**Guide to using the resource**

ACT Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative and the ACT P&C Council have released a pocket guide to mark National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. The pocket guide resource is intended as one resource to assist students respond to bullying and violence at school. Addressing harassment, bullying and violence requires shared community responsibility, everyone can play a part. This resource is a quick reference that children and young people can carry with them, and a resource that parents/carers and teachers can also use to start conversations about the importance of shared community values and the role that bystander behaviour can play in preventing, reducing and responding to bullying and violence.

It is not the responsibility of children and young people to prevent or stop bullying and violence and this resource should not be used to communicate a message that blames victims. Feeling empowered to identify and challenge exclusion, harassment, bullying and violence can make an important difference, but it’s not a guarantee that these things won’t happen.

**Preparing your pocket guide**

To prepare your pocket guide, either watch the handy video on our website (saisact.info) or follow these directions:

1. Cut the A4 sheet in half, along the cut line. Trim the white border. One A4 print out will make 2 pocket guides.
2. Fold lengthwise in half along the centre line, with “SPEAK UP AT SCHOOL” on the outside.
3. Lay the pocket guide flat, with the actions facing up. Fold the GET HELP panel in to the centre line. Fold the DISCUSS panel in to the centre line.
4. Fold in half. Your pocket guide is now ready! The title panel SPEAK UP AT SCHOOL should be on the front.

**What actions can you take?**

**Discuss**

Teachers and parents/carers can facilitate regular conversations about the kind of school community children and young people wish to learn in. Children and young people can also be very articulate in identifying the kind of the community environment they want, and in identifying creative ways to make their school and wider community safer, more inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

Everyone should be able to be themselves at school and feel safe and welcome for who they are. Diversity exists in all schools, whether it be family make up, appearance, culture, religion, sex, gender or sexuality.

* *Start by exploring prosocial behaviours and school values.*
* *Have open and positive discussions about diversity and respectful behaviour to encourage respect and understanding.*
* *Build a sense of empathy by asking questions about how it might feel to be excluded, picked on, bullied or hurt.*

**Speak Up**

There are often witnesses when bullying and violence happens. The way bystanders behave when harassment, bullying and violence occur makes a big difference to the person who is targeted, as well as to the person whose behaviour is not OK. It is one way children and young people can contribute to safer school environments. Ethical bystanders don’t let bullying and violence slide. When it is safe to do so, they intervene using words or actions.

There are times where speaking up may not be safe or is an insufficient response, especially when physical violence occurs. If physical violence is happening, this is a time where children and young people need to get adult help to manage the immediate situation.

* *Have a conversation with your child or young person about how they would be an ethical bystander if they saw something happening at school.*
* *Explore different scenarios with your young person and support them to identify the limits of SPEAK UP and when GET HELP is required.*

**Stand With**

Sometimes speaking up isn’t easy. If someone is already speaking up, children and young people can lend their support. Standing next to someone who is speaking out provides a visual sense of solidarity as well as moral support. And agreeing when someone says “That’s not OK here” or “We don’t behave like that here” contributes to the sense of shared community values and standards. Sometimes just standing alongside a person who is being bullied or harassed sends a clear message that they are not alone, even if nothing else can happen right then.

* *Prompt your child/young person to remember a time when they felt supported by their peers. Reflect on how they helped them in their actions.*
* *Talk about examples of community change where people have taken a stand together.*
* *Check in with peers if something has happened. Ask them what will help, and encourage them to get more help.*

**Get Help**

Often, children and young people need adult help when managing bullying and violence. Identifying when additional help is needed, who can help and asking for help can be tricky skills to acquire.

* *Talk to children and young people about situations they can manage, and what kind of situations they would need help with.*
* *Have a discussion with students about who in their school and community could help them if something not OK is happening. Talk about what to do if adults don’t listen, don’t understand or don’t help.*
* *Rehearse asking for help and praise your child or young person when they do.*

**These actions aren’t just for National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence – these are everyday actions.**