playground. Some students ticked both locations and more than one form of bullying.

Table 2: *Children's experiences of bullying: By type*

Nature of the Bullying	Classroom	Playground	Did not state
– Hitting, punching, kicking, or shoving	2	7	
– Some kind of weapon was used	1	1	
– 'Mean' teasing	7	8	1
– Purposely left out of things	6	5	
– Property damaged or stolen	5	3	
– Was horribly sworn at	2	7	1
– Offensive sexual suggestions		1	
– Nasty racial remarks	6	3	
– Nasty homophobic remarks (e.g., gay)	5	6	
– Received nasty note/letter(s)	1		
– Received nasty mobile phone texts	1	1	5
– Received nasty computer messages (cyber-bullying)			1
– Someone said nasty things to make others dislike them	4	5	1
– Had untrue and 'mean' gossip spread about them	8	6	2
– Was threatened	2	5	
– Had rude gestures or 'mean' faces made at them	3	5	3

One student reported being hurt by rubber-bands in the classroom and another reported that a piece of steel was thrown at him in the playground. When asked to describe their worst bullying experience this year, students reported the following incidents:

- *My friends leaving me out, teasing me, spread gossip that was untrue*
- *When [name of child] said he will kill me and beat me up*
- *Getting into a fight with [name of child] at Netball courts, Term 2, during health class*
- *When my friends leave me out*
- *I got left out of everything for the whole week, even subjects, games during lunch, name-calling, punching*
- *Teasing*
- *Name calling*
- *Like there was no way out*
- *Having a piece of steel thrown at me*

- *People not including me and my friends and being purposely left out of things*
- *Like to push me from back*
- *Getting teased like: fat and short*
- *When he said I am ugly.*

When asked whom they told about being bullied, the majority chose to tell a friend, followed by those who told their parents. Some of these children chose to tell both their friend and a parent. Others chose not to tell anyone. Reasons for not telling were given as:

- *Because my friend was there when I was said that!!* [sic]. *But, I also didn't because then the other people will start saying that as well*
- *He said if I tell someone he will beat me up*
- *I know how to sort it out by myself*
- *I didn't want to*
- *Don't know*
- *It wasn't that bad*
- *Because I didn't care*
- *Afraid would get bullied more* [Focus Group]
- *Think no one can help* [Focus Group]
- *Really scared about what will happen if I do* [Focus Group]
- *Peer pressure* [Focus Group].

In line with the research literature that indicates teachers often do not know about the bullying, only four children chose to tell a teacher. Consistent with attending an intermediate school, equal numbers of bullies were reported to be in either the same class as their victims or in a different class but the same age. One child reported that his bully had since left the school. Only one child reported being bullied by a student at another school.

In terms of self-reporting their own behaviour, more than half the children said they never bullied anyone else. Ten students, however, said they bullied others once in a while and two reported bullying once a week. The most common forms of bullying were swearing at someone and teasing; followed by making rude gestures or 'mean' faces;

purposely leaving someone out or spreading gossip. There were also three self-reports of homophobic bullying and one of racial bullying. The majority of children said they witnessed bullying happen "once in a while" with equal numbers reporting observing the bullying in the classroom and playground. They also indicated they had witnessed more than one form of bullying. While more students reported feeling safe at school most of the time, when asked for their perceptions of how bad they considered the bullying to be at their school, eight replied, "not bad", 13 said it was "a little bad," three said it was "pretty bad" and two children said it was "really bad" (One student did not answer this question). Six children reported that at some time during the year they had felt too afraid to go to school because of bullying.

Secondary school students

A vertical form class in a South Island girls' secondary school participated in a questionnaire survey. These 21 female students ranged in age from 13-17 years and in year groups (years 9-13). During the 2008 year at school, 11 students said they had never been bullied, nine said they had been bullied once in a while and one student reported being bullied more than once a week. All of the bullying experienced involved forms of relational aggression, with receiving nasty comments, 'mean' teasing and text and cyber-bullying being the most common forms of reported bullying. When asked to describe their worst bullying experience, spreading rumours and text bullying got the most frequent mentions. Indicative quotes included: (1) *A nasty Bebo comment when I fell out with my best friend;* and (2) *Being called a slut though still a virgin.*

Indirect bullying (witnessing) was a common experience for these girls and they observed a variety of bullying behaviours eg. witnessing someone being threatened, hit, punched, kicked or shoved including with some kind of weapon; mean comments, teasing, gestures, or gossip and being purposely left out of things; having property damaged or stolen, being 'horribly' sworn at, having offensive (sexual, racial, or homophobic) remarks or remarks about their disability made to them; as well as observing people receiving nasty notes, mobile phone texts, or computer messages.

While most of these participants said they never bullied others, the girls who admitted bullying, disclosed being responsible for text bullying and making rude gestures or 'mean' faces. Eighteen students reported feeling safe all or most of the time at school,

however two students reported never feeling safe. One student did not answer this question. Four students had felt too afraid to go to school at some stage during the 2008 school year. Another two students reported being bullied by an adult at the school.

Both direct and indirect victimisation by hurtful teasing, untrue gossip and exclusion from friendship groups was a common occurrence for these girls, but out of all the bullying experiences, only one student chose to tell a teacher. The majority told their friends and then their parents. Two explanations for telling no one included: (1) *"I told no one because it was nothing really";* and (2) *"They [teachers] say they'll do something but don't do much about it and the bully just gets worse. Even tried to get out of school sick".*

Some students offered other perspectives about bullying at their school:

- *Teachers bully me*
- *Teachers need to do more about it than throw it to one side*
- *Anyone can apply to be a peer supporter but some of them aren't confidential enough (if I said something to certain people they would spread the gossip)*
- *There are often groups that bully individuals down by the river after school where people walk home*
- *People who are bullied are usually bullied in private.*

Response to bullying: Suggested strategies

When a group of teachers (from a range of primary schools in one provincial city) were asked in a forum situation what they did to deal with bullying, the following strategies were offered:

- *Listen to all sides*
- *Go back to the start of the problem*
- *Fix relationships*
- *Teaching of values*
- *General chat to whole class*
- *Use our level system*
- *Listen*
- *Kia Kaha*

- *Positive behaviour programme*
- *Care Bear citizenship*
- *Friendly classrooms*
- *Discussions with children, parents and other teachers*
- *Observe*
- *Use RTLB support*
- *Peer mediation*
- *Empower students to deal with the situation first and use of "I" statements.*

Some common themes for suggested strategies on how schools might deal with bullying were apparent across the student groups (YPRG, Rainbow, disability, after-school care, primary and secondary) consulted for this inquiry. Their suggestions were somewhat different to the teachers who spoke of educational programmes and practices whereas the students offered strategies relevant to themselves. The following table categorises the responses provided by the participating students of various ages.

Table 3: *Student suggestions on how schools can respond to bullying*

Type of response	Indicative examples
Preventive	- Cameras - More teachers on duty - Playground supervision - Parent involvement - Peer pressure - Time out place - Safe area - Appoint student advocates - Friends to stand up to bullies together - Harder rules around bullying - Behaviour contracts - Don't react - Peer support - No-bully posters 'Check up' on good behaviour - Strong prefect presence - Respectful teachers - Adults who listen and act.
Punitive	- Send them to Boot Camp! - Harsher punishments - Expulsion - Detentions - Withdrawal from playground

	• Make them miss their lunch • Days out, half days out, stand-downs • Send bullies to the principal or deputy principal • Give them a red card • Time out.
Restorative	• Talk to the bullies, discuss why they bully others • Counsellors • Think sheet • Mediators • Conferencing • Counselling for bullies and victims • Be real about individual situations; confront students involved and have the appropriate people to deal with the situation.

Each of the groups consulted provided a range of reasons why students chose not to disclose about the bullying and their reasons could be categorised around common themes: (1) Nobody would act on the information; (2) the incident was not considered serious enough; and (3) fear of retribution.

This small snapshot of students' perceptions of their bullying experiences illustrated the nature of that bullying and the impact it had on their wellbeing. If students were different in some way, they might have been more vulnerable to bullying, however, there were enough participants in this inquiry to show that bullying can happen to any student.

Teachers often did not know about the bullying because (1) students chose not to tell them; and (2) much of the bullying happened "beneath the radar" of the teachers, which makes it difficult for teachers to actually identify when bullying is occurring. Being victimised by hurtful teasing, untrue gossip and exclusion from friendship groups were common occurrences for many of the students who participated in this inquiry. While adults may view bullying as the "rough and tumble" of childhood, these students demonstrated just what this meant for them at school.

Analysis of bullying complaints to the inquiry lines

One hundred and three bullying-related complaints were examined (70 from the Office of the Children's Commissioner's child rights line and 33 from the PLINFO line) from 1 January 2008 to 31 January 2009. The following table presents examples of the nature of the complaints received.

Table 4: *Nature of the complaints received by the Office of the Children's Commissioner and PLINFO advice lines*

Type of bullying	Indicative examples
Physical	• Hit, resulting bruising to the face • Persistent bullying, with student receiving a broken nose in one incident • Picked on and physically assaulted • Fractured eye socket (underwent brain scan) • Required hospital treatment after attack by four girls • Night attacks while Year 9 boarders were sleeping • Dorm crawls • Boarder put under mattress and jumped on • Bed tipped over while sleeping – thrown out of bed • Kicked, punched, spat at • Secondary student was assaulted three times by the same student (with gang affiliations) and two colluders. Parent reported latest incident to the Police who informed the school, resulting in the bully being stood down for five days. The parent fears her son will become a statistic of school yard bullying if the perpetrator is allowed to stay at school.
Sexual	• Sexual attacks • "Dry humping" on several boys in a boarding hostel • Victims were (several times) chased down, partly stripped and sexually violated with objects.
Verbal	• Eight-year-old verbally abused on regular basis • Student with "quirky" personality is regularly bullied • Racial taunts • Threats.
Emotional	• Student bullied into actions against their will • Isolation by peers • Humiliation in front of peers • Degradation (causing loss of status, reputation, and self-esteem) • Principal rang for advice on how to deal with relational aggression at his school • 15 year-old student was "stone-walled" over a long

	period of time, with the whole class totally ignoring and not speaking to him.
Threats	• Students threatening other students with sharp objects such as knives and a compass • A student brought a knife to school to protect himself after another student threatened to stab him.
Bully-related stand-downs	• Student stood down for gross misconduct but parent believed daughter was being bullied and responded negatively to this • Caregiver requested help for child who is a bully after he was stood down for violent episodes at school • Parent reported unfair stand-down after violent assault. Believed her child was bullied also • Nine-year old suspended for unruly behaviour that parents considered was due to being bullied • A number of parents of victims reported dissatisfaction that their children had to face the bullies when they were reinstated at school after stand-down and remained in the same classes as their victims • While expelled from boarding, bullies remained in the day school and could potentially revictimise their victims • After being continually bullied, both girls involved were stood down as the victim had hit her assailant first. Her parent wanted the school to retract her stand-down • Student who was stood down for physical bullying assaulted the same boy again on his first day back at school.
Inaction by schools	• Parents' dissatisfaction with school's responses to the bullying of their children • A secondary student moved to another school because of persistent bullying. His education (not the bully's) was disrupted while he remained out of school waiting for the new school to accept his enrolment • A number of children did not want to attend school because of persistent bullying. Due to their schools' inaction, the parents removed them from those schools • When schools were perceived to be doing nothing to stop the bullying of their children, parents rang for advice on what procedures they needed to follow to lodge complaints about these schools • Two sisters were removed from school and enrolled elsewhere, however parent wanted an apology from the school for not dealing with the bullying

	• Requests received for information on organisations able to give specialist help to students, parents and teachers when schools were perceived to be doing nothing • Principal asked about student rights in relation to bully/victim problems at his school • Parent requested definitions of different types of bullying before meeting with the child's principal

From the number of complaints reported to the Office of the Children's Commissioner, compared to the wider student population, it may be assumed less children are bullied than those who are not bullied. While it must also be acknowledged that bullying and outbreaks of violence can happen in any school, there are nevertheless lessons that can be learnt from schools where things reportedly 'went wrong', for whatever reason. The following examples reflect the findings resulting from the analyses of specific scenarios.

Table 5: *Indicative examples of errors: By category*

Category	Indicative examples
Definitional issues	• Some schools did not have clearly articulated definitions of bullying, violence and abuse • The incident may have been referred to as bullying when in fact it had been a one off incident. This is not bullying, because bullying is ongoing and repetitive.
Policies and procedures	• Lack of clarity about procedures (eg. reporting procedures, steps to take, documentation and record keeping) • There was no policy or procedures documented on how to identify and respond to bullying • Those policies did not stipulate the appropriate agencies to notify • The school community had no knowledge of being involved in any consultation about bully-proofing their school • Some schools had well-written policies but there were a number of gaps between policy and practice • Non-compliance with hostel regulations about student safety • Inadequate security and safety systems in boarding hostels • Inconsistent rules and regulations (particularly in boarding schools) • Separate rules for the day and boarding schools • Breached sections of the Education (Hostels)

	Regulations 2005 • Clear breaches of hostel regulations • The procedures for making and handling complaints against hostels' non-compliance with regulations were introduced in March 2006 but there may be confusion around the legislative requirements in some schools • There can be tension between hostel and school discipline that impacts on the provision of natural justice for students. Students may be stood down from the hostel for unacceptable behaviour (eg. violence and bullying) yet they have the legal right to continue to attend school. While this arrangement is well understood, it sometimes results in students being placed in uncomfortable and unnecessarily tense situations in the school context. In other words, policy may allow students to be stood down from the boarding hostel but still attend school, however, in practice this means that the victim has to attend subject classes alongside the perpetrators.
Effectiveness and impact of strategies	• Students had never been surveyed about their experiences or perceptions of bullying at school • Self-reviews by schools of their processes had not been carried out • Bullying procedures were not monitored, evaluated, or amended • Staff had no professional development training around bullying prevention • Prevention and intervention strategies were not readily known by staff.
Communication	• Parents were either not informed about the incident, or told some time later • Outcome of suspension meeting for perpetrators not disclosed to victims' parents • Police were not notified • Police arrested students but parents were not notified • No referrals were made to outside agencies • Poor communication and reporting back to parents.
Support	• Support was not provided for either the victims or the bullies • Peer mediation, counselling programmes were not available to students • Victims were not empowered • Similarly when boards of trustees follow a restorative approach and do not exclude the perpetrator, the interactions between the victim and his bully are not always handled carefully and sensitively and result in further trauma to the victim if they are in the same classes. In other words, there seems to be more focus on getting the offenders back to school without

	regard to the effect this may have on the victim and the bystanders • Sometimes little support is given to the victim. In such cases parents were often the ones to instigate support • In some instances there were long waiting periods for counselling referrals.
Lack of response	• If students did report bullying, it was not appropriately dealt with • Schools did not provide a rapid response to the bullying • Inaction on the part of the school. The perception of many parents is that their child's school is doing nothing to stop the bullying • No recognition and acknowledgement of the impact • Minimising incidents of harm • Some schools demonstrated a lack of commitment and slow response.
School culture and ethos	• Culture of valuing diversity and difference was lacking • There was no culture of safe-telling • Poor playground supervision • Positive role models were absent (eg. prefects were bullies) • The prefect system creates an imbalance of power and in some cases results in negative treatment of some students on the receiving end of a prefect's "authority" • Allegations of racial bullying ignored.

A common theme for many of the incidents reported to the office and PLINFO lines was the perception of parents that their child's school was doing nothing to stop the bullying. Alongside cases of perceived inaction or non-response to the bullying was the failure of some schools to inform the students and their parents of any actions that had been taken.

There were reports of children being continually picked on and physically assaulted by their peers. Some children reported persistent verbal abuse including being threatened with sharp objects such as knives and a compass. Of concern was one incident involving a student who brought a knife to school to protect himself because another student had threatened to stab him. Presumably if that student had felt supported by the teachers at his school he would not have felt the need to take matters into his own hands. However, it should also be acknowledged that follow-up of some cases indicated contrary

information, ie. schools considered they had done as much as possible to address the bullying issue.

Identified gaps between policy and practice

Many schools have written policies and procedures for responding to bullying, violence and abuse. However, in some instances schools have not always "walked the talk" and subsequently children have fallen through the cracks because of this gap between policy and students' realities, resulting in negative outcomes for all concerned. The following examples demonstrate these gaps between policy and practice:

- Some major incidents of bullying and violence have occurred in school grounds. Despite well-written policies acknowledging the school to be legally responsible for providing a safe physical and emotional learning environment, bullying may still occur. Policy might not be always able to stop an incident from happening, but it is how the bullying is responded to that makes a difference.
- Although the perpetrators' parents were contacted, schools failed to notify victims' parents of the incidents.
- Even if clearly stated in policy procedures, schools failed to notify police following a serious assault involving injury.
- While schools may have policies on responding to critical incidents of bullying and violence, they do not always have a policy or strategies in place for managing or investigating health and safety matters. Hence, the ongoing impact of the initial victimisation may go unnoticed, eg. the failure to alert victims' parents of their children's truancy from school, or appropriate responses for when students admit to suicidal ideology.
- Notwithstanding issues of privacy, students' mental health problems are not made known to all teachers, so sympathetic and special attention was not paid to those students in some instances of relational aggression.
- In some cases further policies needed development (eg. for guiding teachers' reactions to students who turn up late to class or with dress code difficulties).
- When school resources were scarce, consideration by some schools of the need to provide outside mentors would have helped the situation.

- In cases of dual enrolment, better collaboration is often needed between both educational settings to ensure smooth transitions, resulting in fewer behavioural outbursts.

- Government policy encourages schools to have an actual policy on child abuse, which includes a definition of child abuse (physical, sexual and emotional abuse) and how abuse will be referred to the Police and Child, Youth and Family. School principals and boards of trustees signed off assurance statements for ERO (eg. that a child abuse prevention and reporting policy and procedures are in place, when in fact they were not).

- The law states that children under 16 should not be questioned/interviewed without a parent, another independent adult, or a lawyer present (refer Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, Sections 215 (1,f) and 222). Some instances occurred where neither the school nor the Police notified parents that their children had been arrested and taken to the police station.

- Some schools struggle to adapt their traditional school cultures to include new students and their families from diverse backgrounds into their communities. Some children were targeted for their difference from the majority culture.

- Some schools breached policy, eg. in regard to their complaints policy, there was no written communication to the parents. In the case of some boarding schools, perceptions were that there was also limited communication between the school's board of trustees and the boarding hostel board.

- Although there are procedures for making and handling complaints against hostels' non-compliance with regulations, some schools continue to show confusion around the legislative requirements.

- Breaches of the Code of Practice relating to the management of boarding hostels included: agreed regulations on nightly supervision; policy on relationships and the protection of boarders from ill-treatment; abuse, harassment, or serious neglect of boarders; and the requirement that boarders and the staff members who supervise those boarders are supervised by a responsible person.

- Schools are required to manage the procedural issues involving principles of paramountcy (students' welfare and best interests must be the first consideration) and natural justice (the obligation to act fairly and reasonably in the circumstances). At times this means managing the consequences and

impact of the decisions made when both the victim and the perpetrator continue to attend the same school.

It is worth noting that the Office of the Children's Commissioner does not typically receive calls about "things going well" for children. Almost all of the telephone and written communication involved people (parents, principals and other professionals) seeking advice and advocacy for students when there were issues of concern with their education, and for the purposes of this inquiry, the focus was on bullying. The next section discusses the implications of these findings.

Chapter five: Implications on the findings

This inquiry into the safety of students at school identified a number of implications for students and their families and schools. These implications now guide the following discussion.

Reporting procedures

Some of the incidents examined in this inquiry have revealed a grey area in terms of reporting. Schools are self-managing and while the Government, Ministry of Education, Police and Child, Youth and Family might actively encourage the reporting of violence and abuse at school through their child protection guidelines, ultimately schools have the choice to determine their own course of action in preference to others. Clearly in some instances there are schools that, for whatever reason, choose not to report specific incidents of violence and abuse. This has implications for all students in that both perpetrators and victims in one school might receive different consequences for a similar incident that occurred in another school. There seems to be no consistency in the way that schools across New Zealand deal with issues around safety. This report proposes that schools, wherever possible, follow the same broad guidelines while recognising the individuality of each school to make their own informed decisions. Whatever action is deemed to be appropriate by a school should take Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into account, which makes schools responsible for ensuring that "in all actions concerning children…the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration".

Mandatory reporting

In New Zealand there is no mandatory or legal obligation for people who work with children (eg. teachers and doctors) to report child abuse. Instead voluntary reporting is promoted through agreements made with Child, Youth and Family and other relevant government agencies. This report is not the forum to debate issues around mandatory reporting. However, it might be appropriate to query whether teachers should follow the same voluntary guidelines developed for reporting child abuse when they are dealing with bullying and violence. Overseas debates also recognise the complexity of issues

around mandatory reporting. Mathews, Butler, Walsh and Farrell (2007) have considered the issue from an Australian perspective, yet their arguments also seem relevant to the New Zealand context. Mathews and colleagues convincingly concluded that due to the nature and context of mandatory reporting, the nature of child protection systems, the differences between abuse perpetrated by parents or caregivers as opposed to bullying inflicted by children, and the presence of school-based responses to bullying, there should not be a mandatory requirement for school bullying to be reported to government child protection agencies. They identified the differences in the characteristics of peer abuse and abuse by parents or caregivers as first recorded by Healey (2005). These differences included: (1) the relationship of power; (2) the behaviours endured, (3) the psychological impact; and (4) the availability of support structures and helping professionals. Furthermore the presence of school-based mechanisms to deal with bullying means teachers should use these processes rather than filing reports of school bullying to government agencies that were never set up to provide this form of child protection (Mathews et al., 2007).

The paramount principle is that schools must act in the best interests of their students. However, tensions may arise when both the perpetrator and the victim attend the same school and the school has obligations to both students. Support is available for schools faced with this situation (eg. Ministry of Education's Interim Response Fund and the Traumatic Incident Team) but indications from this inquiry are that there are no easy solutions. This next section attempts to provide guidance on action that schools might take.

Reporting to statutory agencies

In cases of assault, the most likely statutory agencies that schools may need to notify for some violence/abuse related incidents are the Police and Child, Youth and Family. Police and Child, Youth and Family are two separate agencies, but they have complementary functions.

Police prosecute offenders and Child, Youth and Family are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Given the nature of their work and need for very close working relationships, the two agencies have an agreed protocol –

the Serious Abuse or Child Abuse protocol, most commonly referred to as the SAT or CAT protocol. This covers cases of sexual and other serious physical abuse and requires both agencies to notify each other of cases that fall within the protocol. In cases where a child requires a forensic (also known as evidential) interview (ie. to the standard fit to be used in court to prosecute an alleged offender) Police and Child, Youth and Family will usually manage the process together, utilising specialised facilities and staff to conduct the interview. A selected number of staff from both agencies have jointly undergone forensic interviewing training, delivered at the Police College.

If a student, while at school, is assaulted by an adult staff member and Police are notified, they will make their enquiries and may or may not alert Child, Youth and Family. It might be a one-off event, involve one adult and one child and they might just arrest the adult and Child, Youth and Family would never know about the case. The Ministry of Education and Child, Youth and Family have a protocol for schools for reporting child abuse. This protocol provides guidelines for school staff dealing with child abuse and neglect and the management of child abuse allegations outside of the school and allegations against staff or a student within the school.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner strongly recommends that if a student is seriously assaulted by another student, or a group of students at school, the Police should be notified. In this situation, Police might deal with the incident themselves and may or may not notify Child, Youth and Family. They might talk to those involved but take no further action if the incident is not considered to be at the level covered by the SAT/CAT protocol.

There is another point at which Child, Youth and Family become involved, that is, if the Police take action in regard to a child or young person's offending under the provisions relating to youth justice in the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act. For example, Child, Youth and Family may receive information on the student's offending through a referral to the Youth Justice Coordinator for a Family Group Conference.

Contacting or involving the Police or Child, Youth and Family does not necessarily mean lodging a complaint or notification. Schools may wish to simply seek advice from either organisation before deciding on the most appropriate course of action.

There have been instances where serious assaults occurred at school, and warranted police intervention, yet the Police were not notified. During its regular review of schools, the Education Review Office (ERO) checks the physical and emotional safety of students (including the prevention of bullying and sexual harassment). Therefore, within this regular review process the Office of the Children's Commissioner recommends that the ERO team also reviews any recorded incidents of violence and bullying, and in particular, the reporting procedures that were implemented following the incident (eg. reporting to parents and police).

Reporting a traumatic incident to the Ministry of Education

As explained in the section on definitions (chapter two) there may be some overlap between the terms bullying, violence, abuse and traumatic incidents. The findings of this inquiry revealed that some schools perhaps should have sought Ministry of Education traumatic incident management support soon after the incident occurred to ensure their situation was quickly de-escalated within the school community. The traumatic incident team can also provide much needed advice and resources on how to respond to the media, and how to communicate within the school and to the wider community when the situation warrants this intervention. Traumatic incident management support information for schools and early childhood education services can be found on http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/SpecialEducation/PublicationsAndResources/TraumaticIncidentManagementSupportForSchoolsAndECEServices.aspx.

The Ministry of Education defines traumatic incidents as events that:

- Cause sudden and/or significant disruption to the operation, or effective operation, of a school, Early Childhood Education service and/or community
- have the potential to affect a large number of children and young people and/or staff
- create significant dangers or risks to the physical and emotional wellbeing of children, young people or people within a community
- attract media attention or a public profile for the Early Childhood Education service or school as a result of these incidents.

The Ministry of Education recommends that schools and early childhood services have a Traumatic Incident Response plan and team in place before an incident happens, so that the roles and responsibilities of specific staff members are clearly defined. The plan should be reviewed regularly and all staff should be familiar with the plan. Support is also available from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry's traumatic incident coordinators can help with the preparation of policies and traumatic incident planning. In the event of a traumatic incident, traumatic incident coordinators and other trained ministry staff, will work alongside the school/ECE service's traumatic incident team to support their traumatic incident plan. Traumatic incident coordinators can be contacted on 0800-TI-TEAM (0800-848326).

In 2009 the Ministry of Education is developing a manual (*Managing Traumatic Incidents: A Handbook for ECE Services and Schools*) that will provide detailed information and advice on traumatic incident management. In addition, a checklist of steps will go to all schools to be used as a quick guide.

School safety web

There are many positive responses that schools can make. Schools committed to giving meaning to the rights of children may consider developing a framework or *school safety web*, which is a concept promoted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for some time (Jamison, 1996). This web consists of six components:

1. *A common definition of safety* that, in addition to other safety issues identified by the school, should cover:

   - Child abuse
   - bullying
   - sexual harassment
   - management of traumatic incidents (including suicide)
   - behaviour management and discipline within the school
   - cultural safety
   - safe physical environment.

2. *A student safety team*. The number of members in a safety team will vary, depending upon the size of the school. Their role will be to:

- Keep informed about current policy and practice in relation to the issues they are responsible for
- help decide what the most appropriate response would be to particular safety issues, including what policy to use.

3. *A procedure for making complaints or suggestions to the school*. This would involve having a transparent and well-publicised system to enable students, families and other members of the school community to raise concerns with the school.

4. *Student advocates*. These people would support and take up issues from the students' perspective, eg. when allegations are made against a staff member, the advocate ensures that the child's best interests are paramount. This advocate could either be a member of the school's safety team or an individual advocate from within the school community, (eg. a parent). Two levels of advocacy are required:

   (1) The child safety advocate will primarily be responsible for ensuring the school policies incorporate the paramountcy principle, eg. by advising the school on how to balance the competing rights and interests of its students; and,

   (2) The child safety advocate may at times need to be an advocate for individual children to ensure their views are heard and given due weight through the process. The student concerned should choose this advocate.

5. *School safety advisors or contact people*. These people form a web to provide community support when schools seek assistance regarding safety. Safety advisors are people outside the school who can be contacted to:

- Provide advice to those responsible for managing safety issues within the school

- be a resource to the school
- assist the school's self review and monitoring of safety policies.

6. *A principle of reporting abuse.* Schools should have a clear statement so there is no doubt that the school will make a notification to Child, Youth and Family and/or Police if there is concern that a child is being abused.

Once the definitions have been agreed on and the school safety web developed, schools will be able to set up systems of self-review, in line with recommendations made by the Education Review Office (2007).

As revealed in the 'definitions' section of the literature review, there are three main types of risk to school safety.

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┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│ Bullying │ ───▶ │ Violence │ ───▶ │  Abuse   │
└──────────┘      └──────────┘      └──────────┘
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Figure 1: *Barriers to school safety*

Incidents of bullying, violence and abuse perhaps all require different responses and reporting procedures. Based on this examination of school safety, the following flowcharts are intended to provide some guidance as to what action might be taken for specific incidents. It should be noted at this point that these three key documents are currently under review.

1. The Ministry of Education and Child, Youth and Family are reviewing the *Breaking the Cycle* document that outlines interagency protocols for child abuse management. A new protocol is being developed for the notification of suspected or actual child abuse and neglect. The guidelines will inform boards of trustees, principals and teachers on how to deal with child abuse and neglect and how to manage child abuse allegations against school employees.

2. *Managing Traumatic Incidents – A Handbook for Early Childhood Services and Schools* (2009) outlines a risk framework to help schools and early childhood education services to undertake a self-review of their policies and procedures to

reduce the risk of violence and other emergency situations, and to effectively manage traumatic incidents. This manual is soon to be rolled out and trialed in schools. Guidelines are available on the Ministry of Education website for all schools and early childhood education services that include recommended actions to be taken in planning and responding to a traumatic incident. In addition a checklist of steps has been developed for use as a quick guide in emergencies.

3. The Ministry of Education is updating the 2004 *Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Trustees on Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions.* The 2009 guidelines will distinguish between legal advice and good practice. More specifically, part one of the new guidelines will describe the mandatory legal process and the obligations of principals and boards in relation to stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions. Part two will provide optional good-practice models (eg when to involve Police in school disciplinary issues), background information and links to other relevant ministry guidance. Part three of the new guidelines will provide model letters, record templates, and information about Ministry of Education forms.

All three documents are due for release early in 2009, and those formal protocols, guidelines and procedures may supersede these simplified flowcharts of complex issues.

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO BULLYING

Bullying is deliberately harmful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, by a person or group, who target a less powerful person as the victim. In other words, bullying occurs when one child consistently targets another for negative treatment and the victim feels powerless to stop the interaction. The hurtful actions can be: (1) physical, such as hitting and punching; (2) verbal assaults, for example, teasing, taunting, threatening and name-calling; or (3) indirect, such as psychological exclusion from friendship groups or spreading rumours.

In the first instance schools need to determine the type of incident according to the definitions of bullying, and then refer to its bullying policies and procedures to determine the course of action, including disciplinary procedures when required. Regular self-reviews of the school climate, programmes and strategies to prevent bullying are also necessary.

What process is most effective for schools when bullying occurs?

1 Act immediately to secure the students' safety and emotional wellbeing.
→ Complete an Incident Report Form (that can be used in court as evidence for either side).
Implement procedures in line with school policy.

2 The principal (or authorised person) meets with the victim and his/her parents or caregivers.
→ The principal (or authorised person) will explain the school's anti-bullying policy and outline the actions to be taken. It is important to reassure parents/caregivers and the victim that the school is taking the matter seriously and to respond as soon as possible.

3 **Is the bullying a form of relational aggression?**

Relational aggression is behaviour that harms others through damage (or thread of damage) to relationships, feelings of acceptance, friendships, or group inclusion.
→ For this form of bullying, the social dynamic must be taken into account, with both the bullies and the victim included in the problem solving process alongside pro-social peers to help find a solution to the bullying. No Blame and Undercover are effective programmes for this type of bullying.

4 **Is the bullying a form of text bullying?**

Text bullying is when students use text messages to threaten, harass, and/or intimidate a peer. It involves sending text messages to spread rumours or secrets, call the victim mean names, and to organise the exclusion of the victim from social activities.
→ All messages to a mobile phone can be tracked. If the text messages were sent during school time, the school should take action. Otherwise the school should encourage the victim's parents/guardians to:
i.   Praise their child for disclosing the bullying and counsel them on how they feel about the bullying; reassure them their phone will not be taken away from them;
ii. Advise the child not to text back to the offender;
iii. When the child has received (and retained) at least four messages that were not replied to, make a complaint to the telephone company;
iv. Once the telephone company has acted on the complaint, convene a meeting between the bully (or bullies), their parents/caregivers, the victim (or victims), and their parents/caregivers.

5 **Is the bullying a form of cyber bullying?**

Cyber bullying is the posting of destructive text or images through the internet, including social networking pages, instant messaging programmes, and through emails or message boards.
→ Schools should advise a student who is being cyber bullied to:
i.   Ask the person to stop and not reply to any further messages;
ii. Save all messages by taking a screen shot (i.e., print screen, then paste it into a word document) which can be passed onto the school or NetSafe to show what has occurred;
iii. If the bullying is occurring through a website, note down the address and check for the site's terms of use/service and make a complaint to the website's hosts if the bully has contravened any of the rules. Bebo, Facebook, MySpace, and Windows Live have dedicated 'contact us' or 'cyber bullying pages'. For more information on how to contact a website's hosts, contact NetSafe.
iv. If the bullies were at school or using school resources, convene a meeting with all involved.

6 Does the bullying involve serious physical or sexual assault?
→ Notify the Police and the parents/caregivers of both the perpetrator and the victim. The school should remain involved and support victim and bully through consequential processes, e.g., SAT/CAT protocols, prosecution, Family Group Conference, school action).

Figure 2: *Suggested action to take for bullying*

In this first flowchart about bullying, the actions to take regarding text and cyber-bullying have been drawn from NetSafe, (a programme mostly funded by the Ministry of Education and developed by the Internet Safety Group (ISG) to provide cyber safety information and education).

Schools have an important role to play in helping to reduce and manage cyber-bullying. Maher (2008) suggests that traditional anti-bullying policies and curriculum must incorporate the use of interactive technologies such as email and chat rooms. Implementing procedures around mobile phone use at school will not only help to reduce levels of text-bullying by students in school time, it will also help to prevent the quick gathering of crowds of young people to witness fights or film bullying incidents, where circulating coverage of the incident risks "revictimising the victim" over and over again. Evidence indicates that many teachers do not use or understand the interactive online technologies used by their student and are therefore fearful of encouraging online interactions to extend school learning. Thus teachers also require appropriate training in order to gain an appropriate understanding of the educational issues related to cyber-bullying and the best ways to address these issues when they arise. It is also time for parents and teachers to work together to manage online bullying in both home and school environments (Maher, 2008, p. 56).

Some of the suggested responses for violent incidents in the next flowchart have been informed by the Wellington Community Law Centre's book: *Schools and the Right to Discipline* and the PPTA's (2007) checklist for assessing schools' anti-violence policies and practices.

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE

> Schools have a legal responsibility to keep students safe. Incidents of violence require different responses depending on the nature and severity of the harm suffered and the context in which the incident took place.

What process is most effective for responding to school violence?

1 Have well accepted school rules, guidelines, policies and procedures for appropriate behaviour that include specific references to different types of violent behaviours.

→ Developing rules around violence should include: consultation with parents, ensuring they are reasonable, relevant to students and their educational needs; and legally enforceable – with procedures in place if the rules are broken.

Establish a confidential reporting system to encourage a safe environment for confidential disclosure of violent incidents.
Establish a safety web and appoint safety advocates

2 Respond quickly and consistently to violent incidents.

→ Act immediately to secure students' safety.
Complete an Incident Report Form (that can be used in court as evidence for either side).

3 Support victims.

→ Provide students with victim support, counselling and advocacy options. Information on the impact of Police laying charges may be helpful for victims and witnesses to prepare for what to expect in the legal system's response.

4 Support perpetrators throughout any consequential procedures.

→ **For lower level breaches** of the school's anti-violence code of conduct, the offending student could be required to participate in a restorative conference or attend a special programme offered by the school, e.g., conflict resolution, anger management, communication, or other interpersonal skill development. In-school suspension may also be appropriate. This type of response is consistent with a non-violent supportive school climate and is appropriate for minor incidents.

Serious incidents (e.g., assaults causing bodily harm, sexual assaults, robbery and extortion, hate-motivated violence, or vandalism causing property damage) require Police intervention. Students need information on what the victim, any witnesses, and the perpetrator can expect if criminal charges are laid. The Police will decide on whether the students involved are dealt with differently according to their age.

Throughout any consequential procedures, e.g., SAT/CAT protocols, Police prosecution, Family Group Conferences, Board of Trustees hearing, and the school's restorative conference, the school should remain involved and supportive of the victim and the perpetrator. Ensure the views of the victim and their parents are heard, if that is their wish.

5 Provide violence prevention programmes.

→ Choose programmes that address the problems of violence and aggression in schools by attempting to alter the school environment rather than focusing on the perpetrators and victims alone.

6 In the event of a serious traumatic incident contact the Traumatic Incident Coordinator at the Ministry of Education: toll free phone 0800 848 326.

→ Traumatic incidents are events that:
• cause sudden and/or significant disruption to the operation, or effective operation, of a school, early childhood education service and/or community;
• have the potential to affect a large number of children and young people and/or staff;
• create significant dangers or risks to the physical and emotional wellbeing of children, young people, or the community;
• attract media attention or a public profile as a result.

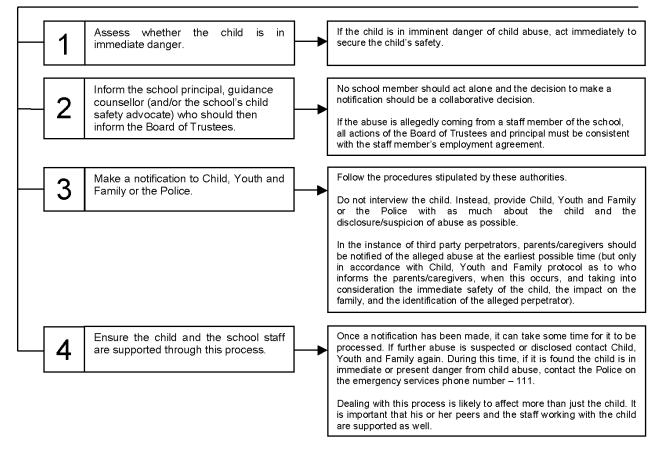**Figure 3:** *Suggested action to take for incidents involving violence*

RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of a child or young person, caused by actions (or inactions) of adult(s) in the child or young person's life.

The child's best interests and welfare should be paramount and used as a guide for any action taken.

Emergency phone numbers	**Child safety advocate**
Child, Youth and Family: 0508 326459 (toll free) Police: Emergency phone 111 or your regional child abuse team through your local police station	Each school should appoint and train a staff member as a child safety advocate. The advocate can act as a medium between authorities involved in child abuse complaint management and the school.

What should schools do when a student discloses or a teacher suspects child abuse?

1	Assess whether the child is in immediate danger.	If the child is in imminent danger of child abuse, act immediately to secure the child's safety.
2	Inform the school principal, guidance counsellor (and/or the school's child safety advocate) who should then inform the Board of Trustees.	No school member should act alone and the decision to make a notification should be a collaborative decision. If the abuse is allegedly coming from a staff member of the school, all actions of the Board of Trustees and principal must be consistent with the staff member's employment agreement.
3	Make a notification to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.	Follow the procedures stipulated by these authorities. Do not interview the child. Instead, provide Child, Youth and Family or the Police with as much about the child and the disclosure/suspicion of abuse as possible. In the instance of third party perpetrators, parents/caregivers should be notified of the alleged abuse at the earliest possible time (but only in accordance with Child, Youth and Family protocol as to who informs the parents/caregivers, when this occurs, and taking into consideration the immediate safety of the child, the impact on the family, and the identification of the alleged perpetrator).
4	Ensure the child and the school staff are supported through this process.	Once a notification has been made, it can take some time for it to be processed. If further abuse is suspected or disclosed contact Child, Youth and Family again. During this time, if it is found the child is in immediate or present danger from child abuse, contact the Police on the emergency services phone number – 111. Dealing with this process is likely to affect more than just the child. It is important that his or her peers and the staff working with the child are supported as well.

Figure 4: *Suggested action to take when a student discloses or a teacher suspects child abuse*

The recommended procedures for reporting suspected child abuse have been informed by Child, Youth and Family's interagency protocols for child abuse management. Abuse involving school staff is not addressed in this report, but is covered extensively in the Ministry of Education's guidelines. As previously stated, separate from this inquiry into school safety, the Ministry of Education is reviewing and developing (in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development) guidelines and protocols for supporting schools with (1) traumatic incidents; (2) notification of child abuse/neglect; and (3) suicide prevention. The child abuse/neglect protocol is due to be published in 2009 and new "Breaking the Cycle" guidelines will provide more detail than the flowchart in this report.

What teachers can do to help

Other than the students themselves, teachers are a school's most valuable resource for combating bullying and victimisation. Teachers lie just outside the peer ecology and help shape, intentionally and unintentionally, the critical microsystems in which children interact at school (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). Olweus (1993) noted that teachers' attitudes are of "major significance for the extent of bully/victim problems" (p. 26) yet studies indicate that teachers intervene in only one-third of the bullying cases that come to their attention (see Holt & Keyes, 2004; O'Moore, 2000; Rigby, 2000; Smith & Brain, 2000). Sometimes teachers seem unaware of aggression among their students, or are overwhelmed by its prevalence. Other teachers may underestimate the prevalence of bullying, too often failing to stop bullying when they see it, and sometimes exacerbating the problem by siding with perpetrators and blaming victims (Rodkin & Hodges, p. 392).

Yoneyama and Rigby (2006) also contend that the quality of the classroom climate is largely determined by the contributions of the teacher and the profile of the students in that class. Rodkin and Hodges (2003) suspect that untrained observations from teachers and other adults about students with high social status underestimate the proportion of popular-aggressive boys and girls and distort other relevant aspects of peer ecologies in which bullying occurs. These researchers advise that not all groups containing aggressive children are deviant, and educators who "exclusively target peripheral antisocial cliques as the engine of school violence may leave intact other groups that are responsible for mainstream peer support for bullying" (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003, p. 389). Teachers who try to eradicate bullying without an appreciation of the complexity of peer

ecologies invite resistance and defiance that may worsen existing problems. Interestingly, Rodkins and Hodges found that when teachers were warm and caring to everybody, children were less rejecting of aggressive peers than when teachers had negative beliefs about aggression.

Likewise, some years ago Olweus (1993) established that the fundamental principles for school violence prevention are: warm, caring relationships with adults; firm, clear, consistent limits to unacceptable behaviour; non-hostile, non-physical sanctions; adults acting as authorities; and active monitoring and supervision. If schools are to teach values and attitudes, then adults in that school community must also practise those attitudes and beliefs. Gamache and Snapp (1995, p. 228) believe that schools can provide a climate that draws a magic circle around themselves in which they state: "In here it is different". Children will only learn new skills in settings where it is safe to practise them, therefore developing and maintaining relationships in schools may be the most important resource for violence prevention (Gamache & Snapp, 1995, p. 230). The research literature consistently finds that in schools with significant bullying problems the children report that they dislike being alone at playtime, and that they often experience bullying on the way to and from school. It is possible that such schools do not have a supportive climate for students or clear anti-bullying policies. On the other hand, effective schools have an ethos that promotes their students' health, wellbeing and security.

Professional development

The attitudes, routines and behaviour of all school staff have either a positive or negative effect on bullying. Professional development on how to prevent and respond to bullying in order to provide a safe learning environment is critical for building a common philosophy and knowledge base from which to work (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).

Self reviews

No school can be complacent about bullying because it happens in all schools at some time or other. Classrooms are dynamic social settings and each year brings together a new cohort of students.

ERO (2007) found that schools' measurement of the effectiveness of their anti-bullying initiatives was often anecdotal in nature or measured more broadly against analyses of incident reports and decreases in the number of detentions or stand-downs. This inquiry into school safety supports the recommendations of the Education Review Office that schools need to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the anti-bullying initiatives they implement through a regular self-review programme. As stated by ERO, the aim of self-review is to help schools reflect on how the culture and practices of their school minimises the risk of bullying behaviour and supports the provision of a safe physical and emotional learning environment. To support schools in their self-review process, ERO (2007, p. 9) provided the following reflective questions. For ease of reading they are presented in a table format and slightly adapted to incorporate some extra questions:

Table 6: *Self-review questions for schools* (see ERO, 2007, p. 9)

Questions	Indicators
Does the school have documented policies and procedures for preventing bullying and managing bullying if it occurs?	• Is there a shared understanding (by students, parents, and staff) of the intent and practices as documented in the school's policies and procedures? • Is there a common definition of bullying and violence?
How well are the policies and procedures for preventing bullying and managing bullying implemented school wide?	• Are they consistently implemented? • Are they regularly reviewed?
In what ways does the school find out the views of staff, students and parents about the safety of the physical and emotional environment?	• Does the school carry out anonymous surveys of students, parents and staff to find out their views about the school's physical and emotional safety? • What other opportunities are provided for views to be sought?
What information does the school have about the range of strategies and programmes being implemented to prevent bullying behaviour?	• Are targets/programmes to reduce bullying based on needs analysis? • Are programmes offered for all students, individuals, or targeted groups of students? • How wide ranging are the strategies? • Do strategies include the prevention of text bullying?
How effective are these programmes and strategies in preventing bullying behaviour at school?	• What evidence does the school have about the implementation of specific programmes and strategies? • What is the impact of specific programmes and strategies for all students and/or specific groups of students?

How well is self-review information used to inform decisions about programmes and strategies?	• Is the information referred to?
How is information from self-review reported to the board of trustees, parents and the wider school community?	• Is the information tabled at a board of trustees meeting? • Is the information disseminated as a report? • Is the information included in a school newsletter?

Still drawing on recommendations from ERO (2007), additional questions might include:

1. What has the school done to prevent bullying, including the names of anti-bullying programmes that have been implemented by the school?
2. Does the school have particular strategies to prevent text-bullying?
3. What evidence does the school have about the implementations of these programmes?
4. What does the school know about the impact of any of these strategies that have been implemented? (p. 3).

The purpose of regularly evaluating and reviewing is to determine the extent to which the school wide approaches to prevent school bullying and violence are working for all students at the school. It is also important to gauge the impact of targeted approaches for specific individuals and groups of students. Schools should assess the effectiveness of their professional development programmes for staff as well as assessing the actual implementation of their policies, procedures and plans that set out guidelines for how to manage specific incidents (ERO, 2007, p. 9).

The New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (2007) has developed a checklist for schools to review its anti-violence policies and practices. This checklist of 10 pertinent questions on which schools might conduct their self-review can be found in the PPTA's *School Anti-Violence Toolkit* (p. 41). Assessing all relationships (ie. students, staff, management, parents) rather than just student on student violence, the questions are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: *School anti-violence checklist* (adapted from PPTA, 2007, p. 41)

Checklist	
Does the school have policies on dealing with violence between students, between staff, between staff and students, and between staff and management and parents and staff that are:	• Based on clear definitions of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour? • Accepted by all groups concerned as fair and reasonable? • Resourced? • Practicable? • Implemented?
Do students, staff and administration clearly understand that they have a responsibility to report incidents of violence to ensure that early intervention can occur?	• Are they aware of the process of reporting? • Are they actively encouraged to report incidents? • Are violent incidents analysed and reviewed regularly?
Does the school have individuals or groups with clear authority and responsibility for:	• Dealing with complaints and incidents of violence? • Monitoring and supporting staff and students under stress?
Does the school identify and support individuals or organisations with conflict resolution or mediation roles?	• Do these people have the support of management?
Do management, e.g., Deputy Principals or Heads of Departments receive training so they understand:	• The definition of violence and how violence can develop? • The effect that a perceived risk as well as a real risk can have on staff morale and stress levels? • Their role in implementing the employer's preventive strategy? • The importance of being supportive of students and staff who have been victims of violence? • What action to take when a violent incident has occurred?
Are there clear procedures established to manage and diffuse conflict early?	• Are these procedures reviewed and adjusted to ensure that they are effective and have the confidence of students and staff? • Are these procedures implemented and adhered to?
Are there clear and effective procedures in place, which have the confidence of staff and students, to manage indirect or direct threats of intimidation/violence?	• Are these procedures implemented and adhered to?

Are staff and students made aware of the psychological and physiological effects of experiencing or witnessing traumatic incidents?	• Are they encouraged to view these incidents seriously?
Are there procedures in place to support staff and student victims of workplace violence at a school level?	• Do they take into account the effects of trauma?
Do staff know where to refer people who need support?	• Are these documented in the school's procedural guidelines?

The PPTA checklist and indeed the entire *School Anti-Violence Toolkit* are relevant to both primary and secondary schools. The toolkit is available on the PPTA website http://www.ppta.org.nz

School climate surveys

Understanding how students perceive the school and classroom climate is important because:

1. Research suggests that students involved in bully/victim problems view the classroom climate differently from other students and might provide a clue to their bully/victim status. Identification of such students will ensure earlier support and intervention; and,
2. Peer victimisation can be reduced through improving the classroom climate (Yoneyama & Rigby, 2006, pp. 34-35).

A range of school climate surveys can measure the safety of a school's physical and emotional environment. Recently the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) developed a tool that measures student engagement. Specifically targeted to the Year 7-10 age group, this *Me and My School* survey probes students' attitudes, moods, and feelings towards school, teachers, peers, and their own learning. Of interest

to this inquiry is that the questions explore behavioural, emotional, and cognitive aspects of engagement at school. Designed to provide robust and systematic information, this is one way that schools, as part of the self-review process, can obtain students' views about their school's culture and ethos. Relevant items include: "I respect other students' space and property at school"; "I feel safe at school"; "people care about each other in this school"; and "my class accepts me for who I am". The NZCER survey tool can provide a picture of student attitudes across the school, with analysis by year and sub-group, and with national comparisons. Information about this survey can be obtained from: www.nzcer.org.nz or meandmyschool@nzcer.org.nz

Other "checklists" are also available for evaluating school culture. Whether schools conduct individual class, or whole school surveys, the data should reveal whether the bullying is increasing or decreasing. After all, these surveys are intended to measure how well the school's anti-bullying policies, procedures and programmes are working. Preferably the survey should also provide information regarding the frequency of the bullying, when the bullying is occurring, where the bullying is occurring, and who is doing the bullying. The survey should be short (requiring students to only answer a few "yes" or "no" questions); easy to administer; and easy to score (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Surveying the social climate can be used as whole school evaluations that reflect on the values, norms, and goals of the school. They can be modified (and one case study school did this) to suit the specific needs of a range of schools and are a good starting point in establishing what core values 'look like' and how a school's management systems, resources, and power relationships shape positive learning environments.

Chapter six: Whole school approaches and programmes

This section of the report explores school responses and approaches that might improve school culture and student safety.

The philosophy of inclusion could play a key role in changing the culture and ethos of schools. Inclusion is the process of increasing the presence, participation and achievement of all students in their schools, with particular reference to those groups of students who are at risk of exclusion, marginalisation, or underachievement (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Based on three of his studies involving the perceptions of students, Slee's (1995) examination of the impact of teachers and schools concluded that improvement and organisation of schools is required to ensure they better meet the needs of marginalised students. Children who have been exposed to school violence or bullying are one sub-group of at-risk learners, who may only indicate that something has happened to them through their behaviour (Carroll-Lind & Lind, 2004). Inclusion involves increasing the capacity of schools to respond to the diversity of such students by restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, p. 3).

Whole school approach

The term *'whole school approach'* is an internationally recognised term that helps to define the values system agreed on by the whole school community, including students, teachers, principals, boards of trustees, parents, and the wider community (MoE, 2009). As stated by the Ministry of Education, the policies, practices and procedures provided by the whole school approach set up an ongoing, sustainable and long-term foundation, which ensures that any programme the school decides to use will be easily integrated and accepted into its school community.

Behaviour such as bullying should be viewed as a whole school issue requiring a whole school solution (MoE, 2009). As stated by Sullivan (2000b):

Adopting a whole school approach means that when an anti-bullying initiative is going to be developed in a school, all those affected – teachers, students, administrators, governors, parents and others in the wider community – are involved in the full process (p. 40).

Raskauskas (2007) agrees that involving all stakeholders in the school's anti-bullying efforts is crucial. She defines a whole school approach as one in which the school community (and especially teachers and parents) become aware of the prevalence and seriousness of the problem of bullying and develop a coordinated effort to reduce it, usually through the development of anti-bullying policies (Raskauskas, 2007, p. 13). In addition, effective leadership and principals who practise collaborative styles of working set a tone which facilitates the development of a whole school anti-bullying philosophy (Sullivan, 2000b).

Interventions are more likely to be successful within a whole school approach that involves commitment and input from the whole school and its community (Blazer, 2005). Cleary and Palmer advise that there is a direct correlation between the time and quality of effort spent in developing a whole school policy and the reduction in the levels of bullying. Furthermore the process of developing a common understanding of the problem is as important as any other factor. However, a no-blame culture is also fundamental to a whole school approach (MoE, 2009). Therefore, the whole school approach aims to reassure the school community that issues and crisis situations will be dealt with consistently and fairly (MoE, 2009). Where expectations are clearly stated and reinforced and a whole school initiative (that prohibits rather than sanctions bullying) is developed, bullying is more likely to be dealt with effectively (Maxwell & Carroll-Lind, 1997).

The Office of the Children's Commissioner strongly supports the importance of taking a whole school approach to bullying, but this needs to be achieved alongside a positive school culture. As explained by the Ministry of Education (2009) a *positive school culture* also has a shared vision and commitment from the school community. Students feel they belong, enjoy supportive relationships and are engaged in learning. For a whole school approach to effectively influence the school's philosophy and culture, it must increase the level of engagement for all its students through the modeling and supporting of

positive and pro-social behaviours by all members of the school and its wider school community (MoE, 2009).

This report will now briefly describe the various whole school approaches and programmes examined during the school safety inquiry. All of these anti-bullying approaches and programmes showcased below will be written up in more detail for the summary report – a resource booklet that will be sent out to schools. Information in that booklet will describe how the success case study schools actually implemented the programmes into their learning environments.

Human Rights in Education

There is compelling evidence that a comprehensive human rights-based approach to education will contribute to participation, engagement and achievement, thus helping young people to develop as New Zealand and global citizens, while ensuring that New Zealand meets its legal obligations under international laws. Backed by the Children's Commissioner, Human Rights Commission and three leading non-government organisations (NGOs), the Human Rights in Education founders have developed a broad collaborative initiative for children and young people to develop as confident, connected, and actively involved learners and citizens, through the development of school and early childhood centres as communities in which human rights and responsibilities are known, promoted and lived (HRIE, 2008).

This initiative aims to support early childhood centres to develop a curriculum based on the principles of Te Whariki. Within the school sector the Human Rights in Education initiative can help schools to:

- Develop a school curriculum based on the principles of the New Zealand curriculum
- encourage, model and explore the agreed values
- reinforce pedagogy that promotes student learning
- develop the key competencies young New Zealanders need to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities
- meet key achievement objectives across the learning areas

- meet key requirements for boards of trustees, including the National Education Guidelines (NEGS) and National Administration Guidelines (NAGS).

This approach, which is based around 'rights, respect, and responsibilities', is not another programme to be fitted into an already crowded overall school programme. It is a general whole-school approach to teaching, school organisation and learning, that brings coherence to many things schools do already. It means learning a basic framework, but teachers have found that applying the framework improves the learning environment, reduces stress, and provides a toolkit that can readily be applied by students and teachers across the school.

Human rights-based education in this context can be defined as education that respects and helps realise the human rights of young people and others. It includes the provision of information and experiences aimed at building a universal culture of human rights. A comprehensive education in human rights not only provides knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms that protect them, but also imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life. Human rights education fosters the attitudes and behaviours needed to uphold human rights for all members of society. Therefore, rights-based education activities should convey fundamental human rights principles, such as equality and non-discrimination, while affirming their inter-dependence, indivisibility and universality (HRIE, 2008).

At the same time, activities should be practical, ie. relating human rights to learners' real-life experience and enabling them to build on human rights principles found in their own cultural context. Through such activities, learners are empowered to identify and address their human rights needs and to seek solutions consistent with human rights standards. Both what is taught and the way in which it is taught should reflect human rights values, encourage participation and foster a learning environment free from want and fear (HRIE, 2008).

Human rights-based education is aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum, however the initiative is still in its infancy in New Zealand. Other countries (eg. Canada and Great Britain) are further along the continuum and have extensively evaluated the effectiveness of this model. The Children's Rights Centre at the University of Cape

Breton, Nova Scotia, found that in comparison to students who did not receive a 'rights curriculum', those who participated in the Canadian initiative showed (1) higher self esteem; (2) were more accepting of ethnic minority children; (3) had a higher perception of teacher and peer support; (4) were more optimistic about their futures; and (5) improved behaviour and understanding of the importance of rights for all. Similarly, in those evaluations teachers reported better classroom behaviour and ethos. They reported a 'contagion' effect, where learning about one's own rights resulted in greater support for the rights of others, including teachers' right to teach. Furthermore, student support for the rights of others (including adults, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities) was significantly related to their teacher's support for children's rights. The more teachers used the rights curriculum the higher they rated it (HRC, 2007, pp. 27-28).

Adapted from the Canadian initiative, the *Rights, Respect and Responsibility (RRR)* programme in Hampshire, Britain, was based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Four key principles underpin this programme (1) the whole school is committed to embedding the values of the children's rights curriculum into the life of the school; (2) there is a shared knowledge and understanding of the children's rights curriculum among the whole school community and its relevance to the school ethos and curriculum; (3) the values of the children's rights curriculum are reflected in classroom practice; and (4) there are effective and inclusive arrangements for students' active participation in decision-making throughout the school. Evidence-based research about this programme found an improved sense of students' responsibility to others and themselves and development of rights respecting behaviour (HRC, 2007, p. 27).

The resource booklet for schools, to be published after this report, will outline the implementation of this initiative into a secondary girls' school. Director of Human Rights in Education, Ced Simpson, has developed a manual for schools (HRIE, 2008) and any school wishing to adopt this human rights-based approach to help bring coherence and focus to the implementation of the New Zealand curriculum can obtain further information from info@rightsined.org.nz or www.rightsined.org.nz. Furthermore, the Human Rights in Education Trust, established to facilitate the initiative, offers a range of support to education agencies (particularly schools and early childhood education

centres) in meeting New Zealand's commitment to the right to an education that respects and gives realisation to human rights.

Restorative approach and practices

Restorative practices (originating out of the criminal justice system) are a more recent alternative in New Zealand schools and offer a new way of promoting positive school behaviour (Hayden, 2001; Maxwell & Liu, 2007). Varnham (2004) suggested that the restorative approach shifts the emphasis from seeing antisocial behaviour as challenging the authority of the school to seeing it as damaging to relationships within the school. Being accountable to their victims and to others affected by their misdeeds puts the responsibility back on the student, not on an administrator of punishment and most importantly, it helps to teach students how to handle situations differently in the future (Rappoport, 2005).

Within an educational context, the restorative approach facilitates a whole school climate that can prevent, teach, and respond to behavioural issues and student needs (Maxwell, 2005). Restorative practices aim to change the whole school culture by building a school environment based on core restorative principles of inclusion, the repair of harm, and reintegration, reinforced by strong support networks (Buckley & Maxwell, 2007). More specifically restorative practices:

- Facilitate a safe environment for communication between those involved in a conflict
- reach agreement on how any wrongs committed might be put right in order to repair the damaged relationships
- reintegrate all those involved back into the school community without labelling them as victims and perpetrators (Buckley & Maxwell, 2007).

With extreme bullying, the most common response from schools is likely to be suspension or exclusion, but links have been made between forgiveness, reconciliation and reduced bullying (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006). On the surface, the two concepts (bullying and restorative justice) appear to be an oxymoron. Bullying is an abuse of power whereas restorative justice attempts to transform the power imbalances affecting social relationships (Morrison, 2006). Morrison (2006) suggests that repairing social bonds through effective shame management practices may be a central mediating

variable in understanding bullying and victimisation in schools. She describes how shame acknowledgement is adaptive to maintaining healthy relationships, while shame displacement is maladaptive to maintaining healthy relationships (p. 375). There are three steps to achieving adaptive shame management (1) acknowledging harmful behaviour towards others; (2) taking responsibility for the harm done; and (3) making amends for the harm caused. According to Morrison, it is possible to differentiate bullies, victims, bystanders, non-bully and non-victims on the basis of their shame management styles. This has implications for both the identification and intervention of bullying within a restorative framework.

Restorative justice conferencing and other practices (eg. circles) have been found to be effective interventions in school bullying, helping schools to find new ways of engaging students and creating learning environments in which students feel they can belong and achieve (Buckley & Maxwell, 2007; Morrison, 2006). The following strategies, described by Buckley (2007) are examples of restorative practices commonly used in schools.

The *restorative chat* involves a one-to-one private conversation between a student and teacher. The issue is teased out through a variety of questions that explore the event, its consequences and how the harm might be repaired. Typical questions might be: What happened? What were you thinking at the time? Who do you think has been affected? How could you have acted differently? What do you need to do to make things right?

The *restorative classroom* is a whole class discussion where specific conflicts are discussed as they arise. Potential conflict situations are also explored to ensure all class members know how to respond before they happen. Some guiding principles are developed (that can always be revisited) and displayed on the classroom wall.

The *restorative thinking* room is similar to a time out room where students involved in a conflict need time away from their peers in order to regain their composure. While in the restorative thinking room a staff member uses restorative questions to discuss the conflict and how to repair the harm.

The *restorative 'mini' conference* is held for more serious conflict situations, with the victim, perpetrator, staff member and perhaps one other person. Numbers are deliberately kept small to allow for the mini conference to be held as quickly as possible.

The *'full' restorative conference* is similar to a youth justice family group conference in that it takes time to organise to allow for a wide range of people to attend (e.g., victims, perpetrators, school staff, family, officials and other support people). For the more serious conflict issues, these conferences can take several hours.

The *restorative conference* in schools is used primarily for acute disciplinary problems. A trained facilitator arranges and runs the meeting, which is attended by everyone affected by the incident. Besides the "wrongdoer" and "wronged person", other people likely to be involved are family/whanau members, teachers, assistant/deputy principal, school counsellor, Kaumatua, friends, youth workers, coaches, and social workers (Winslade, 2001). The problem and relevant background is discussed, followed by a plan to repair harm and consider the student's future. Outcomes expected from a restorative conference include (1) an acknowledgement of any wrongdoing; (2) a proposal to repair any harm that was caused; (3) a plan for the educational future of the student; and (4) a plan for any other needed services or support for the student, their family, and others affected by the harm that was caused (Buckley & Maxwell, 2007). The process is not restorative if the victim feels the outcomes are irrelevant to him or her, or if the outcomes are aimed solely at hurting the perpetrator.

Restorative conferencing was first introduced into New Zealand schools in the late 1990s to coincide with the Ministry of Education's Suspension Reduction Initiative, now known as the Student Engagement Initiative, when Waikato University was contracted to employ restorative justice principles to develop a process for conferencing in schools. The School of Education's Restorative Practices Development Team initially introduced the process into five schools, with another 24 schools sending teachers for training in restorative practices (Drewery, 2007).

This Restorative Practices Lead Development Team has developed a resource (*Restorative Practices for Schools: A Resource*) that helps schools to develop and implement restorative practices into their environments (contact details:

www.waikato.ac.nz). Margaret Thorsborne, a private provider from Australia (www.thorborne.com.au) runs professional development workshops in New Zealand, however there is no ongoing support and monitoring eg. mentoring and peer tutoring) as part of the initial training package (Towl, 2007). Schools must take ownership of implementing the whole school approach themselves.

The studies by Buckley and Maxwell (2007) and Drewery (2007) highlight the need for a complete paradigm shift so that restorative practices are not implemented as a stand-alone process, but rather are embedded within a whole school management system. Herein lies the challenge for schools. To be sustainable all staff must undergo training in restorative practices – but this requires funding as well as whole school buy-in and school-based implementation (Buckley, 2007; Towl, 2007). In reality though (and notwithstanding the funding issues), any whole school approach takes time and effort to sustainably embed the approach into the school's ethos. It is also important that appropriate behaviours, school culture, and restorative processes are taught within the school curriculum, so that the principles of restorative justice have relevance and practical application in everyday classroom interactions (Winslade, 2001).

Drewery (2007) identifies the shift away from restorative practices as a correctional or disciplinary mechanism to be an encouraging development. Since its inception (in New Zealand) restorative practices have moved from involving mainly confrontational discipline, to "a focus on relational practices earlier in the chain of command, for example in the classroom, between students and teachers, between students in the playground, and in the dean's or principal's office" (p. 207).

When the concept of restorative practices was first introduced into some schools, evaluative studies, commissioned by the Ministry of Education (see Adair & Dixon, 2000; Hill & Hawk, 2000), were undertaken to examine the effectiveness of restorative practices within the school context. Findings from these studies indicate that adopting restorative approaches instead of the more usual punitive and exclusionary response to school discipline develops a more positive whole school culture. However, some years on, further research is needed.

That said, a number of New Zealand schools are considered to be implementing restorative practices because their practices are consistent with a set of values recognised as underpinning restorative justice theory and practice. Those schools aim to change the whole school culture – not simply aspects of that culture – by building such values into the school's foundational ideology as well as its daily practice creating a 'climate of care' (Buckley & Maxwell, 2007, p. 7). The practices of one such school will be highlighted in the resource book for schools.

Effective Behaviour Support Initiative (EBSI)

As described by Group Special Education's EBSI Facilitator, Juliet Lewis (2007), the Effective Behaviour Support Initiative (EBSI) is a research-validated systemic approach to encourage proactive social behaviour in students, and to prevent problem behaviours such as bullying. It is based on School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) which was developed and then assisted towards large-scale implementation by eight universities and four educational agencies working collaboratively. Thus EBSI is now firmly established (in some schools for up to 13 years) in more than 4000 schools across the USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Australia and New Zealand.

In New Zealand, EBSI is focused on the respectful and consistent teaching of behaviours as an essential part of the learning areas of the curriculum. These behaviours are defined by staff, students, parents/whanau, and the community working collaboratively. The subsequent building of teacher/student relationships, and the increased time spent on learning, result in an increase in academic achievement, social skills and values (Bohanon-Edmonson et al, 2005, Jackson, 2004). Longitudinal research shows that EBSI maximises academic opportunity, and that academic achievement increases as problem behaviour decreases (Todd, Horner, & Sugai, 1999; Sugai and Horner, 2001).

An essential element of EBSI is the use of data to guide decision-making, both for the development of school wide discipline action plans, and individual behaviour support plans for students with ongoing, severe, problem behaviour. A quantitative information system for recording behavioural events is central to the structure, thus enabling decisions to be based on actual data.

A key factor of EBSI is that it develops a positive school environment, in which the staff recognises, and consistently abides by, the same set of behavioural expectations as students. It is designed to improve the learning environment by teaching critical skills that help students to become competent, responsible, and caring. It educates all staff to understand the functions of behaviour, and to respond to problem behaviour in logical, proactive, and consistent ways without escalating the behaviour. The data system ensures that "at risk" students are identified early so that families, students and teachers can work together to problem solve and develop appropriate support plans.

EBSI is not a packaged curriculum, but an approach that defines core elements that can be achieved through a variety of strategies (Sugai & Horner, 2007). Each school develops its own EBSI plan, based on the resources, values and strengths relevant to that particular school, community and culture. There is particular emphasis, in New Zealand, on student involvement in decision-making, and staff commitment to ongoing professional development around behaviour strategies.

The EBSI approach develops the capacity of a school to develop a sustainable continuum of positive behavioural supports. EBSI not only increases time for teaching, but it also makes *measurable* differences to behaviour, thus providing an "alternative to the traditional approaches to managing the diverse range and intensity of problem behaviour that typically fail to deliver sustainable outcomes" (Bryer et al, 2004, p. 2), ie. interventions for individuals without school wide support. Further information about the Effective Behaviour Support Initiative can be obtained from juliet.lewis@minedu.govt.nz

Reality therapy - choice theory

The choice theory explanation of behaviour, developed by William Glasser, is that children (as indeed all people) choose to do what is most satisfying to them at the time (Glasser, 1998, p. 21). By choosing to act in a particular way it becomes an action, not a reaction. As the name implies, the key concept in choice theory is that human beings choose how to behave as they live their lives. Thus, choice theory is about payoff and what human beings need to be satisfied. Since students spend so much time in school, they must find a way to satisfy their needs both in and out of class (Glasser, 1998, pp. 10-11).

Choice theory explains that all behaviour is always the best attempt at the time to satisfy at least five powerful forces, which because they are built into a person's genetic structure are called basic needs. These needs range from the mostly psychological need to stay alive and reproduce to the four psychological needs: belonging (which includes love), power, freedom and fun (1998, p. 15). Glasser contends that students, whether at school or elsewhere, attempt to fill whatever need they detect is most unsatisfied at the time. For example, if they are hungry children will try to find food (or at least think about food much more than about what is being taught); if they are lonely they will look for friends rather than knowledge; if there is no fun they will attempt to play; if they attend a regimented and inflexible school that stifles individuality and imposes authoritative controls, students will seek opportunities for freedom; and if they are not experiencing success and power, they will refuse to cooperate and try to gain power in other ways.

Reality therapy (Glasser, 1990) which is based on Glasser's choice theory, is a unique counselling method that can help teachers to work more effectively with, in his words, "irresponsible" children in their classes who interfere with their own learning and that of their peers. Key principles of this therapy include teachers (1) becoming involved with the child; (2) rejecting the irresponsible behaviour; and (3) helping the child to face reality and learn better ways to behave. Based on the premise that the source of all human problems is unsatisfactory or non-existent connections, the goal of reality therapy is to help people reconnect.

Glasser outlines key criteria for a quality school and one of the case study schools puts his theory into practice every day. This school is recognised as being a safe and happy school, where students and teachers focus on quality learning instead of behaviour problems. Glasser's choice theory and reality therapy (1990, 1998, 2000) is credited with changing the school's culture to the point that the staff, students and board of trustees have all taken ownership of the change process that led to the development of its positive school culture and the common vision, beliefs and values that drive everything that happens in the school. This whole school approach is also credited with students feeling safe, happy and able to learn − a key factor being the belief that everyone is capable of learning how to form positive relationships with others, how to behave in positive ways, and how to solve problems without resorting to physical or verbal violence.

The school principal reported a shared understanding and a common language, with no differentiation in the ways that students and teachers relate to each other. Underpinning this philosophy is a commitment to ongoing professional development for staff, with every staff member trained in the approach. This principal has assisted other schools to create positive and supportive school cultures where everyone treats each other with respect and students want to change their behaviour.

A detailed overview of the case study school's journey will be described in the resource booklet being published for schools, but in the meantime interested readers can obtain further information on choice theory and reality therapy at http://www.wglasser.com/

Health Promoting Schools
In 1995 the Ministry of Health launched its *Healthy Schools Kura Waiora: Health Promoting Guidelines for Schools.* First established in Ottawa, Canada, countries all around the world have introduced this approach. According to the World Health Organisation, *Health Promoting Schools* "are schools which display, in everything they say and do, support and commitment to enhancing the emotional, social, physical and moral wellbeing of their school community" (as cited in Nelson Marlborough District Health Board, 2008). Recognising that schools are a significant setting for both health and education, *Health Promoting Schools* is a whole school, holistic approach that aims to contribute to positive learning outcomes and wellbeing for students. Based on the understanding that supportive school environments can reduce barriers to learning, this approach involves helping children and young people to develop the ability to make meaningful decisions and to take action to address challenges posed by lifestyle and societal conditions.

The conceptual framework integrates the teaching and learning curriculum, community partnerships and the school ethos and climate where it is comfortably aligned to the vision, principles, values and key competencies expressed in the New Zealand Curriculum and within the learning and teachings of Health and Physical Education (NMDHB, 2008). The *Health Promoting Schools* approach links well to students' mental health and wellbeing. These connections to mentally healthy schools are made explicit in the *Support Manual for Health Promoting Schools* (pp. 10-13). Of interest to this inquiry

is the emphasis on school ethos and climate, and its capacity to support schools in developing a school-wide behaviour plan to address bullying (Towl, 2007). To be a health promoting school involves a long-term commitment to establishing a positive school culture and should be considered as a foundation activity similar to a school's charter and strategic planning (Towl, 2007).

For further information schools can contact their local Public Health Service. The website is www.hps.org.nz). The *Support Manual for Health Promoting Schools (*ISBN 978-0-478-19204-9) is available on the Ministry of Health website.

Anti-bullying programmes

To date, the only programmes that have been effective in addressing the problems of bullying and aggression in schools are those that attempt to alter the school environment rather than focusing on the perpetrators and victims alone (Olweus, 2001). Programmes are primarily designed to reduce the risk of violence or bullying by educating students about violence or bullying and how it may be avoided and prevented. To be effective these programmes must be comprehensive, multi-faceted interventions that include long-term follow-ups. The Human Rights Commission (2004) has identified the need for existing programmes to be evaluated "in order to learn what factors prevent bullying, for whom, and in what circumstances" (p. 60).

The following programmes have been successfully trialed and evaluated in New Zealand schools over time. The Office of the Children's Commissioner does not endorse any of these programmes over another and the intention is simply to identify whole school programmes that are available to schools in New Zealand and that have been implemented by one or other of the case study schools.

Eliminating Violence - Managing Anger (EV-MA)
This programme (commonly called *Eliminating Violence*) is a whole school, systems based, prevention focused approach that aims to "promote the development of a pro-social ethos as an effective means of working towards eliminating violence and managing anger in schools" (SES). The Ministry of Education's website states that the main objectives of this Group Special Education (GSE) programme are to:

- Assist schools to develop an environment in which students, staff and parents feel safe
- provide school staff with a framework to assist in the development of an integrated and school wide approach to dealing with school bullying.

The programme is broad-based with no set content. Instead there is an ongoing process involving the whole school and external professionals who gather data about what is happening in the school and then facilitate the school's development of a response to the information (Gaffney et al., 2004). Examination of the school's culture promotes a cultural change in the way schools view violence and helps to identify and modify those values, systems, structures and practices that may be contributing to violence and bullying. Key characteristics of *EV-MA* include:

- Development of a pro-social ethos
- whole school involvement
- focus on school-wide systems and processes
- acceptance of a broad definition of violence and bullying
- a recognition by school staff that they may need to address issues of violence or anger in themselves or the school structures before they can address these issues in their students
- collection of school data to assist in the identification of areas for action, setting priorities, and monitoring progress
- commitment by participating schools to implementing the programme over a minimum period of 12 months
- adaptation to fit the needs of individual schools while retaining programme integrity
- a developmental approach for ongoing modification in response to new knowledge or experience.

Being more ambitious than most anti-bullying programmes brings an added complexity to the implementation of *Eliminating Violence*, particularly because of its reliance on outside facilitators from Group Special Education (Cleary, 2001). Research-based and evaluated (see Cleary, 2001; Moore, Adair, Lysaght, & Kruiswijk, 1997) *EV-MA* has

proven to be an effective anti-bullying programme (albeit an expensive one) and has now been conducted in a number of New Zealand schools, many of which were initially funded out of the Government's crime prevention budget. Further information can be found in the evaluation report (Moore et al., 1997).

Few schools are participating in the *Eliminating Violence* programme, the reasons perhaps being because it is so expensive, complex and time consuming to deliver; only available within certain areas of New Zealand; and not delivered to schools already in crisis. Although they have a slightly different focus, the easier delivery of programmes such as *Non Violent Crisis Intervention* has increased their popularity. Of interest to this inquiry is that a significant number of the case study schools had conducted *Eliminating Violence* with their students at some time.

Non Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI)

The Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) in the United States provides behaviour management, crisis prevention and intervention training and resources based on its founding philosophy of providing *care, welfare, safety, and security* for everyone involved in a 'crisis moment'. Thus the *Non Violent Crisis Intervention* programme is different to whole school programmes such as *Eliminating Violence* because its focus is on managing the violent behaviours of individual students. Run annually in New Zealand by American instructors, and tailored to the participants' organisation (eg. a school) this programme introduces teachers to whole-school approaches to violence and bullying (ERO, 2007) and specifically teaches de-escalation skills (Towl, 2007).

According to its website, the *Non Violent Crisis Intervention* programme has been operating since the 1970s and is known worldwide for its best practices in behaviour management and is recognised as the international standard for crisis prevention and intervention training. There are three training options available: (1) a one-day introductory seminar; (2) a two-day comprehensive workshop; and (3) an intensive four-day instructor certification programme. All groups attend the same session on the first day, but the workshop and certification programme participants continue with more in-depth training and practical techniques on the second day. The instructor certification participants receive two more days of training to develop their intervention skills and to learn how to conduct on-site training workshops as instructors.

The first day of *NVCI* training focuses on early intervention and nonphysical methods for preventing or managing disruptive behaviour. The second day reinforces the preventive techniques and teaches non-harmful physical crisis intervention methods that should be used as a last resort only when an individual becomes an immediate danger to his/herself or others. On days three and four of the programme, the instructor certification participants learn how to master the intervention techniques they have learned so they are able to teach the techniques to staff at their workplace. Participants are assessed for their understanding of programme content, physical techniques, and instructional methods.

Obviously there is a cost involved with this training, but according to Towl (2007) the programme meets the requirements for best-practice professional development delivery. Towl warns, however, that common to all programmes, *NVCI* is dependent on management support and the degree to which the methods taught are embedded in school practice.

For further information, visit CPI's website http://www.crisisprevention.com or email info@crisisprevention.com

Keeping Ourselves Safe (KOS)
Keeping Ourselves Safe is a child protection programme that includes five resource kits: *All about Me* (Early Childhood); *Knowing what to do* (School Years 0-3); *Getting Help* (School Years 4-6); *Standing up for Myself* (School Years 7-8), and *Building Resiliency* (School Years 11-13). Teaching materials include such resources as DVDs, music CDs, photopacks, story-books, and activity cards. Pamphlets for parents and caregivers are provided as part of community consultation. All materials were written by teachers, health educators, school counsellors and Police education officers, under the direction of the Police Youth Education Service curriculum officer.

The first KOS programme, for junior primary level, was developed jointly by the New Zealand Police and the then Department of Education (now called Ministry of Education) to be taught in schools as part of the health curriculum. Since then, the New Zealand Police Youth Education Service has taken responsibility for developing and updating all

the KOS programmes. Police education officers support schools as they implement the whole school approach, and the officers can teach up to three lessons in partnership with the teacher. However, the rest of the programme is taught by the classroom teacher and ownership of the programme is clearly with the school.

The aims of the programme are to:

- Teach children and young people a range of safe practices they can use when interacting with other people
- encourage children and young people who have been (or are being) abused, to seek help
- contribute to an overall community abuse prevention programme by making parents and teachers more aware of their responsibilities to keep children and young people safe (Sanders, 2006).

As described by Woolley and Gabriels (1999), the KOS programme educates children about sexual abuse by teaching them to use their feelings to help them differentiate between 'touching they like' and 'unwanted touching'. KOS stresses that the child should make the decision as to whether a touch is acceptable or not, the rationale being that children will be vulnerable to abuse if they have to rely on adults to instruct them as to what is appropriate and what is not. The programme also teaches children that some parts of their body are private to them and should not be touched by others, unless there is an acceptable reason such as needing medical attention. Teachers are encouraged to discuss a range of touch concepts rather than focus on hand touching only (Woolley & Gabriels, 1999).

Over the years a number of external evaluations for KOS have been undertaken (eg. Briggs, 1991, 2002; Briggs & Hawkins, 1994, 1996, 2001; ERO, 2004; Mahoney, 1998; Perniski, 1995; Van Kessel, 1990, Woodward, 1990). In their study of children's conceptualisation of safety concepts, Woolley and Gabriels (1999) recommended that the programme required further refinement of developmentally appropriate information with concrete instructions and role-plays to facilitate children's ability to conceptualise abuse and to reduce the incidence of common misconceptions made by children. KOS programmes have been consistently revised as a result of the evaluation findings, with

the early childhood programme being the most recent one to be evaluated. Sanders (2006) details the findings of those evaluations and the subsequent revisions and restructuring of the programmes.

Kia Kaha

Kia Kaha is a school-based programme about bullying and similar to the KOS programme, was also developed by the New Zealand Police. To promote a safe learning environment, the aim of this programme is for the whole school community to recognise that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and to work together to develop skills and strategies to stop bullying and replace it with acceptable behaviour (Sullivan, 1998). This programme helps schools to create bully-free environments where all members of the school community feel safe, respected and valued. *Kia Kaha* means to "stand strong" in Maori, thus the name symbolises the need for students and, indeed, the whole school community to stand strong to prevent bullying.

Aligned to the school curriculum, the *Kia Kaha* programme has set content that is delivered, although the school community is consulted before implementation. There are four classroom programmes: *Building a Safe, Happy Classroom* (Years 0-3); *A Bully-Free Zone* (years 4-6); *Safer Communities Together* (Years 7-8); and *Our Place* (Years 9-13).

Kia Kaha adopts a whole-school approach to improve the culture of schools and reduce bullying, with components for educating parents, teachers, students, and school administrators around bullying. The programme is comprehensive, yet flexible (Raskauskas, 2007) and there is no cost to New Zealand schools.

Similar to other programmes discussed in this report, *Kia Kaha* has also been extensively evaluated for its effectiveness and rewritten in light of the evaluations. Specifically written as an evaluation of the Police *Kia Kaha* programme, Sullivan (1998) also provided a review of the *Eliminating Violence* and *Cool Schools* programmes when evaluating the *Kia Kaha* programme. More recently Raskauskas (2007) completed an evaluation of the Years 5-8 *Kia Kaha* programme. Overall, her evaluation found the *Kia Kaha* programme to be meeting its objectives. Teachers, students, and Police education officers were positive about the programme and its effectiveness was measured by

lower levels of bullying and peer victimisation compared to schools that did not implement *Kia Kaha*. Further information can be obtained from: http://www.nobully.org.nz/kiakaha.htm

Cool Schools

Cool Schools is a peer mediation and professional development programme that was developed by Aotearoa/New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies (The Peace Foundation). The *Cool Schools* programme has been operating in New Zealand since 1991 and has been delivered to nearly two-thirds of schools nationwide (Peace Foundation, 2009). Many of these schools have been funded through the Ministries of Education and Health. Although initially implemented into primary and intermediate schools, programmes have since been developed for secondary schools, parents, and a fledgling *Cool Schools International* programme.

In order to create a better learning environment and provide essential life skills to students, *Cool Schools* aims to change the way conflict is handled by both students and teachers in a school. In this programme, students are trained as third party mediators to mediate conflicts between their peers. The Peace Foundation states that the progamme's objectives are to:

- Help individuals develop life long conflict management skills
- focus on building positive relationships with others
- create win/win situations for students, teachers, parents, caregivers and the wider community
- provide life skills for school, home and the workplace
- empower students to help other students
- be proactive, helping to prevent bullying and other levels of conflict
- provide a better learning environment
- encourage students to recognise the value of service leadership.

Cool Schools trainers train school staff who, in turn, train students to become peer mediators. The expectation is for the programme to be introduced throughout the entire school, and become sustainable. Although not an anti-bullying programme as such, the purpose of *Cool Schools* is to proactively teach communication, conflict resolution,

leadership and other life skills in order to reduce bullying and disruptive behaviour (Hay-Mackenzie & Watts, 2002).

Once selected and trained, the school mediators are rostered in pairs to assist children in the playground to find realistic solutions to their problems. These young mediators are specifically trained in non-judgmental listening and confidentiality, as well as in knowing when to seek adult intervention, ie. when there are issues of safety involved and the situation requires more than mediation (Hay-Mackenzie & Watts, 2002).

Information about this programme is available from the Ministry of Education's website (http://www.tki.org.nz/r/governance/positive_behaviours/information/programmes_e.php) and from the Peace Foundation (http://www.peace.net.nz/index.php?pageID=24).

Life Education

Having been around for the past two decades, most New Zealand school children would be familiar with the Life Education Trust's mobile classrooms and its mascot, Harold the giraffe (who is the symbol of the Life Education Trust). The trust's mission statement is to "help give the young people of New Zealand, through positive health-based education, the knowledge and skills to raise their awareness to live a fulfilling and healthy life". Life Education is a charitable trust that delivers a health programme to early childhood, primary and intermediate aged children. The programme can be easily integrated into the New Zealand Curriculum, but works best when combined with school-wide health initiatives. This health resource comprises 19 modules that align to the health and physical education curriculum and, in particular, *Strand A: Personal Health and Physical Development,* and *Strand C: Relationships with Other People.* Of interest to this inquiry is that the programme claims to help children to develop skills and strategies to cope with bullying, peer pressure, friendships, and relating to others. Invited into schools (annually or bi-annually), Life Education is delivered to class groups in a mobile classroom by a registered teacher who helps the school staff to integrate the programme into their classroom practice (Boyd, Fisher, & Brooking, 2008). A past trustee of Life Education, Diana Seabrook Robinson, has also written a children's book called *Harold,* which tells the story of a young boy called Jimmy. Victimised by bullying and teasing, Jimmy discovers a new way of seeing the world, when he enters the magical realm of Harold the giraffe.

Findings from recent evaluations such as the one conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (see Boyd et al., 2008) indicate that students, principals and teachers all value this programme. Further information can be obtained from the Life Education website www.lifeeducation.org.nz

Case study programmes

There is a vast range of programmes for schools to choose from but attempting to identify all of them was beyond the scope of this project. The programmes discussed so far have been available to schools for some time. New approaches to building positive and nurturing environments are also being encouraged. While many of the case study schools had incorporated those more familiar programmes into their repertoire of strategies for providing safe schools, they also implemented the following (and less well known) programmes, which are now showcased for this inquiry into school safety.

The Responsibility Model
The Responsibility Model (RM) was developed by Don Hellison with the explicit intention of using the contexts of physical education and sport to help students become more personally and socially responsible (Hellison, 2003a, 2003b; Hellison & Martinek, 2006). The Responsibility Model is also commonly referred to as Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR).

While initially developed to be taught within physical education classes, the RM has often been associated with programmes involving at-risk youth (Hellison, Martinek, & Cutforth, 1996) and more recently it has been implemented as a whole school programme involving other areas of the curriculum. This model has strong potential to be effective in tackling bullying and improving school cultures, the rationale being that helping young people fully develop their personal and social values and skills is equally as important as participation in violence prevention programmes.

Integral to the RM are five goals that are often described as levels of responsibility. The five goals/levels are identified as (1) respect; (2) participation and effort; (3) self-direction; (4) caring; and (5) transfer of learning to other areas of the students' lives. As a means towards the achievement of these goals, the RM has a five stage teaching

structure. The first stage, 'counselling time', involves teachers deliberately spending time with individuals within their classes in order to develop positive relationships. The second stage, an 'awareness talk', describes an activity at the start of each lesson whereby time is spent to re-focus the students on the goals of the RM. The third stage, 'activity time', relates to the physical activity part of the lesson, the time which addresses teaching and learning around the physical education curriculum. During this time it is important that the pedagogical approaches selected are also appropriate for achieving the goals of the RM. Towards the end of the lesson a group meeting occurs, a time when the students, as a group, have the opportunity to discuss events that have occurred in class. The final stage of the lesson, 'reflection time', is time given for individual students to reflect on their own behaviour in relation to the goals. Underpinning the programme are four themes: (1) the integration of the goals of the RM with teaching and learning around the physical education curriculum; (2) the transfer of learning about personal and social responsibility to contexts outside the classroom; (3) the empowerment of students; and (4) the development of positive teacher/student relationships.

Dr Barrie Gordon (2007) is the first researcher to extensively examine RM within the New Zealand context. The resource booklet for schools will further explain this model by detailing how a small team of New Zealand teachers, who have been trained in this model, are implementing RM within their schools.

The No Blame Approach

The *No Blame Approach* (Maines & Robinson, 1992; Robinson & Maines, 1997) has been found to be useful in dealing with group bullying and name-calling, when it is difficult to use more traditional remedies. Maines and Robinson's approach is based on the theory that as bullying is an interaction that establishes group identity, dominance and status at a victim's expense, it is only through the development of values such as empathy, consideration and unselfishness that the bully is likely to relinquish the behaviour and function differently in a social setting. Thus the approach works on the premise that to deal with bullying the social dynamic must be taken into account (Cleary, 2001). By involving peers, it is possible to enhance the empathetic responses of pro-social members of the group.

As described by school counsellors, Mike Williams and Richard Tucker, the intention of this programme is on restoring relationships rather than attributing blame and exacting retribution. Bullied students just want the bullying to stop and tend to be less worried about making sure the bullies are punished – so without blaming either party, both the bullies and the victim are included in the problem solving process alongside pro-social peers to help find a solution to the bullying.

The step-by-step technique allows early intervention because it does not require having to prove that anyone is at fault. Basically, it involves a group of students (that include bystanders as well as possible bullies) being made aware of the victim's distress and helping to suggest solutions. Influencing the feelings and status of the bully reduces further bullying because it arouses a sense of compassion or empathetic regard for the plight of the victim as well as the effects of bullying on him or her. A key factor in this approach is the assumption that bullying is a choice, thus bullies can equally choose supportive behaviours. By involving the peer group, colluders and bystanders, it is possible to enhance the empathetic responses of healthy, assertive (bully-proof) members of the group. This, in turn, has an effect on the behaviour of the instigator, who no longer has the group's consent to behave in a bullying manner (Maines & Robinson, 1992). The *No Blame Approach* shows how bullying depersonalises the victim and replaces this with a personalised expression of concern.

The seven-step process involves:

1. Interview the victim. After finding out about the bullying, the teacher starts by talking to the victim about his or her feelings. The teacher does not ask questions about the incidents, just who is involved.
2. Convene a meeting with the students involved. The teacher arranges to meet with the group of students involved and ensures a balanced group (6-8) is formed by including bystanders and others in collusion with the behaviour, ie. those who joined in but did not initiate any bullying.
3. Explain the problem. The teacher tells the group about how the victim is feeling, sometimes using a poem, piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise the victim's distress. The focus remains on the victim's feeling, not details of the incident or allocating blame.

4. Share responsibility. The teacher does not attribute blame but states that the group is responsible for taking action and can do something about it.

5. Ask the group for suggestions. Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way to help make the victim feel better. The teacher gives some positive responses but does not extract a promise of improved behaviour.

6. Leave it up to the group. The teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility for solving the problem to the group and arranges to meet with them again to check how things are going.

7. Meet with the group again. About one week later the teacher discusses with each student how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keep the group involved in the process. The victim must be supported throughout this time by meeting informally on a daily basis to check on progress.

Research shows that one of the main reasons that children do not disclose about being bullied is their fear of retribution from the bullies. An underlying assumption of the *No Blame Approach* is that reparation and restoration of the relationships can occur only when there is no threat of punishment or sanction. The desire to exact revenge is usually the product of being named and shamed especially where school authorities are informed and they adopt a punitive approach. Where it is used to protect students, the results may be short lived with no lasting change, because the underlying problem has not been resolved and retribution can also occur outside of school.

Students initially may be surprised that they are not going to be punished, which in turn leads to a more relaxed empathetic response and makes the problem solving approach more successful. Mark Cleary (2001) does advise, however, that it is important to separate stopping the bullying behaviour, where a *No Blame Approach* is used, from addressing specific incidents such as assaults that need to be dealt with formally in accordance with the law. Bullying is a behaviour, not a personality, so when using this approach labelling the participants should be avoided, because talk of a victim and bully will reinforce the power imbalance that is an essential part of the bullying relationship (Clearly, 2001). According to Cleary, it is also important not to 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 and being asked to adopt strategies that may not work will accentuate the helplessness.

The *No Blame Approach* has been used widely, particularly in European countries. There has been some debate around the name, with some critics labelling the approach as "No Responsibility". Consequently George Robinson and Barbara Maines have renamed their programme as "*The Support Group Approach*", although its former name is still the one used most commonly. The criticism is unfair because this programme is a responsibility method that deliberately aims to set aside any feelings of justice, morality or retribution towards the bully so that the responsibility falls on changing behaviour to achieve the best outcome for the victim (Maines & Robinson, 1994).

The merits of this programme are its links with the New Zealand Curriculum, there are no costs or real training involved and classroom teachers, RTLBs and school counsellors can easily and quickly respond to incidents of bullying by using this approach. While the *No Blame Approach* may seem too simple, evaluations show that this intervention does work.

The Undercover Approach

As previously stated, sometimes responding to bullying behaviour in schools through punitive methods can reproduce the same power relations that are inherent in bullying. In contrast, however, the *Undercover Approach* uses peer group relations strategically to interrupt bullying (Williams & Winslade, 2008). Informed by the *No Blame Approach*, Bill Hubbard (2004) from Rosehill College in Auckland, created this "undercover team" concept to tackle bullying. The *Undercover Approach* shares the same basic assumptions as *No Blame* but requires a philosophical commitment and not just an application of techniques. Drawing on narrative counselling theory and the restorative practices literature, undercover teams work as a counter-practice to bullying power by directly addressing the relational harm already experienced and implementing change in the immediate relational context where harm has occurred (Williams & Winslade, 2008).

Mike Williams, a New Zealand secondary school guidance counsellor, uses the *Undercover Approach* in his own practice and he has provided much of the following information regarding this anti-bullying programme. Williams is convinced about the

effectiveness of the *Undercover Approach* as a bullying intervention. He explains the steps of *the Undercover Approach* (as reported in Williams and Winslade, 2008) in the following way: First, the counsellor (or whoever is convening the team) meets with the victim of the bullying or relational aggression. After hearing the story of what happened and ascertaining that it is an example of a bullying relationship, the counsellor introduces the idea of addressing the problem through an undercover team. The counsellor should describe the undercover team as a covert operation in which some secrecy is needed for it to succeed. The sense of intrigue makes the setting up of the undercover team into a playful approach, which often adds to its appeal. Freeman, Epston and Lobovits (1997) write about the attractiveness for children and young people of "playful approaches to serious problems" (as cited in Williams & Winslade, 2008).

The person being bullied is invited to select six people to be members of their undercover team. Included among those six people, will be two of the worst perpetrators of the bullying from which the victim has suffered. The other members are made up of an equal number of boys and girls who have never bullied others and who have never, as far as the victim knows, been victims of bullying. These others should be respected classmates, especially those whom others might look up to. It is possible to check with a teacher if the victimised student cannot identify these team members.

The counsellor then meets with the team and tells them that a member of their class has been harassed and bullied. The counsellor reads them a shortened version of the bullying story prepared by the victim without identifying any names of those involved. The team members are invited to respond to this story. Then the counsellor invites them to be part of a special covert operation that nobody knows about, a specialist undercover team, and working in secret to support the victim of the bullying and help this person through a rough patch. They are not asked to be the person's friend, but to be at least friendly. It should be emphasised that this is a secret team and that nobody must know of its existence. The counsellor explains that upon the successful conclusion of the team, ie. when the bullying has stopped for a specified period of time, they will be awarded a food voucher (or other suitable reward) and will receive a principal's award. Implicit here is the expansion of the legitimacy of the operation in the school through the inclusion of the school principal (New Zealand Gazette, 2007).

Only after all of the students have agreed to be part of the team is the name of the victim revealed (even though some may have already guessed). The undercover team is then invited to develop a plan for how they will get the bullying to stop and create a different experience for the victim. The plan is to be carried out covertly so that it is not too obvious. After a few days, the counsellor meets with the victim and then with the team to review how the plan is working. Refinements to the plan are discussed and its effects are studied (Williams & Winslade, 2008, pp. 3-4). Teachers are consulted throughout this process and their comments are fed back into the monitoring meetings. Evaluation of this approach indicates that reports from team members as the process develops, show considerable cooperation among themselves in taking personal responsibility for the action steps on the plan. Teachers too have noted changes in the class relationships once the team begins its undercover operations.

The *Undercover Team* approach has considerable merit in reducing the extent of bullying and violence for students. Guidance counsellor Mike Williams attributes the success of this approach to the fact that bullies are provided with an opportunity to "try out" positive behaviours without being blamed and their power shifted so that they are given responsibility for a peer's wellbeing. The irony of this approach is that these undercover agents facilitate turning bullies into protectors of their victims. In the case study school, four years of student evaluations show that every student on a team has worked conclusively to reduce bullying in the school. Furthermore, the evaluations of past team members show that all those students who have been members of undercover teams were willing to be considered for another team, including those who were the bullies.

More often than not the existence of the team remains a secret, except to the teacher. The counsellor, of course, must maintain confidentiality, and most students seem committed to this as well, because they enjoy the playfulness of the undercover team. As explained by Williams and Winslade (2008) if the existence of the team is revealed after "it has done its work", then it does not matter if the secret cover is exposed.

The *Undercover Approach* provides benefits to victims, bullies and bystanders. Bullying is assumed to be relational and a product of the use and abuse of power. In this approach power is relocated to the victim because the victim decides when the bullying

has ceased. Membership in the undercover team provides opportunities for inclusion into a positive group, that were previously denied, and offers the victim a pro-social identity and gives value to their participation. Nothing is required of them to change. Feedback through the monitoring process provides opportunity to recognise positive actions from others and respond, and "restories" the victim's relationship with the rest of the class and teacher.

Perpetrators of bullying benefit by gaining a new pro-social 'identity'. They get support to develop that identity and also anonymity to gain confidence with that identity. 'Membership' is being offered rather than having to be struggled for and they are invited into a new relational position without being shamed or punished. The undercover team provides an alternative group to enjoy membership in. Support group meetings provide a means of developing a group 'identity' and an opportunity for developing 'norms'. Furthermore, disclosing the victim's information provides an opportunity for the bullying student to 're-categorise' the victim. Most importantly, bullies become accountable for their own behaviour and responsible personally to their team, to the victim, and the class for changing their behaviours.

Supporters enjoy the new goodwill that is spread throughout the class. Students benefit by the modelling of new relationships to the rest of the class by the assertive pro-social students who most obviously use and produce power. Sometimes the audience is expanded to include the teacher, the principal, and the victim in producing new relationships. Their goal is the disruption of an existing storyline without requiring any pathologising or loss of face by the perpetrators of the bullying. These students focus on supporting the bully and assisting him/her to contract a new relationship with the victim. By not shaming the bully, the membership of the team comprises those students who want to eliminate the bullying and assumes the bully as part of that team. Restoring positive relationships with the bully and other class members benefits the whole school community.

Another strength of this approach is its ability to break down cultural divisions by deliberately designing teams to include students from diverse backgrounds. This approach helps to promote cultural respect (Williams & Winslade, 2008).

The aim of the undercover teams is to directly address the relational harm that has been done and to instigate change in the immediate relational context in which the harm has occurred. In this way the process is consistent with the ideals of restorative justice, which is about the direct redress of relational harm done to relationships rather than circuiting redress through the intervention of the authorities.

This approach can also be viewed as an application of the narrative counselling technique. The "totalising of identities" (as bully, victim, or bystander) is avoided as those who occupy those positions are invited "to play significant roles in the production of an alternative story" – hence the relations implicit within the bullying practice are re-authored (Williams & Winslade, 2008, p. 11).

A relatively new programme, the *Undercover Approach* has not undergone a vast number of evaluations, although it has proven successful with the small number of schools that have adopted this approach. An added benefit is that no real costs are involved – other than the cost of photocopying forms, certificates – and in the case of Mike William's school, a tuck shop voucher for every team member at the successful conclusion of the undercover operation. This approach links strongly to all the key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum.

Virtues Project

Dixon (2005) describes virtues as being "the content of our character, the elements of the human spirit existing in potential within us all" (p. 5). Is there a difference between values and virtues programmes? Both are character development programmes, but *values* education is associated with cultural, moral, or religious based programmes, whereas *virtues* is a universal programme that is based on people's innate virtues (Dixon, 2005). Popov (2000) argues that virtues education is the more appropriate term to use because although values include things people value and care about, they are not necessarily "good" things and are usually culture and class specific, ie. what some families or countries value, others do not. In comparison, virtues are innate good qualities of the human person. Virtues are much more elemental than values. While values are culture-specific, virtues are universally valued by all cultures (Popov, 2000, p. xix, as cited in de Souza, 2004).

New Zealand is a multicultural country, but in line with the previous discussion, Popov's *Virtues Project* is:

> Not about the practice or beliefs of any particular religion but is based on the world's diverse cultures and religions about living by the best within us – courage, honour, justice, kindness and all of our innate virtues. These virtues are the silver thread that runs through all the sacred texts of the world binding humanity together (Dixon, 2005, p. 5).

That said, some schools in New Zealand and, in particular, schools of special character (eg. catholic schools), might incorporate their Christian values into the school's curriculum and/or alongside a virtues programme. In her examination of schools implementing a values based education curriculum, Thomson (2006) found that schools either had a long history of Christian values derived from a church foundation or the current programme was introduced into the school because a staff member rated the idea of a whole school values system. All of the values systems observed by Thomson had their beginnings in a known and established character, values, or virtues programme. However, every school had adapted the established programme to meet the needs of its own students (p. 53). This was also apparent in the visits to schools conducted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner, and those adaptations contributed to the special character of each school.

The *Living Values* programme emerged from the Independent schools in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Fletcher Challenge Trust. There are three key components: (1) a set of core organisational values understood by all at the school; (2) harmony between stated values and action; and (3) specific values education programmes (Snook, 2005). The Ministry of Education (2009) considers that *The Living Values Project* provides schools with tools to develop values education so that the second part of NEG 1 is consciously and deliberately defined and taught to ensure happy and successful learning environments for their students. However, the *Virtues Project* will now be highlighted because it was the programme attributed to making the difference to the culture and ethos of the schools in this inquiry.

Motivated by the desire to reduce bullying, the vision of the *Virtues Project* is to support the moral and spiritual development of people from all cultures, by helping them to live by their highest values. The mission statement is "to provide empowering strategies that inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life through programs of excellence and simplicity which support people of all ages to cultivate their virtues – the gifts of character". Developed in America (Popov, Popov, & Kavelin, 1995) the *Virtues Project* has been adopted worldwide, including in New Zealand. The *Virtues Project* is based around five key strategies (1) speaking the language of the virtues; (2) recognising teachable moments; (3) setting clear boundaries; (4) honouring the spirit; and (5) offering spiritual companioning. This fifth strategy of spiritual companioning, was specifically developed for parents, school counsellors and teachers of older children and therefore is not always implemented into primary schools (Patton, 2007). A variety of programmes "to bring the virtues to life" are available (see the *Virtues Project* website). These programmes focus on the five strategies of the *Virtues Project* in personal, professional and community development. Examples are: Personal Growth and Healing Retreats, Parenting Life-skills Courses, Character Education Initiatives, Positive Cultural Change, Violence Prevention and Intervention, Transformation of Bully Behaviour, Community Building, Leadership Development, and Facilitator Training. Training and materials for both professionals and parents are available from qualified New Zealand facilitators, and manuals for parents and families (Popov, Popov, & Kavelin, 1995, 1997) and a school manual for educators (Popov, 2000) are also readily available in New Zealand.

Within the education context, education is considered to be the key to transformation, but it must "involve education, which touches the human spirit" (see *Virtues Project* New Zealand website). According to Popov (2000) the *Virtues Project* helps to shape character by creating a positive, empowering culture or environment in which children are learning and growing. In this programme, teaching virtues can be integrated into the curriculum, discipline system and social atmosphere of any school. From a theoretical perspective, the *Virtues Project* attempts to train underlying capacities of mind within a social context and through social interactions. Terminology is key to a successful programme and the words must be clear, consistently applied, regularly used and well understood across the whole school community (Thomson, 2006). Using target words (in this case virtue words) has been shown to increase children's cognitive and emotional

development (Patton, 2007). Thus virtue words relevant to bullying such as self-discipline, assertiveness, justice, responsibility, etc, may help in the prevention of bullying by raising students' awareness and understanding. The successful schools had well-developed language systems for their virtues/values, with some using a variety of unique "values languages" specific to their school community (Thomson, 2006). The schools in Thomson's study all reported that their anti-bullying and reporting procedures and language had benefited from being aligned to the virtues programme.

The number of endorsements provided by principals, Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs), and parents attest to the wide acceptance of this programme and the numbers of schools who have adopted a virtues approach. Typically schools take one value per week and incorporate it into the daily life of the school (Snook, 2005). The case study school for this school safety inquiry does one virtue per term (or two if they are similar). That virtue is tied to everything the school does throughout that term. With each virtue teachers probe the same key questions. Take the virtue of, for example, 'friendliness'. Popov's Educators' Guide asks the following four questions: (1) What is friendliness? (2) Why practise friendliness? (3) How do you practise friendliness? (4) What would friendship look like if…? Students would then know the signs of success, eg. "Congratulations! You practise friendliness when you…" Finally, they make an affirmation statement, eg. "I practise friendliness when ...I am a faithful friend".

Patton's (2006) evaluative study determined that the *Virtues Project* has affordable resources and trainers within New Zealand, fits with the New Zealand Curriculum, is accessible to schools and parents, and is held in high regard by schools and parents. Of interest to this inquiry is that within an educational setting, Patton's study also found the *Virtues Project* caused a reduction in children's problem behaviour. Further information about this programme can be obtained from: http://www.virtuesproject.com/index.php and the *Virtues Project* New Zealand, which is a registered non-profit charitable trust to promote the *Virtues Project* (www.virtuesproject.org.nz).

Kiwi Can

Kiwi Can is a whole school life skills and values based programme, administered by the Foundation for Youth Development. Also described as a motivational and relationship-focused programme, the Ministry of Education's *Supporting Positive Behaviours* website

states that the *Kiwi Can* programme aims to improve children's life skills by developing an "I can" attitude. By positively affirming the "I can" message this programme teaches students that a better future for New Zealand begins with the attitudes and aspirations of the individual.

The philosophy of *Kiwi Can* is: praise, challenge, excel, encourage, achieve. The programme builds children's self-esteem by helping them to (1) gain a sense of self-worth and self-confidence; (2) respect themselves and others; and (3) be better prepared to handle life's challenges and opportunities by adopting a "can do" attitude. Valuable life skills are taught, including the ability to take responsibility and to be accountable for their actions. While not an anti-bullying programme as such, underpinning this programme is the belief that by supporting the individual, building self-esteem, and strengthening basic values, a real change can be made to avoid the downward spiral of educational failure, antisocial behaviour and crime. According to *Kiwi Can's* national manager, Marie-Jo Wilson, this broad-based programme goes further than simply providing anti-bullying strategies in its attempt to bring about change at both an individual level (getting children to think about their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions) as well as at a wider whole school level (by working with the principal and teaching staff to make the whole school culture and ethos more positive and supportive).

In Kiwi Can's 2008 report to the Ministry of Education (*Summary and Analysis Report of Benchmarking Data for Kiwi Can in 2008*) the main reasons for their school's participation was reported by principals as being (1) to improve positive behaviours or reduce negative ones; and (2) to reinforce the school's culture, values, rules or ethos.

Interactive, fun, and high energy lessons with constant praise and encouragement are delivered in primary and intermediate schools (years 1-8) by *Kiwi Can* leaders (one male and one female) who are employed and trained by the Kiwi Can Trust. *Kiwi Can* leaders interact with students at lunchtime and intervals, organise and accompany students on outings and sometimes attend school camps (MoE, 2009). These leaders are not qualified teachers – but they are young, positive and accessible role models, who are able to connect with children in a way that their classroom teachers are not able to do. The leaders use games, songs, drama, and physical challenges to teach core values,

such as respect, honesty, integrity and life skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving. They also run school and community projects to encourage the students to have pride in themselves, their environment and their community.

The *Kiwi Can* programme specifically caters for students in low decile schools (decile 1-3) and operates across New Zealand (from Kaeo in the North to Stewart Island in the south). Each class in the school attends a weekly *Kiwi Can* lesson accompanied by the class teacher. The lessons are based on themes decided by the schools but they are encouraged to select modules from one overall theme each term to give overall cohesion to the term's learning. The themes for 2008 comprised:

- Respect
- relationships
- integrity
- resilience
- environment and community
- health.

Three to five lessons are spent on each module. Some modules (eg. bullying) can go across a number of themes. These themes also provide students from each *Kiwi Can* school with opportunities to contribute to their community in some way, thereby helping them to gain a connectedness and engagement with their communities. The resource book for schools will explore the case study school's programme content and implementation in some detail. Worth noting in this report, however, is that the *Kiwi Can* programme in that school coupled easily with the *Virtues* programme and the two programmes were integrated to provide students with consistent and clear messages as to the behaviour expected of them.

External evaluations conducted by Massey University, Waikato University and the Ministry of Education attest to this programme's success in developing children's life skills, values, shifts in behaviour and attitudes. *Kiwi Can* has also been shown to be effective in crime prevention. The programme does not track and evaluate bullying behaviours specifically as part of the measures for existing *Kiwi Can* schools, however an evaluation tool is being piloted with the new schools and will be available once all the

data is gathered. The intention is that every school involved in *Kiwi Can* will also conduct pre and post evaluations to determine the incidence of bullying incidents before and after the programme's introduction.

Information about this programme was informed by (1) the *Kiwi Can* website (http://www.fyd.org.nz/kiwican); and (2) from documentation provided by the *Kiwi Can* national manager and *Kiwi Can* leaders at the case study school.

Roots of Empathy (ROE)
Roots of Empathy – Puna Atawhai is the New Zealand version of the Canadian programme founded by Mary Gordon and introduced into New Zealand by the Peace Foundation. Roots of Empathy (ROE) is an evidence-based classroom programme that has been shown to reduce levels of aggression among students while at the same time raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy.

At the centre of the programme is a baby and parent from the school community who visit the classroom every three weeks throughout the school year, along with a trained ROE instructor who teaches the students to observe the baby's development, celebrate milestones, interact with the baby and label its feelings. Using a specialised lesson plan for each visit, the ROE instructor also visits the class before and after each family visit to prepare and reinforce teachings,.

In these experiential learning lessons, the baby becomes the "teacher" (often wearing a t-shirt with the word "Teacher" printed across the front boldly) and the parent/baby relationship becomes the "lever" – which the instructor uses to help children identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others. The emotional literacy that is taught within the ROE programme lays the foundation for safer and more caring classrooms so that children become the "changers". Research has shown that children will then become more empathetic and therefore, less likely to physically, psychologically and emotionally hurt each other through bullying and other aggressive behaviours. In addition, children are actively taught to challenge cruelty and injustice. Messages of social inclusion and consensus building activities also help to change the classroom climate by creating a caring culture and ethos. Proponents of *Roots of Empathy* consider

that this programme educates both the mind and the heart – with the cognitive aspect of empathy being perspective taking and the affective aspect being emotion.

The goals of the ROE programme are:

- To foster the development of empathy
- develop emotional literacy
- reduce levels of bullying, aggression and violence and promote children's pro-social behaviours
- increase knowledge of human development, learning and infant safety
- prepare students for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting.

The ROE curriculum is divided into nine themes related to infant development, with three classroom visits supporting each theme (a pre-family visit, family visit and post-family visit) for a total of 27 visits. Many of the activities are integrated into the curriculum, eg. students use their mathematical skills to measure and weigh their baby and chart the development; they write poems and music for the baby; as well as reading and writing stories about emotions.

Roots of Empathy aims to break the intergenerational cycle of violence and poor parenting, with the long-term objective of building this next generation's capacity for caring and compassionate citizenship and responsive parenting (eg. by observing the baby's interactions and attachment to the parents). The short-term focus is on raising levels of empathy, resulting in more respectful and caring relationships and reduced levels of bullying and aggression. Anti-bullying is listed as one of the values of the ROE programme because students are taught to understand how others feel (empathy) and to take responsibility for their own actions and inactions so that "social responsibility rises and incidents of bullying fall" (p. 1). Its success has been attributed to the universal nature of the programme where all children are positively engaged rather than simply targeting bullies and aggressive children, as well as the universality of the parent-child relationship and irresistibility of the 'teacher', the baby.

It is easy to measure the knowledge that is disseminated to students about, for example, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Shaken Baby Syndrome, Foetal Alcohol

Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and second-hand smoke, but not so easy to measure the affective learning involved. However, a number of evaluative studies support the programme's ability to reduce the levels of bullying. There is evidence (eg. Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Kendall et al., 2005; Rolheiser & Wallace, 2005; Schonert-Reichl, Smith, & Zaidman-Zait, 2003; Schonert-Reichl, Smith, Zaidman-Zait & Hertzman, 2003) to indicate that ROE provides social and emotional training, which results in greater emotional understanding, an increase in pro-social behaviour, and a decrease in the incidence of bullying and aggression. Furthermore preliminary results from a longitudinal study suggest that these positive effects endure over time (Scott, 2008). Since 2000, seven independent evaluations on the effectiveness of ROE, as well as two programme reviews have been conducted with consistently positive results. A number of ROE evaluations have been conducted in regions across Canada (eg. British Columbia, Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario), as well as in the United States and Australia.

In New Zealand, a three-year trial began in 2007 with ROE being introduced into Year 5 classes in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch respectively. To assess the impact of this programme on New Zealand students, the first 10 Auckland schools to participate in the trial have been independently evaluated during 2007 and 2008 and the results of this first New Zealand evaluation are due in 2009.

NB: The information about *Roots of Empathy* has been drawn from documentation supplied by the New Zealand Peace Foundation, the ROE liaison person, and two case study schools. The resource booklet for schools will describe the programme content and implementation in more detail and further information can also be obtained from rootsofempathy@peacefoundation.org.nz; www.peace.net.nz; and www.rootsofempathy.org

Rock and Water

By facilitating the physical and social development of students, the *Rock and Water* programme offers another way for teachers to address issues of school violence and bullying in their schools. The *Rock and Water* programme aims to support children and young people in key aspects of their development. The specific goals of *Rock and Water* are to:

- Assist young people to be conscious of their own power and responsibility for their development towards adulthood and within society
- develop students' self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-respect, boundary awareness, self-awareness and intuition to facilitate self-realisation
- ensure self-realisation develops alongside morality by teaching respect for people with different lives and opinions through discussions about standards and values
- teach young people (particularly boys) how to deal with energy, strength and powerlessness, so they know how to defend themselves from violence but can also gain awareness of boundaries and crossing them.

Developed in The Netherlands by Freerk Ykema, (a former physical education teacher, remedial teacher, and school counsellor), the *Rock and Water* programme was initially designed to support boys, aged 10 to 15 years, in their growth to manhood. Ykema aimed to cater for boys' learning needs by first introducing skills through physical exercises, after which a transfer is made to social and mental skills, with the premise being that starting from a strong physical base, leads along a path to self-awareness and the insight that people are mutually connected in various ways. Thus, by raising awareness of the sense of purpose and motivation in their lives, *Rock and Water* progresses through simple self-defence, boundary and communication exercises to the development of a strong concept of self-confidence. This process of growth to adulthood is facilitated through the specific teaching of (1) self defence; (2) standing up for one's self; (3) awareness of personal responsibilities, qualities, and responsibilities; (4) the inner compass (directing personal development and forces within); and (5) the inner undercurrent (awareness of connectedness and solidarity).

This youth development programme centres on themes of safety and integrity and a significant component is related to issues around bully/victim behaviours. There are four key themes:

1. Grounding, centring and focusing
2. The golden triangle of body-awareness, emotional awareness and self-awareness
3. Communication
4. The rock and water concept.

Becoming grounded, centred and focused involves learning how to stand firm and relaxed and how to concentrate breath into the belly and focus attention. This is the first external goal, and is later transformed to an internal goal. Because emotions are expressed in the body via muscular tension, increasing body awareness can help young people to gain more insight and experience of their own patterns of reaction, which in turn, can provide opportunities to deepen and further develop emotional and self-awareness. In particular the students learn self-control and focus. Developing physical forms of communication provides a base for developing more verbal forms of communication. The fourth inter-related thread relates to teaching the rock and water concept, that is, the tough, immoveable rock attitude versus the mobile, communicative water attitude. These rock and water principles form the most important frame of reference for the programme, with *rock* symbolising a rigid and uncompromising approach to life and *water* being the symbol of flexibility, cooperation and communication. Application of this concept is learned on three levels. At a physical level this concept means that an attack can be parried by firmly strained muscles (rock) but also, and often more effectively, by moving along with the energy of the attacker (water). At a social level (eg. in a conversation or maintaining relationships with others) people can choose whether they take a rock or water attitude. Finally, on a mental or spiritual level, the apparent opposites between rock and water disappear. In practice this means that insight and experience happen with the realisation that both ways are needed to reach self-fulfilment and that people, in their deepest essence, are connected to each other.

Ykema uses a house analogy to explain the structure and goals of his *Rock and Water* programme – he calls it the 'Rock and Water mansion'. The house is founded on three foundation stones: self-control, self-reflection and self-confidence. In this mansion there are five levels/floors (1) safety; (2) assertiveness; (3) communication and social skills; (4) the inner compass; and (5) solidarity and spirituality.

Ykema's (2002) book outlining the theory behind *Rock and Water* describes the rock and water perspective and includes a chapter on teasing and bullying and explains where and how the topic is included in the programme. For example, students must be able to feel they are in a safe, non-threatening learning environment before they can develop (1) empathy; (2) self-respect and respect for others; and (3) self-confidence and trust in

others. To be able to resist teasing and bullying it is important to feel self-confident and assertive so these skills, along with safety, are covered on the first two floors of the Rock and Water mansion. The third floor has learning and training social skills as its central theme.

Linking physical exercises with mental and social skills training, the *Rock and Water* programme fits comfortably within the New Zealand Curriculum. Topics covered in this manual-based programme include: intuition, body language, mental strength, empathetic feeling, positive feeling, positive thinking and positive visualising, with discussions around bullying, sexual harassment, homophobia, life goals, desires and following an inner compass. The basic programme (safety, assertiveness, communication and social skills) is suitable for children aged from nine years but the second part (the inner compass and solidarity) is only suitable for young people aged 14 years and over.

As previously stated, the programme was originally designed for boys. However, evaluations demonstrate that girls also benefit from *Rock and Water*. While a number of co-educational schools run the classes together, running gender-specific groups is recommended, because of differences in the ways that boys and girls interact and communicate their needs and emotions – which is also supported in the research literature around gender-related bullying.

The *Rock and Water* programme has been operating in Australia since 1999, with more than 10,000 teachers becoming accredited in its application. In October 2006, a conference was held in Newcastle, NSW, where practitioners presented 22 small-scale evaluations of *Rock and Water* in practice in various settings, which were then published for wider dissemination (Ykema, Hartman, & Imms, 2006). Pre-and-post programme data on a *Rock and Water* programme, implemented in one Australian primary school, to develop anti-bullying strategies as part of a focus on boys' education, found that every boy increased in his *confidence* in four areas (1) to stand up to bullies; (2) in resolving or preventing a fight; (3) within himself; and (4) at school (Hirsch, 2006).

Other studies (eg. Gray, 2006; McCluskey, 2006) evaluated the extent to which incidents of bullying had decreased, both in the classroom and the playground. One study provided a preliminary evaluation of an intervention based on the *Rock and Water*

programme for young adolescents with severe behaviour difficulties. Although limited by the small sample size, findings from this study provided encouraging results for conducting this type of intervention in a school setting (Lee, 2006). *Rock and Water* was also trialed in an Australian residential care setting and systematically evaluated for its effectiveness. The results suggest that the programme helps young people to develop self-management and personal self-control skills. One of the key outcomes for these participants was that the programme helped them to deal with bullies (Raymond, 2005).

To teach, *Rock and Water* educators must first undergo specific professional development of which participants have a choice of seminar options (three-day seminars, whole-school workshops and advanced training). In New Zealand the *Rock and Water* programme is in its infancy. The case study for this programme shows the progressions that can be made; for example, secondary schools can start small by introducing the programme to one Year 9 form class, then all the Year 9 students through one curriculum area so that its influence continues through those students' years at school and is embedded into the school's ethos. Further information about this programme can be obtained from the official websites: www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac; and www.rockandwaterprogram.com; or from the New Zealand liaison person, Robin Schofield, email sd@naenae-college.school.nz.

Other recent initiatives

In 2008, the then Minister of Education Chris Carter, introduced three new bullying initiaitives:

1. Resource cards were designed by and for primary and secondary students. Called '*Step Up, Be Safe'*, these resource cards were distributed by the Ministry of Education to all schools for every student from Year 3 onwards.
2. Web-based resources for teachers have been included on the Ministry of Education's *Supporting Positive Behaviours* website. The website provides a baseline for teachers wanting guidance on how to provide positive behavioural support in their classrooms and schools. These resources are available from www.tki.org.nz/r/governance/positive_behaviours/index_e.php. Advice for parents and families is posted on the Ministry of Education's TeamUp website

(www.teamup.govt.nz). In addition the Government funds Netsafe, an organisation that provides resources and advice in relation to technological bullying.

3. As part of their formal review process, the Education Review Office must now examine each school's anti-bullying procedures and ask for details about any incidents of bullying.

Recently the Ministry of Education released its action plan *Setting Boundaries* that focuses on addressing disruptive behaviour. Other stakeholders have also contributed publications on this topic. NZEI tabled a report on disruptive student behaviour at its 2007 Annual Meeting and followed up in 2008 with its *Disruptive Student Behaviour Guidelines* (in poster format for staffroom walls). PPTA published a *School Anti-Violence Toolkit* in August 2007 and the next month its commissioned review of the literature on *Best Practice Behaviour Management* (Towl, 2007) was released. The Education Review Office (2007) published a report on *Safe Schools: Strategies to prevent bullying.*

Summary of anti-bullying approaches and programmes

Similar to ERO's (2007) study, this inquiry by the Office of the Children's Commissioner found that the case study schools offered a range of programmes, taking more of a "tools in the toolkit" approach. Some of the programmes highlighted had a specific focus on bullying – but other whole school approaches incorporated a wider focus on student safety and wellbeing and, in some cases, a specific focus on health and social wellbeing.

Some programmes were perhaps more prohibitive in terms of costs and a greater number of evaluative studies had been conducted on programmes that had been on the market for any length of time. In Patton's opinion, if an intervention that (a) already has affordable resources and trainers available in New Zealand, (b) is in agreement with the current curriculum development goals, (c) can be readily accessed by schools and parents, (d) appears to be acceptable to schools and parents, and (e) reduces problem behaviour, it would be preferable over even well established interventions based in other countries, usually requiring university trained implementers, that would be more expensive and less accessible to New Zealand schools (Patton, 2007, p. 16).

Implementation of programmes

To maximise success schools, before implementation and no matter which programme is introduced, must first have effective policies and procedures in place. This will ensure that schools (ie. principals, teachers, and boards of trustees) know how to respond appropriately, depending on the type of violence or abuse that occurs. The school community should be involved and prevention made a publicly announced priority. After assessing the school's safety (possibly via ERO's school self-review questions) a committee could be established to lead the school through its development of a whole school approach to bullying and violence. Resources such as PPTA's *School Anti-Violence Toolkit* may be helpful in this regard.

Some educational programmes for children target the prevention of violence. The aims of such programmes are to teach young people about the risks of using violence. Although they encourage alternative strategies for resolving conflict and discourage drug and alcohol abuse that can lead to violence, these programmes show minimal effectiveness (Herzberger, 1996; Reiss & Roth, 1993).

Programmes aimed at empowering potential victims usually teach the child about good and bad touching, and their right to control what happens to their body, as well as the importance of disclosing to a trusted person who can help. The literature suggests that there is not enough evidence to guarantee the effectiveness of these programmes. It is not known to what extent children in these programmes apply their new knowledge in their own lives. There is also little evidence that children who do or do not participate have been better able to prevent sexual abuse happening to them. There is an added risk that these programmes may increase children's fear of innocent adults and there is evidence that teachers worry about this possibility (Herzberger, 1996). Wolley and Gabriels (1999) examined children's perceptions and interpretations of safety concepts presented to them through New Zealand's Keeping Ourselves Safe (KOS) programme. Their findings support this risk to some extent.

Students exposed to child abuse, violence and bullying require intervention programmes that will enhance their social and emotional development and their social competence with peers. Some will need support to develop their social sensitivity and others will need

support to manage their anger and to regulate their own behaviour (Herzberger, 1996). Schools could lead the way in providing the safety and the effective educational programmes by which children can learn to reduce and prevent violence (Slaby, Barham, Eron, & Wilcox, 1994).

A successful school-based programme to reduce bullying in Norway (Olweus, 1992) encouraged students, teachers and parents to share responsibility for changing the school culture. The programme included a strong message to children and their parents that bullying would not be tolerated and there would be quick intervention when incidents occurred. Seminal studies by Olweus (1991, 1992) have clearly proven that it is possible to substantially reduce bullying problems in schools with a suitable intervention programme. Effective programmes have common attributes: they are introduced systematically throughout the whole school; include good data-gathering systems; facilitate effective problem-solving; allow the school staff to take ownership for meeting the needs of its school community; and are sustainable over a long period of time. But while such programmes have proven to be successful, Herzberger warns that isolated prevention efforts will not reduce the incidence of violence. For the same reason that violence is not caused by a single factor, prevention and intervention must involve a "coordinated system of services, directed at individual, familial, and societal levels" (1996, p. 214).

Chapter seven: Discussion and conclusions

The cause of school violence has been attributed to a variety of reasons, the main ones being individual behavioural characteristics of certain students and how that antisocial behaviour plays out in school, as well as how the school environments themselves contribute to violent and bullying type behaviour. More often school violence is a combination of all three. Indications are that New Zealanders have a high tolerance for violence and while schools cannot be responsible for the ills of society, schools can make a difference in how violence is dealt with. Preventive approaches will help reduce school bullying and violence, but it will still happen despite schools' best efforts – and teachers need to know how to deal with it when it does occur.

This inquiry has not been extensive enough to conclude that bullying is a systemic problem entrenched in the New Zealand school system. However by its very nature, bullying is "a systemic, ongoing set of behaviour instigated by an individual or a group of individuals who are attempting to gain power, prestige, or goods" (Espelage & Swearer, 2003, p. 368). Many schools operate effectively and appropriately and have clear policies to ensure bullying is addressed. Some of the most recent literature supports the view that school is increasingly becoming a safer place for most New Zealand students. For example, *Youth '07 The Health and Wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand* found that 84 percent of students feel safe for all or most of the time at school. Furthermore, the school climate has improved between 2001 and 2007, with more students reporting feeling connected and safe at school in 2007 compared to 2001. This does not negate the fact that six percent of students reported being bullied weekly or more often and "a small but significant number of students (10 percent) report being afraid several times during the past school year that someone at school would hurt or bother them" (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2008, p. 17).

Recently researched statistics from the *What's Up* telephone counselling service for children and young people aged five to 18 years reveal that although the proportion of calls about bullying did not change between 2007 and 2008, the actual severity of the bullying reported decreased. In fact, the proportion of frequent incidents or continual harassment dropped significantly, from 43 percent in 2007 to 27 percent in 2008 (Barnardos, 2009, p. 7). While the data show an increasing, long-term trend over time,

the increase may have levelled off because there has been a stabilisation of the total proportion of bullying-related calls between 2007 and 2008 and a definite drop in the severity of those calls. Findings from both *Youth '07* and the *What's Up Statistical Summary 2008* are encouraging, given the importance of healthy and positive school environments for students' wellbeing and achievement.

Bullying behaviour is complex. First, someone has to feel victimised. Bullying can only happen if the recipient feels bullied. When should aggressive acts at school be called bullying and when should they be called violence? Inconsistency in the ways that schools defined violence and bullying is a key finding of this project. That schools *defined* these terms differently and in some cases *responded* completely differently to the various incidents they experienced is not really surprising because there are also definitional issues in the research literature related to the concept of violence.

Not every act of aggression or violence is bullying. It should only be described as bullying if there is ongoing victimisation. It is important that schools ascertain the nature of the aggression, and in particular whether the victim has experienced persistent and ongoing acts of aggression. Furthermore gang rivalry erupting in the playground is another form of violence altogether and should not be confused with bullying. Different acts require different responses.

We know that most bullying incidents have witnesses, therefore bullying can only occur if the bystanders allow it to happen by not intervening. Some bullies intimidate others to gain peer approval, or for the benefit of an audience in the playground. Youth culture and the desire to belong contribute to students' reluctance to step outside their peer group and it takes courage to stand tall beside the young person being isolated or hurt by the group. But if peers are part of the problem they should also be part of the solution, and effective schools understand the importance of involving their students in a whole school approach to eradicate bullying. Peer disapproval has the potential to reduce bullying in any context. Both parents and teachers need to encourage and empower children to speak out because bystander or peer intervention is the most effective means of controlling behaviour.

Children's perceptions and the rates and nature of violence and bullying they report provided new insights into our understanding of their school experiences. Their information could help to combat school violence and bullying and to design effective prevention and intervention strategies. Indeed, as argued by Anderson, Kinsey, Loader and Smith (1994) "it is only through trying to understand young people's views of their experiences as victims and witnesses that we can confront the problem in a way that is meaningful and acceptable to them" (p. 66). It makes sense that effective development and provision of policy should be based on data that reflects children's perceptions of school violence and bullying in the context of their own experiences.

The success case study schools that participated in this inquiry into school safety had all worked over time to build a strong culture and ethos of school community. These schools used a range of strategies. They often implemented a number of educational programmes that were "tools in the toolbox" and complemented their whole school approach. The approaches, programmes and strategies easily aligned with the key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum. Primary prevention programmes are designed to reduce the risk of violence by educating students about violence and bullying and how it may be avoided or prevented. These programmes are readily available, and schools should be discerning (as were the case study schools) about which ones they choose (it is always better to use comprehensive programmes that have been evaluated for their effectiveness). For best effect, these programmes require long-term follow-ups.

While the case study schools might have used a different approach to build their positive school cultures, the benefits were the same. Their students showed a greater liking of their class and school; they articulated concern and empathy for others' feelings; seemed motivated to be kind and helpful to their peers; and possessed good self-esteem and conflict resolution skills. The school culture established a sense of belonging and connectedness ("this is the way we do things here").

Identified barriers and enablers to school safety

While it is now accepted that bullying occurs in every school, this inquiry determined that a minority number of schools either had no systems in place or those systems were not

robust enough to cope when things go wrong. There is evidence to suggest that in schools where things went wrong, it went horribly wrong. What are the factors that contribute to effective or ineffective practices around school safety? Informed by a comprehensive review of the literature (eg. see Blazer, 2005), the following factors have been found to either enable or act as barriers to school safety. The identified barriers and enablers are further supported by the findings of this report.

Enablers to school safety

- Acknowledgment that bullying behaviour is a risk to be managed (ERO, 2007).
- Good policies define bullying and the school's position against it, and outline procedures to discourage bullying and help victims (Rigby, Smith, & Pepler, 2004, as cited in Raskauskas, 2007).

- Involvement and education of parents increases the effectiveness of their schools' anti-bullying measures.

- Establishing a school-wide Code of Conduct that clearly specifies appropriate and inappropriate behaviour as well as providing clear guidelines for teachers will facilitate a shared understanding and consistency.

- Providing training for staff in recognising and responding to bullying.

- Keeping a log of all bullying incidents that detail who was involved, where it occurred, how often it happened, and the strategies employed to address the problem, can over time identify behaviour patterns and the most successful interventions.

- Establishing a confidential reporting system will encourage students to disclose. 'Bully boxes' where students can place anonymous reports have proven to be successful in some schools.

- Conducting anonymous student surveys about student safety at school.

- Adopting a culture of 'safe telling', with students understanding it is part of the school's ethos will ensure that student interactions do not insinuate messages about the acceptance or rejection of particular students.

- Implementing strategies, programmes and interventions to prevent and manage bullying. Anti-bullying programmes most likely to be successful are the ones that shift the balance of power from the bullies to the silent majority of students who are upskilled and empowered to confront the bullies.

- Ascertaining the success of these strategies, programmes, and interventions through self-review (ERO, 2007).

- Increased adult supervision in common "hot spot" locations around the school (eg. playgrounds, toilets, bus stops, and corridors), especially at commonly "less supervised" times (eg. class changes, intervals and lunch times) helps to prevent the occurrence of bullying and violence. Reducing the amount of time spent with minimal supervision is also effective in some schools (eg. shorter lunch breaks and class changes). Staggering class release times has enabled schools to reduce the numbers of bully-victim problems at any one time and makes identification of bullying incidents easier.

Barriers to school safety
- Anti-bullying programmes are less likely to succeed when staff perceive teaching the anti-bullying programmes to be an added burden because of insufficient support, lack of time, and inadequate training etc.

- Implementing reactive measures such as metal detectors or surveillance cameras to increase security at school has not been proven in the research literature (interestingly children and young people consulted in this inquiry consistently identified this as a potential strategy for reducing the incidence of bullying).

- Encouraging students to "stand up" to bullies without adequate support from peers or adults may be harmful and physically dangerous for victims.

- Providing self-esteem training for bullies and training students in conflict resolution and peer mediation may both be misguided approaches and could actually act as a barrier to bullying prevention. Research suggests that most bullies do not lack self-esteem and while peer mediation programmes may resolve conflict between peers of equal status, the power imbalance between bullies and victims might further victimise students who have been bullied through the continued abuse of power.

- Adopting *'zero tolerance'* policies rely on exclusionary measures such as suspension and expulsion. They do not change the bully's behaviour and, indeed, may exacerbate it because after being excluded the bully has even more unsupervised time than if he or she had still been at school. Issues around zero tolerance will now be further explored.

There has been some controversy around the term 'zero tolerance'. This inquiry has determined that schools should maintain a 'zero tolerance' *attitude* to violent and bullying behaviours. In other words, they should clearly state that "violence is not okay" and will not be tolerated in their schools. Schools that endorse a zero tolerance attitude to violence are signalling that any form of violence (eg. physical assaults such as fighting or shoving; or verbal abuse such as swearing, sexist or racist language, and persistent exclusion from groups) will not be condoned or viewed as acceptable behaviour. Zero tolerance towards violence means taking a stand to encourage pro-social behaviours that contribute to improved school climates. However, zero tolerance does not mean that schools should always take a harsh and punitive stance by responding to all infringements in the same way. The findings of this school safety inquiry confirm that students experience a range of behaviours that could be described as violence and bullying. First, all students have the right to natural justice which puts the obligations on principals to act fairly and reasonably in the circumstances. Second, each case is different and must be treated accordingly because what response is required will vary according to the situation. Third, zero tolerance 'action plans' may stop the behaviour but do not teach new behaviours and often spell the end of a student's education. The New Zealand School Trustees Association (2008) states quite clearly that:

A school's "zero tolerance" of any behaviour is untenable… From the time the

principal begins considering if a student should be stood down or suspended, the principles of natural justice apply…The principal has to consider the circumstances of each situation and be satisfied that it warrants standing down or suspending a student…by carefully considering the evidence and all the circumstances at the time (p. 4).

In the same way that this report recommends different reporting and notification approaches, so too should the various forms of bullying be treated differently. Serious assaults will go down a different track to incidents of relational aggression among friends. While the emotional impact may be similar, serious physical assaults are likely to involve the police, whereas relational aggression would be best dealt with through a restorative justice approach. Restoration implies bringing back to what was happening before. Hagemann (2009) suggests this term may be misleading, but in a school setting, where victims simply want the bullying to stop, restorative practices are particularly successful in bringing about restoration and healing.

The enablers and barriers are now reinforced by further recommendations based on the findings of this inquiry.

Recommendations for schools

The following recommendations are grouped under four categories:

1. *Whole school approach*
   - Perceive bullying to be a whole of community response
   - Involve the school community. The principal should publicly announce the school's commitment to the prevention of violence and bullying
   - Ensure that prevention and intervention strategies and programmes consider the school climate as a potential contributing factor in promoting or inhibiting bullying
   - View bullying as a group phenomenon that recognises the diversity of experiences along the bully/victim continuum, including students as bystanders and reinforcers and the contribution of peers in relational aggression
   - Implement whole school approaches and violence prevention programmes
   - Adopt a zero tolerance *attitude* to violence and bullying, but do not adopt exclusionary zero tolerance *policies.*

2. *Policy and procedures*

- View bullying, violence and child abuse separately according to the agreed upon definitions
- Adopt consistent procedures as suggested in the flowcharts
- Develop crisis procedures for rapid response to serious incidents of violence
- Implement procedures around mobile phone use at school
- Know the appropriate legislation and policies relevant to students' safety at school
- Establish a confidential reporting system for students
- Establish a safety web and safety advocates
- Integrate anti-violence strategies into the existing school curriculum
- Consider employing a school counsellor in primary schools to manage the restorative practices and anti-bullying approaches, and the children wanting "a safe place" during interval and lunch times.

3. *Ongoing review and professional development*

- Conduct regular and ongoing self-reviews of the school's anti-violence policies and procedures. This should also involve an assessment of the school's safety and subsequent implementation of correction procedures in light of the self-review
- Undertake professional development for teachers. This training should also be available to pre-service teacher education students to ensure that all teachers know how to identify bullying and how to intervene
- Conduct staff training on the school's anti-violence and bullying policies and procedures
- Be discerning about which anti-bullying programmes to use.

4. *Collaborative responses*

- Respond immediately so that students and their families feel confident about the school's commitment and response to issues of bullying and violence
- Use the police and other agencies when the need arises (eg. serious incidents involving assault)

- For less serious incidents, invite the school's Youth Aid officer to the restorative conference (ie. when schools run a restorative conference, as opposed to a Youth Justice one). This will forge good school/police partnerships
- Access support and coaching on how to deal with the media.

A safe learning environment is one that "recognises that bullying is unacceptable and where policies are adopted to ensure it does not flourish" (Raskauskas, 2007, p. 9). Furthermore, as stated by Kazmierow and Walsh (2004):

> The standards which assist education providers in eliminating bullying are extensive, and practical steps to diminish bullying are well documented. To minimise the risk of expensive litigation and to meet legal and ethical obligations, the challenge is for schools to commit to school wide policies, and to 'walk the talk' in a consistent and steadfast way (p. 128).

A first step in committing to the eradication of bullying is the 'acknowledgement that bullying exists in the school' and until this acknowledgement is made, any interventions, anti-bullying strategies or initiatives, will not get to the essence of the problem. The challenge is to alter the school environment rather than focusing on the perpetrators and victims alone. The key message therefore, is the need for a 'whole school approach' that is embedded in the culture and ethos of a school and its community. Effective intervention requires 'immediate action' and the majority of approaches view professional development of teachers in the field of student behaviour management as a prerequisite to building a safe school culture.

The research strongly suggests that students' social relationships at school will be best supported when there are changes at the level of the classroom, but most importantly, when there are systemic changes that focus on the school as a caring community. The Office of the Children's Commissioner shares this view. Uncovering the nature and extent of bullying in schools and taking steps to address issues, particularly through whole school policy is critical. Aggressive, violent and bullying antisocial behaviour will only be effectively reduced when the intervention involves an ongoing commitment at multiple levels, with individual, family, classroom, school, and the wider community combining to achieve this goal.

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Appendix

Sample student questionnaire

Questionnaire about School Bullying

The Office of the Children's Commissioner takes bullying very seriously. We wish to know about your experiences of bullying. This is an anonymous questionnaire, which means that you can answer the questions but you don't have to let us know who you are. Completing this questionnaire means you have agreed to participate.

1. **Are you a male or a female?** (circle one)   boy   girl

2. **How old are you?** _____

3. **Which class/year are you in?** (circle one)

   Year 9   Year 10   Year 11   Year 12   Year 13

Bullying:
- *Can be hitting, kicking, or the use of force in any way. It can be teasing, making rude gestures, name-calling, or leaving you out of things on purpose.*
- *Is physical (being shoved around), verbal (as well as text or cyber bullying) and non-verbal (left out).*
- *Means that these things happened more than once and were done by the same person or persons.*
- *Means to hurt, either physically or emotionally, so that you feel very bad.*

4. **During this current year at school, I have been bullied:** (circle one of the following)

					Where (✓)	
					Classroom	Playground
never	once in a while	about once a week	more than once a week	most days		

5.

I have been bullied in the following ways. Tick (✓) yes or no for each category. You can tick more than one box	Yes	No	Where √	
			Classroom	Playground
– Hitting, punching, kicking, or shoving				
– Some kind of weapon was used on me (state weapon)				
– Mean teasing				
– Purposely left out of things				
– Had my things damaged or stolen				
– Was horribly sworn at				
– Had offensive sexual suggestions made to me				
– Had nasty racial remarks made to me				
– Had nasty homophobic remarks made to me				
– Had nasty remarks made to me about my disability				
– Received nasty notes or letters				
– Received nasty texts on my cell phone				
– Received nasty messages on my computer				
– Someone said nasty things to make others dislike me				
– Had untrue and mean gossip spread about me				
– Was threatened				
– Had rude gestures or mean faces made at me				
– Anything else? (write in here)				

6. **If you have been bullied this year, describe your worst experience.**

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Thinking about that worst experience, who did you tell that you were being bullied?
(Tick (✓) one or more boxes below.)

(a)	Parents or guardians	
(b)	Class Teacher	
(c)	Duty Teacher	
(d)	Staff member at the school	
(e)	Friend	
(f)	Other - state who (e.g., aunty, cousin)	
(g)	No-one	

8. If you did not tell anyone about the bullying, why not?

_____

_____

_____

9. Who bullied you? Don't give any names, just tick (✓) one or more boxes below.

(a)	The bully/bullies are in my class	
(b)	The bully/bullies are in a different class, but the same age as me	
(c)	The bully/bullies are in an older class	
(d)	The bully/bullies are in a younger class	
(e)	The bully/bullies go to another school	
(f)	A teacher	

10. During this current year at school, I have bullied someone (circle one of the following):

					Where (✓)	
					Classroom	Playground
never	once in a while	about once a week	more than once a week	most days		

11.

I have bullied someone in the following ways. Tick yes (✓) or no for each category. You can tick more than one box	Yes	No	Where √	
			Classroom	Playground
– Hitting, punching, kicking, or shoving				
– Used some kind of weapon on someone (state weapon)				
– Mean teasing				
– Purposely left someone out of things				
– Damaged or stole someone's possessions				
– Swore at someone				
– Made offensive sexual suggestions to someone				
– Made nasty racial remarks to someone				
– Made nasty homophobic remarks to someone (e.g., being gay)				
– Made nasty remarks to someone about their disability				
– Sent nasty letter(s) to someone				
– Sent nasty cell-phone text(s) to someone				
– Sent nasty computer messages to someone				
– Said nasty things to make others dislike a person(s)				
– Made up and spread untrue and mean gossip about someone				
– Threatened someone				
– Made rude gestures or mean faces at someone				
– Anything else? (write in here)				

12. During this current year at school, I have seen bullying take place (circle one of the following):

					Where (✓)	
					Classroom	Playground
never	once in a while	about once a week	more than once a week	most days		

13.	I have watched or have heard about the following types of bullying at school. Tick (✓) yes or no for each category. You can tick more than one box	Yes	No	Where (✓)	
				Classroom	Playground
	– Hitting, punching, kicking, or shoving				
	– Use of some kind of weapon on someone (state weapon)				
	– Mean teasing				
	– Someone purposely left out of things				
	– Someone having their things damaged or stolen				
	– Someone being horribly sworn at				
	– Someone having offensive sexual remark(s) made to them				
	– Someone having nasty racial remark(s) made to them				
	– Someone having nasty homophobic remark(s) made to them				
	– Someone having nasty remarks made about their disability				
	– Someone receiving nasty letter(s)				
	– Someone receiving nasty cell-phone text(s)				
	– Someone receiving nasty computer message(s)				
	– Someone having nasty things said so others dislike them				
	– Someone having untrue/mean gossip spread about them				
	– Someone being threatened				
	– Someone having rude gestures/mean faces made at them				
	– Anything else? (write in here)				

14. Where are the 'danger spots' where most bullying takes place? Please list these:

_____

_____

15. Do you feel safe at school? (circle one of the following)

always   most of the time   sometimes   never

16. How bad is the bullying at your school? (circle one of the following)

not bad   a little bad   pretty bad   really bad   terrible

17. This year have you ever felt too afraid to go to school because of bullying?
(circle yes or no)   Yes   No

18 What does your school do to stop or deal with bullying?

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Can you suggest other ways that might help schools to deal with bullying?

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. **Any other comments?**

_____

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