



SAOU: FREE STATE NEWSLETTER 4/2017

TO: SAOU SHOP STEWARDS
FOR ATTENTION: ALL SAOU MEMBERS

“6 Dangerous myths about bullying”

Don't be the parent or teacher who believes these clichés about school bullying.

SOURCE: Parent24: 23 January 2017

http://www.parent24.com/Child_7-12/Development/6-dangerous-myths-about-bullying-20170123

As much as everyone agrees that bullying is bad, children, parents and teachers sometimes fall into the trap of believing it's a normal part of childhood – like a rite of passage or initiation – and that there is nothing much they can, or should, do.

Education expert **Dr Gillian Mooney**, Teaching and Learning Manager at The Independent Institute of Education, shares some often-believed myths with us and warns against this outdated way of thinking.

1. FALSE: "Adults should stay out of it when children are bullied"

Don't think that children should "work it out". Adults *must* become involved. Teachers can monitor bullies to deter bullying behaviour. Principals can discipline. Parents can report to schools.

• *Does your school have an effective anti-bullying strategy?*

2. FALSE: "Boys are the most likely victims"

Both boys and girls are equally susceptible to bullying, although perhaps in different ways. Both boys and girls are the targets of physical bullying. Girls are more likely to experience relational, sexual and cyberbullying.

3. FALSE: "Children should just toughen up"

This myth is a hangover from ideas like "boys will be boys". Bullying can cause real harm and should not be ignored.

• *4 ways to deal with a bully*

4. FALSE: "Bystanders should stay out of it when they witness bullying"

Evidence suggests that bystanders are also affected by witnessing bullying. Observers also give bullies the audiences that they crave, and legitimacy if they do not sanction the behaviour. Children can be taught to reduce bullying by noticing, reporting and intervening.

5. FALSE: "It is easy to spot a bullied child"

Children do not report everything that happens in their lives to their parents. Adults need to find ways to make reporting bullying easier for children, and to follow up effectively when they do.

6. FALSE: "Bullying is about a kid being beaten up"

Not true. Bullying is when anyone, or a group, picks on someone else – whether it's physical, emotional, social or virtual (cyberbullying). Deliberately ridiculing someone, publicly or privately humiliating someone, excluding someone socially and breaking down someone's self-worth are all equally as damaging as physical harm.

• ***Bullying videos and social media: what the law says***

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