

# Bullying: teacher and vulnerable peers studies

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Bullying can be found in every school in the country. It is all too often part of the way young people interact in our society. Every school must recognise its extent and impact and take steps to stop it happening. When bullying is ignored or downplayed, pupils will suffer ongoing torment and harassment. It can cause life long damage to victims. A school's failure to deal with bullying endangers the safety of all its pupils by allowing a hostile environment to interfere with learning. There is clear, unambiguous evidence that school action can dramatically reduce the incidence of bullying. Schools not only have a moral obligation to reduce bullying, their charter agreement between the school's trustees and the Minister of Education specifically directs the school to " provide a safe physical and emotional environment". Studies show that bullying is an international problem that affects all schools. There is a remarkable similarity in the incidence of bullying from country to country, school to school. Bullying knows no international boundaries, socio-economic status or ethnic boundaries. I believe that schools have a positive duty to be vigilant to guard against bullying and to deal with it and stamp it out if it occurs. The consequences of a failure to do that can be very profound Successfully dealing with bullying involves building a genuine community within the school. Everyone accepts they have the right to be free from harassment and that they have the responsibility to support their weaker and more vulnerable peers Studies have found dramatic reductions in bullying of between 20-80% when school wide strategies are used. Teachers must recognise that a safe classroom is the most effective way of developing a positive learning environment