

14 March 2019

Parents urged to take the lead in preventing bullying among young people

Parents are faced with a myriad of concerns when it comes to the safety and wellbeing of their children; but often near the top of the list is bullying – both online and face-to-face.

On this National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (15 March) the peak body for parents with children in Catholic schools says that we all have a part to play in addressing bullying, including parents.

Council of Catholic School Parents (CCSP) Executive Director, Peter Grace, says that bullying is learned behaviour, which makes the type of behaviour that parents model for their children incredibly important.

“Bullying is an area of great concern for many parents, and understandably so. Any parent of a child that has been bullied knows how distressing it is, not only for the child, but for the whole family.

“To help prevent bullying, Catholic schools have their own bullying prevention strategies in place and it is critical that parents actively engage in and support these strategies. Schools also have policies and processes in place to manage reported bullying behaviour so that it is addressed as early as possible.

“At home, children are watching and learning from the adults in their lives, so we must be conscious of the examples we set for them. Do our thoughts, words and actions build up or tear down the dignity of others?

“The 2019 National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence theme is *Bullying. No Way! Take action every day*. By setting good examples and reinforcing positive behaviour on a daily basis, parents and carers are helping to prevent bullying among children and young people.

“So, today let’s pause for a minute and consider how we manage conflict in our own lives, how we respond when things don’t go according to plan and how we engage with people on social media. Do we speak up to challenge behaviour we know is not right?” Mr Grace said.

CCSP says that to help prevent cyberbullying, parents should monitor their children’s use of electronic devices and educate their children about cyber safety and being socially responsible users of technology.

“Cyber safety education is not something that schools are solely responsible for. Many children are using devices at home and parents have a responsibility to establish rules, guidelines and expectations around their children’s use of technology. Encourage device free time, monitor your child’s social media and online activity, ensure you support your school’s policy on the use of mobile devices and explore the Office of the eSafety Commissioner’s website for information on cyber safety.

“The Catholic tradition teaches that parents are the first educators of their children. We, as parents, are their role models. As they grow, our children are also influenced by other sources such as television, movies, games, friends and social media. Again, it is important that we, as parents, are aware of what our children are being exposed to, that we talk about the type of behaviour we expect from them, as well as the impact that negative behaviours have on others. As parents, we might also like to reflect on our own use of digital devices and social media and the examples we are setting for our children,” Mr Grace said.

Parents can access a range of useful resources on bullying including:

- National Day Against Bullying and Violence – <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner – <https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent>
- NSW Anti-Bullying Strategy website – <https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers>
- Raising Children Network – <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/behaviour/bullying>
- National Centre Against Bullying – <https://www.ncab.org.au/>

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