



Media Release

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Guidelines on bullying

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) views bullying in a very serious light. Bullying represents an attack on human dignity and cannot be tolerated.

We have to adopt a zero tolerance approach to bullying if we want to build a caring society based on the values of our Constitution.

Dr Matthi Theron, Director of Specialised Education Support Services at the WCED, says that being bullied is very distressing for the victim and needs to be dealt with. Children who are bullied are reluctant to tell adults due to feelings of shame and fear.

Dr Theron has provided the following guidelines on how to identify and manage bullying in schools:

Signs of being bullied may be:

- Not wanting to go to school
- Finding excuses for not going to school, such as feeling sick
- Sudden drop in grades
- Wanting to go to school a different way to avoid the bullying children.
- Being very tense, fearful and unhappy after school
- Talking about hating school
- Bruises and/or scratches and/or cuts
- Talking about not having any friends
- Refusing to tell parent about what happens at school
- Insomnia
- Nervous when another child approaches
- Afraid of meeting new people or trying new things

Management of the victim

When a learner confides in an educator/parent about being bullied, the educator should be referred to the principal for attention. Depending on the circumstances the learner and the learner who bullied him/her should be referred to a School social worker or Psychologist. The following are

suggestions on how to deal with the learner:

- Listen to the learner and take his or her feelings and fears seriously.
- Do not take over control, thereby making the learner feel less in control.
- Let the learner know that bullying is wrong.
- Tell the learner to work out, as far as possible, his or her own ways of dealing with the problem.
- Find a buddy for the learner to deter bullying
- Do not allow the bullying to continue.
- Help the learner to feel good about other things in class / at home
- Do not suggest to the learner that he or she is a "sissy" or weak .
- Help the learner to think of ways to avoid the bullying situation.
- Work on building the learner's confidence about the things he or she does well.

Parents should ask the principal if the school has an anti bullying policy. Educators should also inform parents of the content of the Abuse No More protocol.

Abuse No More protocol

The WCED has developed the Abuse No More policy document to assist schools, employees and learners in dealing effectively with the problem of child abuse.

It is crucial that the rights of learners are respected and protected and that learning environments are created where learners can, free from abuse, make full use of their learning opportunities.

The [Abuse no More](#) document can be found on the WCED web site at <http://wced.wcape.gov.za> (search the A – Z index for "Child abuse policy").

Meanwhile, parents should approach the principal of the school concerned to report incidents of bullying. Parents can contact the nearest Education Management and Development Centre (EMDC) of the WCED if they are not happy with the response of the school.

Learners can contact the WCED's Safe Schools Call Centre for advice, at 0800-45-46-47.

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http://wced.wcape.gov.za/comms/press/2005/40_bully.html