

# Safer DECD schools

A resource to make DECD schools safer through the reduction of bullying, harassment and violence, and the provision of child protection initiatives



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Education and  
Child Development



Developed with advice from the university members of the *Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools*

This document and support information is available at the Coalition website  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

This document and the associated information on the Coalition website at <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/> aims to make it easier for schools to review their practices in regard to bullying, harassment, violence and child protection. This will support the implementation of the updated National Safe Schools Framework and the recommendations of the Cossey Report in your school.

Feedback on this document and the information on the Coalition website is welcome. Further information or feedback can be provided to Matthew Chapman, Executive Officer of the Coalition, via e-mail at [Matthew.Chapman2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Matthew.Chapman2@sa.gov.au), or phone 08 8226 1029.

Note: In this document, 'parents' denote adults who have the parenting responsibility for children and students, including biological parents, step-parents, legal guardians and extended family members such as grandparents.

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# Introduction

## Purpose of this DECD document

The purpose of this document is to guide South Australian government schools in implementing current research and Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) policy regarding bullying, harassment, violence and child protection so they can continue to contribute to an environment where children and students feel safe and supported. By revisiting the DECD initiatives and policies detailed in this booklet, schools will find the task of implementing the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) (MCEECDYA 2011)<sup>1</sup> easier.

The revised edition of the National Safe Schools Framework was endorsed by all ministers of education through the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in December 2010. In South Australia, Regional Interagency Student Behaviour Management Coordinators have been provided with information to support schools in the implementation of this updated framework. Supporting resources are available via the DECD website to assist schools to implement the National Safe Schools framework effectively and adopt a whole school approach to a safe and supportive school environment<sup>2</sup>.

All DECD schools are encouraged to audit their practices against the National Safe Schools Framework school audit tool<sup>3</sup>. The National Safe Schools Framework identifies nine key elements to assist schools in planning, implementing and maintaining a safe, supportive and protective learning community that promotes student safety and wellbeing. These are:

- 1 Leadership commitment to a safe school
- 2 A supportive and connected school culture
- 3 Policies and procedures
- 4 Professional learning
- 5 Positive behaviour management

- 6 Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- 7 A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
- 8 Early intervention and targeted support
- 9 Partnerships with families and community.

These nine elements are based on a combination of good practice, research-based literature and feedback from representatives from all educational systems, and are further expanded in the Framework<sup>4</sup> and accompanying Resource Manual<sup>5</sup>.

This document is also informed by the State Government's response (Govt of SA 2011)<sup>6</sup> to the *Review of procedures and processes in Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) related to bullying and violence in schools* report (Cossey 2011)<sup>7</sup>. Mr Bill Cossey AM reviewed aspects of DECD processes and procedures related to bullying and violence in schools.

The Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools is a coalition of the three government and non-government education sectors: Association of Independent Schools of SA, Catholic Education SA, and DECD. The university members of the Coalition have developed or provided a number of resources<sup>8</sup> to support schools. These include:

- school questionnaires on bullying and harassment including an explanation why schools should conduct surveys
- six methods of intervention in dealing with bullying
- current thinking about tackling bullying and violence including:
  - prevention coping and intervention strategies
  - feeling safe: change in bullying prevalence over time

1 The National Safe Schools Framework and Resource Manual  
<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/NationalSafeSchoolsFramework.aspx>

2 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/nssfresource/>

3 For the audit tool see the NSSF Resource Manual pp 2–5 at  
<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFframeworkResourceManual.pdf>

4 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFframework.pdf>

5 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFframeworkResourceManual.pdf>

6 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/ResponseCosseyReport.pdf>

7 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/Cossey\\_Report.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/Cossey_Report.pdf)

8 See <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

# Introduction

- effective implementation and recent research and thinking about how to tackle bullying, harassment and violence in school settings
- list of publications about current thinking regarding tackling bullying, harassment and violence.

DECD has developed a number of resources<sup>9</sup> to support schools. These include:

- an anti-bullying policy school audit checklist
- the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum site implementation rubric
- response level and types of behaviour model.

A checklist of actions consistent with DECD policy is provided as an appendix to this document.

## Definitions

### National definitions

The following definitions of terms were agreed by the Safe and Supportive Schools Communities Management Group, which is a national committee supported by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA) with representatives from all Australian education jurisdictions.

- **Bullying**

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not regarded as bullying.

Bullying in any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

- **Discrimination**

Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age;

and/or ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

- **Harassment**

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; and/or ability or disability, and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act.

- **Violence**

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person/s that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

### Other definitions

- **Cyber-bullying definition developed by the SA Coalition**

Cyber-bullying is bullying which uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies—such as e-mail, chat room discussion groups, instant messaging, web pages or SMS (text messaging)—with the intention of harming another person. Examples include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down or humiliate the recipient.

- **DECD sexual harassment definition<sup>10</sup>**

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person (male or female, of the same or opposite gender, same-sex attracted, bisexual or transgender) feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where that reaction to the conduct is reasonable in the circumstances. Sexual harassment can be a single incident, repeated or continuous, direct or indirect, and take various forms.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/schoolresources/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SexualHarassmentPreventio.pdf>

Sexual harassment is a legally recognised form of sex discrimination.

Behaviour of a sexual nature based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect, which is welcome or invited, consensual and reciprocal, does not constitute sexual harassment.

### Discussion regarding definitions

The terms harassment and bullying are often used interchangeably. Harassment however, involves the targeting of an individual due to him/her belonging to a particular social group. DECD recommends that both terms are included in an anti-bullying policy, using the nationally-agreed definitions.

Gaining agreement about a definition is often difficult to achieve. This is why it is recommended that schools use the definitions above. The following examples could be added to the schools anti-bullying policy in order to clarify the types of behaviour that the school will not accept.

### Examples of bullying

- Physical: hitting, pushing, touching, grabbing, looks, stares, facial expressions, gestures, spitting, taking or damaging property
- Verbal or written: spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, name-calling, unfair criticism, spreading rumours
- Cyber: using e-mail, voice and text messaging, social networking sites, photographic and video images
- Graffiti: using pictures, tags or words
- Social: forming groups to leave out, ignore and disrespect; influencing, encouraging or organising someone else to be involved in any type of bullying or harassment.

### Examples of sexual harassment<sup>11</sup>

- Unwelcome touching, hugging, kissing, brushing up against a person, staring or leering
- Suggestive comments or jokes; sexually explicit pictures, screen savers, posters, graffiti, letters, messages, magazines or any other visual or written medium
- Unwelcome invitations to go out on dates
- Requests for sex
- Inappropriate and intrusive personal questions about a person's private life or his/her body
- Insults, taunts, teasing or name calling of a sexual nature; or sexually explicit conversation
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- Offensive telephone calls, letters, e-mails or mobile phone text messages
- Posting filmed or photographed images or comments on social networking sites
- Behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence under criminal law and reportable to the police, such as physical or indecent assault, stalking, obscene communications, and sexual assault.

11 From <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SexualHarassmentPreventio.pdf>



# A safe and supportive DECD school

## The national context

The National Safe Schools Framework describes a safe and supportive school in the following way:

*In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.*

*Harassment, aggression, violence and bullying are less likely to occur in a caring, respectful and supportive teaching and learning community.*

*Student safety and wellbeing are enhanced when students feel connected to their school, have positive and respectful relationships with their peers and teachers, feel confident about their social and emotional skills and satisfied with their learning experiences at school<sup>12</sup>.*

(NSSF 2011, p 2)

Research shows that most children feel safe at school, both physically and psychologically. However, a minority do not. According to a large scale survey of approximately 38 000 Australian students between the ages of 8 and 18 (Years 4 and 12), some 12% of students reported that they never or hardly ever felt safe from being bullied at school (Rigby 1998).

For Same Sex Attracted or Gender Questioning (SSAGQ) young people, a supportive, safe and inclusive school environment is important. In such an environment, these young people will feel safer (85% compared to 46%), are less likely to self-harm (21% compared to 40%), and less likely to be abused at school (71% compared to 49%)<sup>13</sup>. SSAGC students report that 80% of the homophobic abuse occurred in their secondary school (Hillier et al 2010).

Other cohorts of students such as students in care (guardianship), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with a disability (including those with autism) and students from a specific cultural or religious background will also benefit from a supportive, safe and inclusive school environment.

Schools are required to develop an education plan for students under guardianship, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with a disability. These plans are respectively called an Individual Education Plan<sup>14</sup>, an Individual Learning Plan<sup>15,16</sup>, and a Negotiated Education Plan<sup>17</sup>. These plans should address the issues of bullying and harassment.

## The DECD context

DECD has developed a series of policy frameworks and implementation manuals that will support schools in their implementation of the National Safe Schools Framework. This section aims to highlight those related to bullying, harassment, violence and child protection.

### Anti-bullying policy and practices

In light of the level of discussion, community concern and debate that had arisen in the last decade in relation to bullying and violence in schools DECD has a set of new requirements for schools. These were detailed in the circular to principals, pre school directors and governing council members titled *Implementation of Cossey Review Report Recommendations*<sup>18</sup>. Requirements include:

- all schools since 2006 have been required to have a stand alone anti-bullying policy or a section on anti-bullying included within their Student Behaviour Management policy or Student Code of Conduct (see an anti-bullying policy school audit checklist<sup>19</sup>).

12 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFrameworkResourceManual.pdf>, p 2

13 [http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ssay/assets/downloads/wti3\\_web\\_sml.pdf](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ssay/assets/downloads/wti3_web_sml.pdf)

14 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/studentsInCare/>

15 [http://www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au/pages/Resources/aboriginal\\_learners\\_ILP/](http://www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au/pages/Resources/aboriginal_learners_ILP/)

16 <http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators/36714/>

17 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced/pages/specialneeds/NEP/>

18 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Circular\\_to\\_Site\\_Leaders\\_r.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Circular_to_Site_Leaders_r.pdf)

19 Available at <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/schoolresources/>

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- all schools are required to have an easily locatable and well publicised link on their website to the relevant anti-bullying policy or anti-bullying section within an existing policy.
- regional directors are required to verify anti-bullying policies and report on compliance levels. A desktop audit of school anti-bullying policy compliance will be undertaken by Central Office.
- principals are required to provide to the governing council updates each term in relation to school bullying related data and trends and any anti-bullying programs/initiatives in place or being considered. This report is to be made available to the general school community via the newsletter and be placed on the schools website for easy access by parents (see school questionnaires on bullying and harassment<sup>20</sup>).
- all school enrolment processes are to include a requirement for parent(s)/caregiver(s) and/or students to annually acknowledge/agree to the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- all school leaders are to review their anti-bullying policy annually, and to involve parents/caregivers and students in this process.
- nomination of the Head of Schools as the departmental media spokesperson in relation to these types of incidents.
- the role of DECD Corporate Office in responding to such incidents.

The SAPOL response guideline outlines the process that schools and preschools should take when making requests for police attendance and/or advice.

### Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools

The Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools provides advice to the DECD Chief Executive and the heads of the Independent and Catholic schooling sectors regarding the development, implementation and evaluation of site based anti-bullying policies and procedures through the development and promotion of evidence informed resources.

The coalition draws upon the expertise of leading academics in the bullying field, including Adjunct Professor Ken Rigby, Professor Phillip Slee, Dr Barbara Spears and Dr Shoko Yoneyama. The role of the coalition has been further strengthened as academic members will support the Department's training and development initiatives, provide high level consultation and advice on matters relating to bullying and harassment and represent the department and its relevant initiatives at state, national and international levels.

### Memorandum of Administrative Agreement (MoAA) between DECD and SAPOL

A MoAA has been developed in consultation with SAPOL that details the policy and practices that are in place in relation to site contact with SAPOL. It will form the basis for the general orders issued to officers in the field and will provide site leaders with clear guidelines.

### Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion

Many of the recommendations from the review undertaken by the Suspension, Exclusion and

The circular reminds principals of their obligations under the 2008 *'Information Sharing Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and Families'*. There has been some inconsistency in the sharing of information between schools and TAFESA in relation to informing TAFESA providers of any known bullying activities involving senior secondary students who are studying at TAFESA as part of their senior secondary schooling so that appropriate action can be taken.

### Updated Making Our Sites Safer Guidelines for Site Leaders

Two of the *Making Our Sites Safer Guidelines for Site Leaders* have been updated – *Critical Incident reporting*<sup>21</sup> and *SAPOL response to school related incidents*<sup>22</sup>. The key changes to the former Critical Incident related guidelines are:

- inclusion of documented protocols in relation to who site leaders must notify following a serious and significant critical incident (regional director, parent, school care).

20 Available at <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

21 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/MossCriticalIncidentRepor.pdf>

22 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/Mossapol.pdf>

Expulsion (SEE) group have now been implemented. Amendments have been made to the SEE guidelines to enable student participation in re-entry meetings without a parent/guardian present. EDSAS behaviour descriptors have been updated to include greater data analysis of behaviours influencing suspension and exclusion. Professional learning for site leaders in the SEE procedures is available from the school's regional office. Site leaders are also reminded that immediate notice of intention to exclude is to be given to students for incidents of violence involving a weapon. The updated SEE guidelines are available via SSONet<sup>23</sup>.

## Updated and new resource materials

The *'Bullying and Harassment at School: Advice for parents and caregivers'* brochure has been revised and copies have been provided to schools for distribution to parents and caregivers. The *Cyber-Safety – Keeping Children Safe in a Connected World* a resource that assists schools to develop a safe online environment is being updated. The updated document will be made available in 2012<sup>24</sup>. A reference guide for schools with a student with a disability whose behaviour is problematic<sup>25</sup> is available on the DECD website.

DECD has been granted permission by Safer Schools Coalition Victoria to reproduce two key documents to address sexual diversity and homophobic bullying.

- Supporting Sexual Diversity In Schools: A Guide
- Challenging Homophobia in Schools: A Guide for School Staff

These resources will be available via the DECD website<sup>26</sup>

## Child protection

Education and care programs play a significant role in child protection. Child abuse and neglect negatively affects a child's or young person's emotional, intellectual and social development. It is vital that child protection risks are identified, protected against and responded to appropriately. The framework for doing this in education and care settings involves two major areas of focus: curriculum for children and young people and professional learning for adults.

## Curriculum

The Keeping Safe child protection curriculum is an age and developmentally appropriate teaching program for use with children and students from the early years to senior schooling. Its four focus areas are:

- The Right to be Safe
- Relationships
- Recognising and Reporting Abuse
- Protective Strategies.

The core focus of the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum is to educate children and students about how to recognise abuse and protect themselves from it. More broadly, however, the curriculum has a focus on rights, responsibilities, relationships and ethical behaviour as core building blocks for children and students to build the skills that will help them recognise and protect themselves from abuse.

Teaching respectful relationships to children and students makes an important contribution to increasing protective factors and decreasing bullying, harassment and violence in schools. Both bullying and cyber-bullying are ultimately relationship issues that require relationship-focused solutions (Pepler 2006).

A site implementation rubric, which supports your school in assessing progress in the implementation of this curriculum, is available at the Safer SA schools website<sup>27</sup>.

## Professional learning

All staff members in education and care settings undertake mandatory pre- and in-service training titled *Responding to abuse and neglect: Education and care (RAN-EC) training*. Used across the government and non-government education and children's services sectors, this training aims to give staff an understanding of:

- what underlies child abuse and neglect and its impact on children's development and wellbeing
- how staff can help prevent and lessen the impact of abuse and neglect through their daily work with children and young people.

23 <https://ssonet.central.sa.edu.au/pages/bm>

24 <http://www.DECD.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/>

25 <http://www.DECD.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/behaviour/>

26 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/homophobia/>

27 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/schoolresources/>

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A primary protective factor for all children and young people is a safe and respectful learning environment and this forms the core of the *Responding to abuse and neglect: Education and care (RAN-EC) training* professional learning program. All other persons regularly on DECD sites such as volunteers are required to complete a version of RAN-EC training.

The provision of this training for staff and the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum enables principals and directors to meet child protection components of the National Safe Schools Framework<sup>28</sup>.

### Supporting child protection policies, guidelines and programs

- *Protective practices*<sup>29</sup> for staff in their interactions with children and young people: *Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings*—a framework for the establishment of positive, caring and respectful relationships between adults and children and young people in education and care settings.
- *Suicide postvention guidelines*<sup>30</sup>—a framework to assist staff in supporting their school communities in responding to suspected, attempted or completed suicide.
- *Information sharing: Guidelines for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families*<sup>31</sup>—a framework for information sharing between all government agencies and relevant non-government agencies.
- *Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people: Guidelines for staff in education and care settings*<sup>32</sup>—a framework to assist education and care staff to respond effectively to incidents of problem sexual behaviour involving children and young people.

- *SMART: Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma professional learning for staff*<sup>33,34</sup>—a professional learning program designed to enhance the capacity of school and early childhood personnel to effectively respond to the needs of children and young people who have experienced abuse and trauma.

### DECD Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy 2011<sup>35</sup>

On 26 November 2008, the South Australian Government introduced a Bill into Parliament to update the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*. The Equal Opportunity (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2008 was passed on 14 July 2009.

The new law provides for a student 16 years or over, or a staff member who is sexually harassed by a student, to lodge a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Commission. Secondary schools are required to have a written policy against sexual harassment that includes a procedure for resolving complaints. It is recommended by DECD that this policy be a standalone policy and available to the school community on the school's website.

All types of disability are covered in the new legislation, consistent with that of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Along with disabilities that have been identified previously under the Act, the new South Australian Act now includes people with mental illness, people with learning difficulties, people who are HIV positive, and people who have Hepatitis C or other disease-causing organisms. (Note that taking reasonable measures to stop the spread of infection does not constitute discrimination.) A person with one of these conditions must not be treated unfavourably in respect of education and employment.

28 See Element 2.7, p 24; 6.4, p 33; and 8.1, p 36  
<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFrameworkResourceManual.pdf>

29 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf>

30 <http://www.crisis.sa.edu.au/pages/EM05/30674/>

31 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/36801/](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/36801/)

32 Refer to Appendix 1 (p 34) for a prevention checklist  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/RespondingtoProblemSexual.pdf>

33 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/cpProfessionalDevelopment/>

34 Also Making space for learning trauma: Informed practice in schools <http://www.childhood.org.au/resources/>

35 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SexualHarassmentPreventio.pdf>

Under the Act, it is unlawful to treat a person unfavourably because of his/her appearance or dress, if that appearance or dress is required by, or symbolic of, the person's religious beliefs. An exception to the Act would be if the wearing of the dress would create a danger or hinder appropriate emergency action. The ordinary entitlement of schools to stipulate reasonable uniform requirements is unchanged.<sup>36</sup>

The DECD Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy 2011<sup>37</sup> incorporates changes made through the *Equal Opportunity (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2008*.

Further information for schools is available from the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission's eo4schools website.<sup>38</sup>

### The Learner Wellbeing framework for birth to year 12

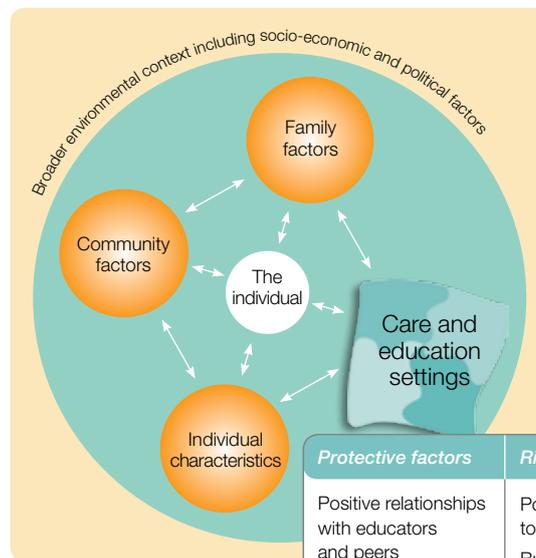
The Learner Wellbeing<sup>39</sup> framework, for children and young people from birth to Year 12, links closely with the National Safe Schools Framework in that it helps guide the Department's response to the prevention of bullying, harassment, violence and neglect in DECD schools and care settings. It has assisted sites to recognise the strong and mutual interconnections between wellbeing and learning and the practices that support the development and improvement of wellbeing for all children and students. Individual, family, school and community related factors all contribute to or detract from a person's wellbeing (see figure right).

Protective factors (eg feeling safe at school) or risk factors (eg being bullied at school) and the dynamic relationship between protective factors and risk factors mean their negative impact (eg non-attendance at school) will vary for each individual. However, a positive ethos in a school and the adoption of enlightened policies aimed at developing greater social and emotional maturity and positive interpersonal relationships have been found to enhance the positive and minimise the negative contributory factors.

Information regarding what school factors, social dynamics and interactive processes help to explain bullying<sup>40</sup> and the characteristics of those who bully and who are bullied<sup>41</sup> can be found in the National Safe Schools Framework Resource Manual.

The involvement of the whole school or care community (children, students, parents and staff) in the development of policies will support implementation and increase ownership of school and care policies.

### Influences on wellbeing



Protective factors	Risk factors
Positive relationships with educators and peers	Poor connection to the setting
Feeling safe	Bullying
Engaging curriculum	Peer rejection
Feeling connected	Failure
Belonging	Anti-social peer group
Positive climate	Ineffective behaviour management
Pro-social peer group	
Responsibility and required helpfulness	
Opportunities for success	
Recognition of achievement	
Sense of control of learning	
Feeling competent	
Meaningful pathways through and beyond schooling	

(Adapted from National Crime Prevention 1999, pp. 136 & 138)

36 The DECD School Dress Code <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDressCode.doc>

37 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SexualHarassmentPreventio.pdf>

38 [www.eo4schools.net.au](http://www.eo4schools.net.au)

39 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/learnerwellbeing/pages/frame/framework](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/learnerwellbeing/pages/frame/framework)

40 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFrameworkResourceManual.pdf>, pp 11–15, 86–92

41 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFrameworkResourceManual.pdf>, pp 9–11, 79–86

## A safe and supportive DECD school

### School discipline and behaviour management

The School Discipline Policy<sup>42</sup> and its Implementation Kit<sup>43</sup> provides the policy and implementation guidelines for dealing with student behaviour in DECD schools, including bullying, harassment and violence. This is supported by the resource *Reducing bullying in schools: A professional development resource*<sup>44</sup> and its accompanying DVD *Reducing bullying: Evidence based strategies for schools*<sup>45</sup>.

Principals, in consultation with other staff (and, if required, support services and interagency personnel) will use their professional judgment to determine the appropriate response strategy for a specific behavioural issue. The DECD document *Response level and types of behaviour*<sup>46</sup> provides a set of factors to consider in determining an appropriate level of response to a student behaviour issue. This includes a suggested guide for the use of suspension and exclusion as a response to student behaviours.

Occasionally, drug related behaviour incidents will occur in schools. Schools and their principals are advised to apply a harm minimisation response, by going beyond punitive measures to reduce drug related harm. Successful approaches include:

- prevention through drug education, skills and resilience building, and provision of a positive school culture
- intervention and support for students with drug related behavioural issues.

Schools are referred to the DECD policy statement *Intervention matters*<sup>47</sup> as a procedural framework in assessing and responding to suspected drug related behaviour incidents.

As a response to the most serious of incidents, principals can suspend or exclude a student from attendance at school. Section 2 of the School Discipline Policy Implementation Kit<sup>48</sup> provides guidelines for using these procedures.

If part time attendance is used as an interim behaviour management strategy for a student up to 16 years of age, an exemption from attendance at school is required. The *Principal's guide to exemptions*<sup>49</sup> provides principals with the required advice when considering an exemption.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour at any age level. Over the age of 10 years, children who engage in violent bullying or violence can be charged by the police with assault.

The revised brochure titled *Bullying and harassment at school: Advice for parents and caregivers* should be provided to parents<sup>50</sup> as part of the information provided by the school.

The *Six methods of intervention in dealing with bullying*<sup>51</sup> (Rigby 2010) provides responses in dealing with bullying. The training of key staff in these interventions will increase the school's options for actions and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome with incidents of bullying.

42 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDisciplinePolicy.pdf>

43 Provided to all DECD schools in 1998. See Section 2 on SSO Support Online (SSO net > student health and wellbeing > behaviour management)

44 Provided to all DECD schools in 2004

45 Provided to all DECD secondary schools in 2007

46 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

47 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/drugstrategy/pages/documents/schoolsaig/>

48 Section 2 on SSO Support Online (SSO net > student health and wellbeing > behaviour management)

49 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/thePrincipalsGuidetoExemp.pdf>

50 See <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

51 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Bullying\\_Brochure\\_DECS.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Bullying_Brochure_DECS.pdf)

As there is a link between positive classroom practices and a lower incidence of bullying, harassment and violence (Roland & Galloway 2002, 2004), teachers within their first five years of employment with DECD should complete the training program: *Your classroom: Safe, orderly and productive*. If teachers are interacting with students with significant behavioural issues, the principal should consider if they require training in *Non-violent intervention*. A consistent environment for staff and students is supported if ancillary staff members complete the training program: *Contributing to a safe and positive learning community*. Training in these packages can be delivered by staff from the school's regional office.

Schools require a selection of preventative and intervention strategies as well as advice on how students cope with bullying incidents at school<sup>52</sup>.

### Additional DECD guidelines regarding school safety

- *Keeping schools safe: Guidelines for site leaders*<sup>53</sup>—guidelines for managing trespass and misbehaviour on school premises
- *Making our sites safer—Fact Sheets*<sup>54</sup>—part of the State Government's initiative to provide improved safety and security of staff and students at all government schools, preschools and children's centres

### Cyber safety

Cyber safety is concerned with being safe when online. The following DECD documents provide the policy framework for principals in dealing with incidents of cyber-bullying and electronic crime:

- *Cyber safety: Keeping children safe in a connected world*<sup>55</sup>—includes sample cyber-safety use agreement proformas<sup>56</sup> for preschool, primary/middle and secondary children and students, and sample permission to publish student and adult photos and work forms<sup>57</sup>
- *Making our sites safer: E-crime*<sup>58</sup>
- DECD Circular 09/3677: *The action principals can take for incidents of cyber-bullying or electronic crime*<sup>59</sup>.

Information is available for families in the pamphlet *Cyber bullying e-crime and the protection of children and young people*<sup>60</sup>.

Cyber-bullying is not just confined to students but can occur between and by adults, including parents and teachers. In the case of parents making aggressive or uncomplimentary statements on a social networking site about teachers, DECD has provided advice to principals in the policy document *Making our sites safer: E-crime*<sup>61</sup>.

The view that traditional bullying intervention strategies may be useful in the cyber context is supported by numerous research studies. For instance, The Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study (ACBPS) found that most students (87%) who reported being bullied by technology were also bullied in other (non-cyber) ways (Cross et al 2009). It is likely, therefore, that implementing a positive relationship program such as the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum will impact on student bullying, harassment and violence behaviour including cyber behaviour.

52 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

53 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/legislationPolicies/](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/legislationPolicies/)

54 <http://www.crisis.sa.edu.au/pages/EM05>

55 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf)

56 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/36219/>

57 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/36219/>

58 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/MossECrime\\_1.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/MossECrime_1.pdf)

59 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Cyber\\_bullying.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Cyber_bullying.pdf)

60 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberBullyingECrimeandthe.pdf>

61 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/MossECrime\\_1.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/MossECrime_1.pdf)

## A safe and supportive DECD school

The Australian Communication and Media Authority's Cybersmart<sup>62</sup> website identifies and addresses common cyber safety issues including cyber-bullying, unwanted contact, protecting computers (e-security), protecting personal information, inappropriate content, and excessive internet use. This site provides a comprehensive set of resources for teachers, parents and students, as well as training options at no cost.

It is recommended that the Australian Government 'help' button<sup>63</sup> is placed on all computers in a school. The help page accessed via the help button is divided into three functions:

- The talk function provides users who are experiencing cyber bullying, or perhaps have encountered something that has made them feel uncomfortable or threatened, with a direct link to Kids Helpline.
- The report function links directly to cyber safety information specific to social networking and online game sites, where users can report abuse experienced on that site. Links to report scams and fraud, to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and improper contact or behaviour to the Australian Federal Police can also be accessed.
- The learn function provides access to cyber safety and security education resources via the Stay Smart Online website and the ACMA's Cybersmart site.

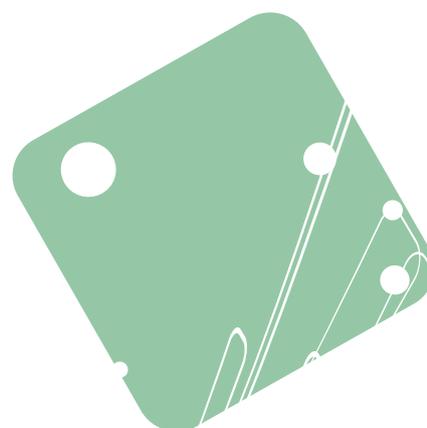
The Australian Government Help Button is useful for principals and members of the school community who need advice on cyber safety or to report inappropriate online activity.

### Role of the media

The media reflects the community's intolerance of bullying, harassment and violence in schools by highlighting the most serious of events. One consequence of this publicity is that members of the general public believe violence and bullying are getting worse in schools even though the research suggests this is not the case<sup>64</sup>. What is not commonly acknowledged is that anti-bullying programs adopted by schools have been shown to reduce violence. Despite this, a single violent event at a school can be devastating for the individual and can send reverberations throughout that school community if not the larger community.

The DECD Media Unit provides training for principals and directors to assist them in their role as spokespersons. The purpose of the training is to provide practical advice to leaders on how to manage requests for information so that timely and accurate information can be provided to the public.

This support will assist principals and directors if they do need to respond to an incident at their school or preschool, as well helping them to promote successful anti-bullying programs and how they are assisting children and young people to improve their peer-to-peer relationships.



62 [www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au)

63 [http://www.dbcde.gov.au/online\\_safety\\_and\\_security/cybersafetyhelpbutton\\_download](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/online_safety_and_security/cybersafetyhelpbutton_download)

64 See <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

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- Spears BA, Slee P, Campbell M & Cross D (2011b) *Educational change: Success of any intervention depends on the implementation*. Seminar Series No 208. Victoria, Centre for Strategic Education.



# Appendix: Checklist of actions consistent with DECD policy requirements

## Required actions

### Schools

Schools are required to:

- implement the requirements of the State Government's response<sup>65</sup> to the Cossey Report as outlined as outlined in the circular to schools<sup>66</sup>
- develop practices consistent with the responsibilities outlined in the DECD School Discipline Policy<sup>67</sup>
- have an anti-bullying policy (see Anti-bullying Policy—School Audit Checklist<sup>68</sup>)
- implement the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum
- have a written policy against sexual harassment that includes a procedure for resolving complaints, if they have secondary aged students
- use the DECD procedures if taking home, suspending, excluding or expelling a student from attendance at school<sup>69</sup>
- use the procedures for exemption<sup>70</sup>
- implement the requirements outlined in *Cyber safety: Keeping children safe in a connected world*<sup>71</sup>, including using cyber-safety use agreement proformas<sup>72</sup> and permission to publish student and adult photos and work forms<sup>73</sup>

- develop an education plan for students in care (guardianship), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students with a disability (respectively called an Individual Education Plan<sup>74</sup>, an Individual Learning Plan<sup>75,76</sup>, and a Negotiated Education Plan<sup>77</sup>). These plans should address the issues of bullying and harassment
- implement the requirements in *Intervention matters*<sup>78</sup> which supports schools to
  - fulfil their legal, duty of care and other obligations
  - ensure the safety of all members of the school community
  - respond to drug related issues in ways which are procedurally just
  - develop or review the school drug policy.

### Staff

Staff members are required to:

- undertake mandatory pre- and in-service training titled *Responding to abuse and neglect: Education and care (RAN-EC) training*.

### Volunteers

All other persons regularly on DECD sites such as volunteers are required to:

- undertake a variation of the training titled *Responding to abuse and neglect: Education and care (RAN-EC) training*.

65 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/ResponseCosseyReport.pdf>

66 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Circular\\_to\\_Site\\_Leaders\\_r.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Circular_to_Site_Leaders_r.pdf)

67 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDisciplinePolicy.pdf>

68 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

69 Provided to all DECD schools in 1998 See Section 2 on SSO Support Online (SSO net > student health and wellbeing > behaviour management)

70 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/thePrincipalsGuidetoExemp.pdf>

71 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf)

72 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/36219/>

73 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/36219/>

74 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/studentsInCare/>

75 [http://www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au/pages/Resources/aboriginal\\_learners\\_ILP/](http://www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au/pages/Resources/aboriginal_learners_ILP/)

76 <http://www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/pages/Educators/36714/>

77 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced/pages/specialneeds/NEP/>

78 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/drugstrategy/pages/documents/schoolsaig/>

## Appendix: Checklist of actions consistent with DECD policy requirements

### Recommended actions

Schools should:

- implement the National Safe Schools Framework<sup>79</sup>
- support teachers within their first five years of employment with DECD to complete the training program: *Your classroom: Safe, orderly and productive*<sup>80</sup>
- encourage ancillary staff to complete the training program: *Contributing to a safe and positive learning community*<sup>81</sup>
- if teachers are interacting with students with significant behavioural issues, support staff in *Non-violent intervention*<sup>82</sup> training
- train counsellors and other key staff in methods of intervention such as the *Six methods of intervention in dealing with bullying*<sup>83</sup> and *SMART: Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma* professional learning for staff<sup>84, 85</sup>)
- use the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum site implementation rubric to audit implementation
- implement the recommended practices outlined in *Cyber safety: Keeping children safe in a connected world*<sup>86</sup>, including supporting teachers to access the online training provided by ACMA.



79 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/NationalSafeSchoolsFramework.aspx>

80 Training can be delivered by staff from the school's Regional Office

81 Training can be delivered by staff from the school's Regional Office

82 Training can be delivered by staff from the school's Regional Office

83 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>

84 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/cpProfessionalDevelopment/>

85 Also Making Space for Learning Trauma: Informed Practice in Schools <http://www.childhood.org.au/resources/>

86 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf)

## Recommended reading for key school staff

### National documents

- National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)<sup>87</sup>
- National Safe Schools Framework Resource Manual<sup>88</sup>
- National Safe Schools Framework school audit tool<sup>89</sup>, pp 2–5

### Coalition documents at [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/)

- School Questionnaires on bullying and harassment including an explanation why schools should conduct surveys
- Six methods of intervention in dealing with bullying
- Current thinking about tackling bullying and violence including;
  - prevention coping and intervention strategies
  - feeling safe: change in bullying prevalence over time
  - effective implementation and recent research and thinking about how to tackle bullying, harassment and violence in school settings
- list of publications about current thinking regarding tackling bullying, harassment and violence

Also on this website are the following DECD developed documents:

- *An anti-bullying policy— School audit checklist*
- the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum site implementation rubric
- response level and types of behaviour

### DECD documents

- The Cossey Report<sup>90</sup>
- State Government's response<sup>91</sup> to the Cossey Report
- Circular to schools *Implementation of Cossey Review Report Recommendations*

87 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/NationalSafeSchoolsFramework.aspx>

88 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFrameworkResourceManual.pdf>

89 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Documents/NSSFrameworkResourceManual.pdf>

90 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/Cossey\\_Report.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/Cossey_Report.pdf)

91 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/aboutdept/files/links/ResponseCosseyReport.pdf>

# Appendix: Checklist of actions consistent with DECD policy requirements

## Recommended reading for key school staff – continued

### Child protection documents

- the Keeping Safe child protection curriculum
- *Responding to abuse and neglect: Education and care (RAN-EC) training*
- *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people*<sup>92</sup>
- *Suicide postvention guidelines*<sup>93</sup>
- *Information sharing: Guidelines for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families*<sup>94</sup>
- *Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people: Guidelines for staff in education and care settings*<sup>95</sup>
- *SMART: Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma* professional learning for staff<sup>96, 97</sup>
- DECD Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy 2011<sup>98</sup>
- The DECD School Dress Code<sup>99</sup>

### Child and student wellbeing document

- *Learner Wellbeing*<sup>100</sup> framework birth to year 12

### School discipline and behaviour management documents

- The School Discipline Policy<sup>101</sup>
- The School Discipline Policy Implementation Kit<sup>102</sup>
- *Reducing bullying in schools: A professional development resource*<sup>103</sup> and its accompanying DVD *Reducing bullying: Evidence based strategies for schools*<sup>104</sup>
- *Keeping schools safe: Guidelines for site leaders*<sup>105</sup>
- *Making our sites safer—Fact Sheets*<sup>106</sup>
- *Bullying and harassment at school: Advice for parents and caregivers* a revised brochure for parents<sup>107</sup>

92 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf>

93 <http://www.crisis.sa.edu.au/pages/EM05/30674/>

94 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/36801/](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/36801/)

95 Refer to Appendix 1 (p 34) for a prevention checklist  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/RespondingtoProblemSexual.pdf>

96 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/cpProfessionalDevelopment/>

97 Also Making Space for Learning Trauma: Informed Practice in Schools <http://www.childhood.org.au/resources/>

98 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SexualHarassmentPreventio.pdf>

99 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDressCode.doc>

100 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/learnerwellbeing/pages/frame/framework](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/learnerwellbeing/pages/frame/framework)

101 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDisciplinePolicy.pdf>

102 Provided to all DECD schools in 1998. See Section 2 on SSO Support Online (SSO net > student health and wellbeing > behaviour management)

103 Provided to all DECD schools in 2004

104 Provided to all DECD secondary schools in 2007

105 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/legislationPolicies/](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/legislationPolicies/)

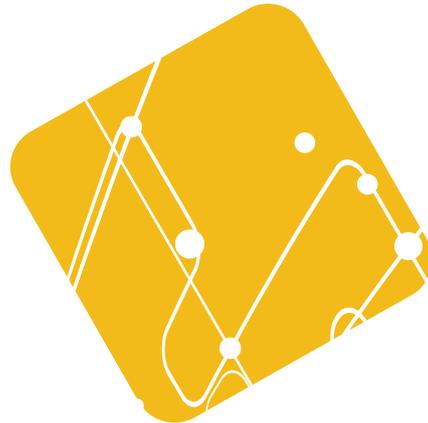
106 <http://www.crisis.sa.edu.au/pages/EM05>

107 [http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Bullying\\_Brochure\\_DECS.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Bullying_Brochure_DECS.pdf)

## Recommended reading for key school staff – continued

### Cyber safety documents

- *Cyber safety: Keeping children safe in a connected world*<sup>108</sup>
- sample cyber-safety use agreement proformas<sup>109</sup> for preschool, primary/middle and secondary children and students
- permission to publish student and adult photos and work forms<sup>110</sup>
- *Making our sites safer: E-crime*<sup>111</sup>
- DECS Circular 09/3677: *The action principals can take for incidents of cyber-bullying or electronic crime*<sup>112</sup>
- *Cyber bullying, e-crime and the protection of children and young people*<sup>113</sup>—Advice for families



108 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberSafetyKeepingChildre.pdf)

109 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/36219/>

110 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/36219/>

111 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/MossECrime\\_1.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/MossECrime_1.pdf)

112 [www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Cyber\\_bullying.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Cyber_bullying.pdf)

113 <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/CyberBullyingECrimeandthe.pdf>



Developed with advice from the university members of the *Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools*

This document and support information is available at the Coalition website <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/bullying/saferschools/>