

Bullying

We have an expert team to support our students.

Our pastoral care team includes junior and senior deans, a behavioural psychologist, specialist guidance counsellors, and youth workers from Kahu Youth and 24-7.



Our guidance counsellors
Victoria Stewart and Holly McDiarmid

How to contact our guidance counsellors

E: dept-guidance@mtaspiring.school.nz

T: 020 404 94623 or 03 443 0496

We know from research that a coordinated and collaborative approach is the best way to respond to bullying. When the school community, students, staff and whānau work together to address bullying, we are more likely to see positive change in behaviour.



— TE KURA O TITITEA —
MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE

INFORMATION SHEET

What is bullying?

There are three types of bullying behaviour: physical, verbal and social. The most widely-accepted definitions of bullying comprise five elements:

- Bullying is deliberate.
 - Bullying is harmful and not a normal part of growing up.
 - Bullying involves a power imbalance.
 - Bullying is repeated behaviour.
 - Bullying is often disguised as 'having a bit of fun' or 'banter'.
- Some bullying behaviour can be easy to see such as hitting someone or calling them names.
 - Other bullying behaviour can be harder for others to see, such as whispering, excluding, threatening looks, or restricting who someone can talk to or where they can sit.
 - Bullying can happen in person or online.
 - Cyberbullying where digital technology is used to bully or harass someone.

What is not bullying

Bullying involves an ongoing or repeated misuse of power in a relationship with the intention to cause harm. Not liking someone, a single unkind act, or isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence are not bullying.

Bullying happens everywhere

Research shows that bullying behaviour occurs everywhere, including in schools, in families, in communities, and in the workplace. [The Ministry of Education He Whakaaro report \(2021\)](#) found that:

- New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bullying in the world.
- Around 38% of Year 9 students reported that they were bullied on a monthly basis.
- About 33% of 15-year-old students in New Zealand report that they have never been bullied.
- 'Being made fun of' and 'being excluded on purpose from activities' are the most common forms of bullying.
- Students that are more likely to be exposed to bullying are: male, disabled, LGBTQIA+ (particularly transgender students), New Zealand born, low achievers, and from a disadvantaged background.
- About 27% of students self-reported engaging in bullying behaviours, and up to a third of students taking part in bullying might themselves be bullied.

INFORMATION SHEET

Signs that may indicate a child is being bullied

- seems anxious or negative about school
- avoids school or wants to change the way they travel to school
- drops out of sport and other activities
- begins doing poorly in schoolwork
- comes home hungry on a regular basis (someone may have taken their lunch)
- seems withdrawn (not talking), distressed, anxious or unhappy
- has trouble sleeping or frequent nightmares especially on Sundays or at the end of school holidays
- stops eating
- socialises less with family and friends
- has unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- loses or brings home damaged belongings or clothes on a regular basis
- is visibly upset after using a device or suddenly begins avoiding it
- refuses to say what is wrong (too frightened of the bully).

How we deal with bullying at school

- We **prioritise student wellbeing** by building a [safe, caring and inclusive environment](#).
- We know from research that when the school community, students, staff and whānau **work together** to address bullying, we are more likely to see positive change in behaviour.
- If you believe your child is being bullied or is bullying another child, please **contact your child's dean**.
- If more support is needed, your child's dean will bring in further support from our specialist team of counsellors or senior leaders.
- We thoroughly **investigate all reported incidents of bullying** and follow a restorative practice process which focuses on building and maintaining positive and respectful relationships across our school community.
- We have a range of **policies relating to bullying**, its management, and student wellbeing more generally. You can view these documents at the [SchoolDocs policies and procedures website](#) and by entering the user code: mtaskiring and password: success

Resources

[Bullying-Free NZ](#)

[Ministry of Education](#)

[Netsafe](#)

[What's up?](#)

Tips for parents

If your child is being bullied

It's important to step in if you're concerned about your child being bullied, as your support is vital to your child's wellbeing. You should contact the school immediately if your child's safety is at risk.

- **Encourage your child to talk** about what has happened and assure them that they have a right to be safe.
- **Make notes** about the nature of the bullying, how frequent it is, and who is involved.
- **Make an appointment at school** to talk with your child's dean.
- **Work together with the school** and make sure your child has a say in the process.
- **Ask the school what steps will be taken** and if a plan will be developed to deal with the problem.
- Recognise that **investigating the situation at school will take time**.
- **Keep a written record** of when you contacted the school, who you spoke to, and any agreements that were made.
- **Stay in touch with the school** and let them know if problems continue or something new happens.
- **Seek professional help** if you need it.

If your child is displaying bullying behaviours

- **Ask them** what they think is going on and what they think might help them
- **Consider what is going on at home** and whether any major events have occurred that may have upset your child.
- **Explain what bullying is** and help them understand how their behaviour affects others.
- **Let them know you support them** even if you do not support bullying.
- **Make an appointment at school** to talk with your child's teacher or their dean.
- **Seek professional help** if you need it.

