



Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

promoting, protecting and preserving human rights

Date: 4 May 2017

Human Rights Commission's Statement on Anti-Bullying Day

The Human Rights Commission supports the United Nations' recognition of 4 May as Anti-Bullying Day, a part of its campaign to protect children from violence.

A report by the UN Secretary General found that childhood bullying was related to two attributes of the UN's global development agenda¹: creating high quality education through the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence (Goal 4), and promoting peaceful societies by ending child abuse, trafficking, and other forms of violence against and torture of children (Goal 16).

The Commission agrees with the UN's approach to bullying. Equally, under the Cayman Islands' own Constitution a number of rights may be breached in situations involving bullying in schools including; section 3 – dealing with Torture and Inhuman Treatment; section 9 – dealing with Private and Family Life; section 16 – dealing with Non-discrimination; section 17 – dealing specifically with the Protection of Children; and section 20 – dealing with Education.

As well as the use of physical violence bullying includes verbal abuse and cyber-bullying through email, messaging or social media to harass a victim. These non-physical bullying behaviours can often have an even more harrowing impact. With the advent of cyber-bullying a victim can be taunted constantly; in their own home, at weekends, when away on holiday. The constant bombardment of victims without respite can be particularly demoralising and for many of its victims it is not something that they can just shrug off or ignore - it can become utterly devastating.

There is a misconception that bullying is 'just a part of growing up' - it is not and it never was. Bullying causes loneliness, depression and anxiety; it has an impact on academic performance and is associated with increased school dropout rates. It can have long-lasting consequences for children's development.

For some victims it can become completely overwhelming. Studies by Yale University have found that victims of bullying are between two and nine times as likely to report suicidal thoughts.² A 2008 UK study found that nearly half of suicides amongst 10 – 14 year olds were due to bullying.³

Bullying directly undermines the fundamental idea that all human beings share an inherent dignity. Children's prejudices and ideas of what is acceptable behaviour invariably reflect those of the rest of society, and for that reason bullying is not just a children's issue but one for all of us. Turning a blind eye

¹ http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/documents/docs/A-71-213_EN.pdf.

² <http://news.yale.edu/2008/07/16/bullying-suicide-link-explored-new-study-researchers-yale>

³ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/research-finds-bullying-link-to-child-suicides-1999349.html>

to the culture of cruelty that bullying seeks to perpetuate lends support to the belief that some sorts of abuse or discrimination are permissible. Equally, whilst there is rightly a focus on childhood bullying, it should not be forgotten that bullying can take place in other environments, including the workplace, and that adults can also suffer as victims.

The Commission has identified bullying as one of the key issues which it wishes to address in 2017. For that reason, and in order to try to support the UN's initiative to combat bullying, the Commission has prepared a resource packet for parents, teachers and students that discusses what bullying is, what the potential consequences are, and provides suggested strategies on how to tackle it. If you are interested in receiving a packet you can visit the Commission's website at www.humanrightscommission.ky, or request a printed version by e-mailing info@humanrightscommission.ky or calling 244-3685.

Ends.