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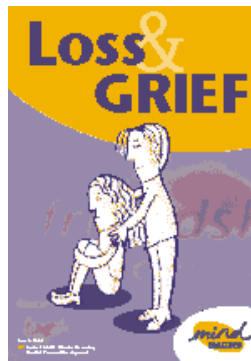
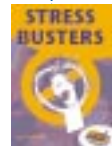
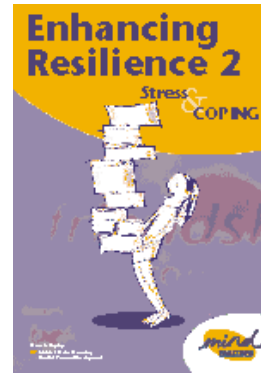
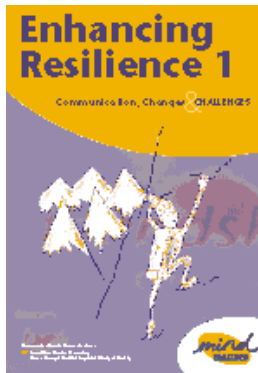
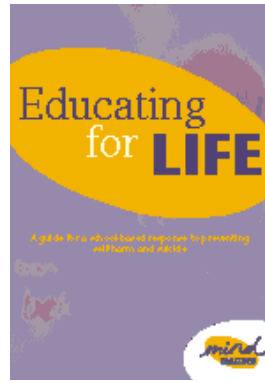
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# The Mind Matters Materials



*This booklet is part of MindMatters: a mental health promotion resource for secondary schools. It is best used as part of a comprehensive whole school approach to the promotion of mental health as outlined in the SchoolMatters booklet.*

## MindMatters resources

### **SchoolMatters: mapping and managing mental health in schools**

This overarching document provides schools with a framework and planning tools to assist them with possible structures, strategies, partnerships and curriculum programs to promote and protect the mental health of all members of the school community.

### **Educating for Life: a guide for school-based responses to preventing self-harm and suicide**

This guide outlines the policies, processes and practices that contribute to a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention.

### **Enhancing Resilience 1: Communication, Changes and Challenges**

The curriculum units are designed to enhance resilience via the promotion of communication, participation, positive self-regard, teamwork and a sense of belonging and connectedness to school, and are particularly useful for new groups.

### *Creating connections*

Activities for the Home Group, Personal Development, Pastoral Care or core curriculum teacher, focussing on issues of communication, codes of behaviour and team work.

### *Games collection*

A collection of interactive games designed to promote communication, cooperation and teambuilding. Suitable for use within each of the key learning areas.

### *Friendship and belonging*

Activities for the English class exploring the challenge of making and maintaining friendships.

### *People, identity and culture*

Activities for the Study of Society class exploring personal and social identity, and addressing issues of belonging and culture.

### **Enhancing Resilience 2: Stress and Coping**

This booklet guides schools in their focus on enhancing the resilience and connectedness of their students. It is targeted at middle to senior secondary students and deals with the importance of providing ongoing opportunities for participation and communication, creating a positive school culture, friendly relationships, and valuing school and community. Two booklets, designed for use in Health, Pastoral Care or Religious Education, address issues of coping with stress and challenge, help-seeking, peer support, stress-management, and goal setting.

### *Coping*

Activities for Health or Pastoral Care in which students identify some of the stresses and challenges young people have to deal with, and explore the range of emotions commonly associated with feelings of stress. They examine a range of coping strategies and consider ways of dealing with a range of challenging circumstances.

### *Stressbusters*

Activities for Health or Pastoral Care in which students explore the role and effect of supportive groups, the role of trust and courage in help-seeking behaviour, and explore conflict resolution and stress-management techniques.

## **A Whole School Approach to Dealing with Bullying and Harassment**

This booklet guides schools in their attempts to take a whole school approach to dealing with bullying and harassment. A comprehensive check list to guide policy and practice is included. Three curriculum units, targeted at junior secondary school students, are provided for use in the Health, English and Drama class. The Health unit is also suitable for Personal Development and Pastoral Care classes. It is anticipated that schools would choose one of the units for use with a particular class.

*Facing facts: a whole school approach to dealing with bullying and harassment for use in the Health class*

Students define and give examples of

different types of bullying and harassment, and consider the effects of bullying on victims, perpetrators and onlookers. They identify common barriers to seeking help or taking protective action. They are equipped to research bullying in their own school and use interactive exercises to develop help-seeking and assertiveness.

*Giving voice: a whole school approach to dealing with bullying and harassment for use in the English class*

Students explore the language of bullying and look at forms of bullying perpetuated at different levels of society. They use group work and participatory exercises to read, write and discuss poetry, stories and newspaper items, exploring the effects of bullying and possibilities for protective action.

*Defining moments: a whole school approach to dealing with bullying and harassment for use in the Drama class*

Students explore the body language of status and power, identify and enact common human responses to messages of welcome or rejection, and use a range of dramatic devices to depict and examine the stories and experiences of oppression, and to prepare a performance piece around the theme of bullying.

## **Understanding Mental Illnesses**

This document provides an overview of the issues a school may face in relation to mental illness among students, staff and families. It includes a curriculum unit, aimed at middle to senior secondary students, that intends to increase students' understanding of mental illness, reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems, and increase help-seeking behaviour. A video accompanies this curriculum unit, and this is also relevant for considering mental illness and stigma with any school audience.

## **Loss and Grief**

Issues of loss and grief have been linked to depression, and traditionally such issues have been under-explored in schools. This document provides an overview of school practices relevant to dealing with death and loss within the school, including a sequence of lessons for junior, middle and senior secondary school students.

## **MindMatters Website:**

**[www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters)**

### *School Stories: MindMatters case studies*

Schools participating in the pilot phase of the *MindMatters* project have provided a description of some the ways in which they approached mental health promotion within their local community, and of the difficulties and successes encountered.

### *MindMatters Annotated Bibliography*

The bibliography provides direction for teachers about other useful resources in the areas of mental health and mental illness. These include print materials, videos and web sites, with brief comments on the use, target audience and relevance of each resource.

*MindMatters is available from:*

**Curriculum Corporation  
PO Box 177  
Carlton South VIC 3053  
Australia**

**Tel 03 9207 9600  
Fax 03 9639 1616**

**Email sales: [sales@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:sales@curriculum.edu.au)**

*Or download from the MindMatters website:*

**<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters>**

# How to use this booklet

It is intended that the classroom program will be taught as part of a comprehensive whole school approach to mental health promotion as outlined in the *SchoolMatters* and *Educating for Life* booklets. As part of a whole school approach, professional development and collegial support should be available to the classroom teacher.

It is recommended that teachers use, or encompass, the whole unit of work to

enhance student awareness, knowledge and skills. Using one or two sessions from the start of each unit is likely to raise awareness, but allow insufficient time for skill-development. Teachers should read the introductory section of the booklet that outlines some of the key concepts and research relevant to the issues covered in the classroom program.

## KEY

### SESSION

A session includes a series of activities that may extend over a number of lessons. Time taken to complete any activity can vary greatly from class to class. Teachers may wish to modify activities to suit the needs of their class.

### INTENTION

The intention identifies the knowledge and skills to work towards in the session.

### RESOURCES

A list of the resources required for the session.

### HOW TO

In the 'How to' section, a step by step approach is used to model how the session might be run.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Sample questions are provided as a guide to class discussion.




### TEACHER TIPS

Assistance and advice is provided for the teacher in the form of teacher tips in boxes in the left column.

### TEACHER TALK

This text provides information to be provided to the class or background information for the teacher.

### Classroom resources:

-  activity sheets are provided as masters
-  information sheets are provided as masters
-  overhead transparency masters

# Rationale

## A whole school approach to dealing with bullying

In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in the ways young people cope with the circumstances they confront in their lives. Schools are very much aware that just as physical illness can affect a student's performance or capacity to concentrate and engage in study, so too can a challenging personal or family situation, relationship problem or mental health problem.

Schools committed to the welfare and learning of their students are addressing the questions:

- How can we provide a safe and supportive environment in which all students can maximise their learning?
- How can we remain accessible and responsive to their needs?
- How can we assist our students to develop their ability to cope with challenge and stress?
- How can we identify those students in particular need of assistance or support?
- How can we support students who are dealing with experiences of trauma or dislocation?

A whole school approach to dealing with bullying models some of the processes schools can use to support students in developing their ability to cope with change and challenge.

A whole school approach to promoting positive relationships entails:

- a shift from a focus on fixing individuals, to that of creating healthy systems
- a shift from problems-based needs assessment to a belief in human potential for development, learning and wellbeing
- an acknowledgment that the 'health of the helper' is critical.\*

The conceptual model underpinning *MindMatters* is that of the Health Promoting School. This model entails a focus on the interconnecting domains of curriculum, school ethos and partnership (see diagram on page 18). Often when using schools as a setting for health promotion or intervention, only the domain of curriculum is targeted, forgetting the impact of school ethos and environment, and the power and potential support to be generated through partnerships with parents, community and service providers. For further material on a whole school approach see the *SchoolMatters* booklet.

### The Health Promoting Schools framework



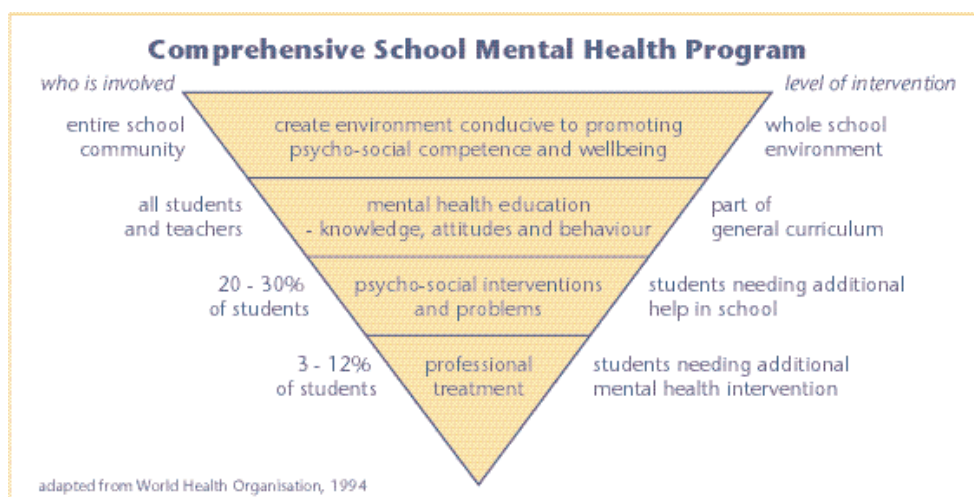
\* Benard (1997) 'A Framework for Practice: Tapping Innate Resilience', in *Resiliency in Action*

Taking a whole school approach to dealing with bullying acknowledges those students with particular needs, and seeks to provide for them. In addition it seeks to promote and provide a safe and supportive environment, and an ethos conducive to mental health and learning. The World Health Organisation model of a comprehensive school mental health program is a useful guide in considering the place of school-based efforts.

The myth that bullying is an acceptable and often unavoidable part of growing up, has long stood in the way of progress in this area. Adults frequently have difficulty accepting that an apparently likable child may be perpetrating bullying behaviour. Most studies show that bullying has an incidence of one in seven, involves boys more than girls, and is at its peak in the first two years of secondary schooling. Bullying takes on a

different form for girls, in that isolation is its most frequent form. Boys are much more likely to be physical or aggressive in their bullying.

With regard to the level of access and involvement they have with young people, schools are uniquely placed to



debunk long-held myths that can prevent effective action against bullying. The major myth is that to do anything will only make it worse. Schools should look at their own practices and policies to ensure that they are not unwittingly tolerating bullying. Strategies for classroom management should not perpetuate stigma or verbal bullying via the use of sarcasm, intimidation or public humiliation.

## Understanding bullying

Only a small percentage of children ever tell anyone they are being bullied, and if they do, it is the staff at school who are the least likely to be told.

The provision of a safe and supportive learning environment is part of the core business of any school. Anecdotally, we have always known that the effects of bullying can undermine a child's wellbeing and ability to learn. Research confirms this to be the case. It not only brings problems for the victim, whose self-esteem is undermined, but for bullies who continue to misuse their power and become 35 to 40 per cent more likely to have criminal convictions as adults.

### Bullying – a definition

It is important that bullying be defined, and that clear messages are sent about what is and is not acceptable behaviour. A school can not address the more subtle forms of bullying if they are not named and understood to be forms of harassment.

Bullying can be defined in the following ways\*:

1. a **repetitive** attack causing distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks
2. involving an **imbalance of power**
3. its nature may be:
  - **verbal** – name-calling, put-downs, threatening
  - **physical** – hitting, tripping, poking, punching, kicking, throwing objects, stealing
  - **social** – ignoring, hiding, ostracising
  - **psychological** – stalking, dirty looks, spreading rumours, hiding and / or damaging possessions.

Racist remarks and homophobic or gender-based put-downs are often ignored by teachers and thus a message is sent that this behaviour will be tolerated.

### **Reasons why young people engage in bullying\***

There are many reasons why a young person may engage in bullying behaviours, including:

- for entertainment or revenge
- to experience power, to prove themselves or impress others
- to compensate for perceived failure or lack of friends, to fit in with what others are doing
- or because it is seen as an acceptable, funny or smart thing to do.

Children who bully often tend to have:

- high energy levels
- good verbal skills and an ability to talk themselves out of trouble

- a high estimation of their own ability
- an ability to manipulate individuals or groups
- an enjoyment of conflict and aggression
- a delight in getting their own way
- the appearance of being popular, but often disliked.

## **Using the Health Promoting Schools framework**

International research suggests that school organisation factors may be more powerful determinants of behaviour than personal factors, and effective reductions in bullying do require a whole school approach. A whole school approach serves to support an environment where it is not acceptable to bully and where the culture says it is okay to 'tell'. In such an environment, the cycle of silence about bullying can be broken (see diagram on page 18).

### **School ethos and environment**

A whole school approach recognises that bullying can be tackled by the child, parents, school staff and community members in a consistent and systematic manner. Appropriate structures, policies and practices need to be in place to provide the tools for dealing with day-to-day incidents of bullying and harassment, and longer term preventative strategies. Anti-bullying policies must be effective in practice and need a broad base of support.

\* adapted from Coosje Griffiths, *Parent Booklet on Bullying*, WA, 1977.

Classroom teaching about bullying can complement a whole school approach against bullying by reinforcing the skills, values and strategies that are needed for students to deal effectively with instances of harassment or bullying.

### Enhancing school culture

Research suggests that the success of best practice strategies associated with positive learning and developmental outcomes in students depends on the ongoing opportunities for participation and on the quality of relationships surrounding them.

Successful schools enhance a sense of belonging, connectedness and self-worth when they:

- build caring relationships
  - offering support, compassion, trust
- set high and achievable expectations
  - offering respect, guidance, affirmation and acknowledgment, building on the strengths of each person
- provide opportunities for participation and contribution
  - responsibilities, real decision-making power, building ownership.

Positive relationships are promoted both within the classroom and via participation in school-wide activities, which build a sense of community, identity and belonging.

### Classroom climate

The classroom climate is acknowledged to be a critical part of school culture. In *MindMatters* the importance of every teacher being a teacher *for* mental

health is emphasised. An anti-bullying program, for example, can be most effective when every teacher stands both as a role-model and a guardian, protecting and modelling respect for the rights and responsibilities of class members. A safe and supportive learning environment in each classroom is an integral part of the Health Promoting School.

#### Classroom climate: advice to the classroom teacher

- be climate oriented, versus task oriented (*attend to how students learn as well as what they learn, build in cooperative tasks, enforce no put-downs rule, promote inclusion and participation*)
- develop rapport (*smile, greet, talk to individuals as well as groups*)
- don't take it personally when students misbehave
- know you can engage common sense (*be helpful, firm and consistent*)
- don't be a doormat; practice effective discipline (*rules protect students' rights to learn*)
- resist labelling your students.

### School partnerships

The partnership between school and home is recognised as being important for a broad range of health and learning outcomes for students. In the area of bullying this partnership takes on particular significance. To deal effectively with problems involving bullying, harassment or exclusion, parents need to be able to discuss the matter with the school and, together, take informed and concerted action to support those involved, whether they be victims, bystanders or perpetrators. Those schools that have worked to establish a climate of openness and communication

with parents are more likely to be effective in addressing the needs of students. Parents may be key informants about the incidence and effect of negative relationships involving their child, or his or her peers. Schools can facilitate communication with parents by developing and publicising procedures to identify and respond to parent or student concerns about bullying.

### **Curriculum materials**

Three teaching units have been designed for use in the Health, English and Drama class curriculum. Schools are encouraged to select the unit that fits best with their teaching program. Each of the units aims to assist students to define and identify bullying behaviours, to explore some of the reasons why bullying occurs and to examine the effects of bullying on victims, bystanders and the perpetrators. Strategies for dealing with bullying and skills of communication, assertion, problem-solving and help-seeking are developed. In each of the units, students are encouraged to consider how to promote a culture of tolerance and respect in which bullying and harassment is not accepted.

### **National curriculum framework**

The curriculum units have been developed to further the appropriate outcomes of the national curriculum frameworks of Health, English and Drama.

## **Professional development**

A number of the resources and activities in this booklet can be used to assist staff to look at the issue of bullying.

It is recommended that interactive processes be used to engage staff in order to promote engagement and ownership. A selection of the activities provided in the teaching units, used in combination with materials provided to guide a whole school approach, can be utilised to structure ongoing reflection and work in this arena.

Recommended activities include activity 3 from session 1, in which bullying behaviours are identified, and activities from sessions 2 and 3, which explore the effects of labelling and bullying.

### **Definitions**

It is important that all staff be aware that bullying is more than physical violence, and that teasing, exclusion, put-downs and sarcasm are also forms of bullying. It is recommended that staff engage with one of the activities around the definition of bullying (either *Giving voice*, session 1 and 2, or *Facing facts*, session 1).

### **Effects**

To examine the effects of bullying on the victim, the perpetrator and the bystanders, activities from sessions 2 and 3 are suggested. The storytelling activities are also ideal for assisting staff to further explore experiences of bullying.

## Myths

It is essential that teachers are aware of some of the common myths surrounding bullying, for example, that the victim is at fault and they must learn to deal with the situation alone, that bystanders have no role and that the bullies are easily recognisable types. Teachers can inadvertently perpetuate bullying practices by failing to take action when it happens in their presence, or by modelling put-downs or sarcasm.

## Researching your students

It is recommended that schools research the type and location of incidents of bullying occurring within the school. The survey tool from *Facing facts*, session 4, can be used across the school. In addition, the provision of maps on which students can mark the places in which they feel least safe can give valuable feedback to guide staff supervision.



# Check list of strategies to reduce bullying and harassment\*

The following is a range of strategies that can be employed by a school to reduce bullying and harassment. These strategies are usually implemented over a period of time, according to the needs of the school. It is not expected that all strategies listed will be implemented by one school. However, the check list can act as an awareness raising exercise for identifying school strengths and areas that may require further focus.

## WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY

**Whole school policy is operable and includes:**

- definitions
- preventative strategies
- ways school will deal with bullying.

**Whole school policy based on information gathered, including:**

- student surveys
- staff surveys
- parent surveys
- other available data, for example, discipline due to student conflict.

**Whole school policy developed collaboratively by:**

- staff
- parents
- students.

**Whole school policy outlined in:**

- staff handbook
- parent information booklet
- student pamphlet.

**Whole school policy reinforced in:**

- school assemblies
- classes
- newsletters
- whole school activities, for example, drama or art
- curriculum.

**Evaluation of effectiveness of school policy:**

- surveys
- monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness.

**Active committee that ensures:**

- policy review
- implementation of ongoing and new strategies
- ongoing skilling of staff
- induction of new and relief staff.

## PLAYGROUND STRATEGIES

**Schoolgrounds committee:**

- analysis of schoolground needs
- monitor and review
- ongoing improvement plans.

**Design and layout:**

- knowledge of trouble spots and hidden areas
- strategies and plans to reduce problems.

**Supervision:**

- staff awareness
- monitoring effectiveness of supervision.

**Lunchtime activities:**

- variety of activities available
- adequate equipment
- equitable access to space and equipment (noting gender and age).

\*by Coosje Griffiths, copyright 1996. Used with permission.

### Student strategies:

- sanctuaries
  - places students can go to if feeling unsafe
- staff
  - students can easily access for help
  - self-protective behaviours are familiar to students
  - peer mediators or counsellors are available.

### Incident response:

- procedures are in place
- procedures are known to all staff, and student counselling and mediation is available through staff.

## WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

### Integrated into subject areas

### Specific classes within health related subjects

### Activities through class or tutor groups

### School resources available:

- videos
- classroom programs
- student literature.

## STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORT

### Staff have training and skills to:

- reinforce school policy
- integrate strategies into class curriculum
- develop class policy and strategies
- reinforce or teach self-protective behaviours to students
- respond effectively to bullying incidents
- refer to appropriate staff
- resolve incidents.

### Staff training is made available for:

- initial policy implementation
- new and ongoing strategies
- new and relief staff.

### Strategies to deal with staff bullying:

- staff to student, staff to staff, staff to parent.

### Support and strategies are available for victimised staff:

- staff to staff, student to staff, parent to staff.

## WHOLE CLASS STRATEGIES

### Classes have policies and strategies in place:

- developed collaboratively with student emphasis on 'no put-down' communications
- reinforcement of positive behaviours
- sanctions are reinforced by administrators
- policies and strategies communicated to parents.

### Classes incorporate curriculum activities:

- themes through subjects, such as drama, art, literature; through classes or tutor groups in secondary schools; positive communications and peer relations courses; effective bystander behaviours; self-protective behaviours training.

### Class teachers have training and support:

- for early identification of bullying
- effective responses to bullying in the classroom
- access to a counsellor
- support for students
- administrator support for reinforcement and sanctions training, resources and personal support.

## PASTORAL CARE SYSTEMS

### Identified personnel who provide pastoral care:

- staff available for support
  - class teacher, school psychologist, school counsellor, chaplain, social worker
- students available for support
  - peer support leaders
  - peer mediators.

### Positive school ethos and practices:

- administrators reinforce positive ethos
- sound behaviour management system
- reinforcement of positive behaviours.

### Counselling and mediation readily available:

- pastoral care staff
- peer mediators or counsellors.

### School resourcing:

- administrator commitment, personnel and financial support, staff and student training
- rooms available for individual and group work.

## SPECIALISED SMALL GROUP WORK

### For vulnerable or victimised students:

- programs which give students general social skills
- social support systems
- strategies to deal with potential incidents, for example, friendship classes and clubs.

### For bullying students:

- programs which give students alternative strategies
- anger management
- assertiveness skills.

### Personnel and resources:

- trained personnel able to run programs
- school support to run programs
- school resources to run programs.

## EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING INCIDENTS

### All staff trained in:

- early identification
- modelling non-bullying behaviour
- various responses
  - individual
  - mediation
  - group
- class familiar with
  - conciliatory methods, procedures and referral to administrator / counsellor.

### Administrators able to:

- provide appropriate sanctions consistently
- conduct conciliatory methods
- provide support to change behaviour
- refer to specialist staff / programs.

### Specialist staff able to:

- provide counselling, negotiation, mediation.

### All students familiar with:

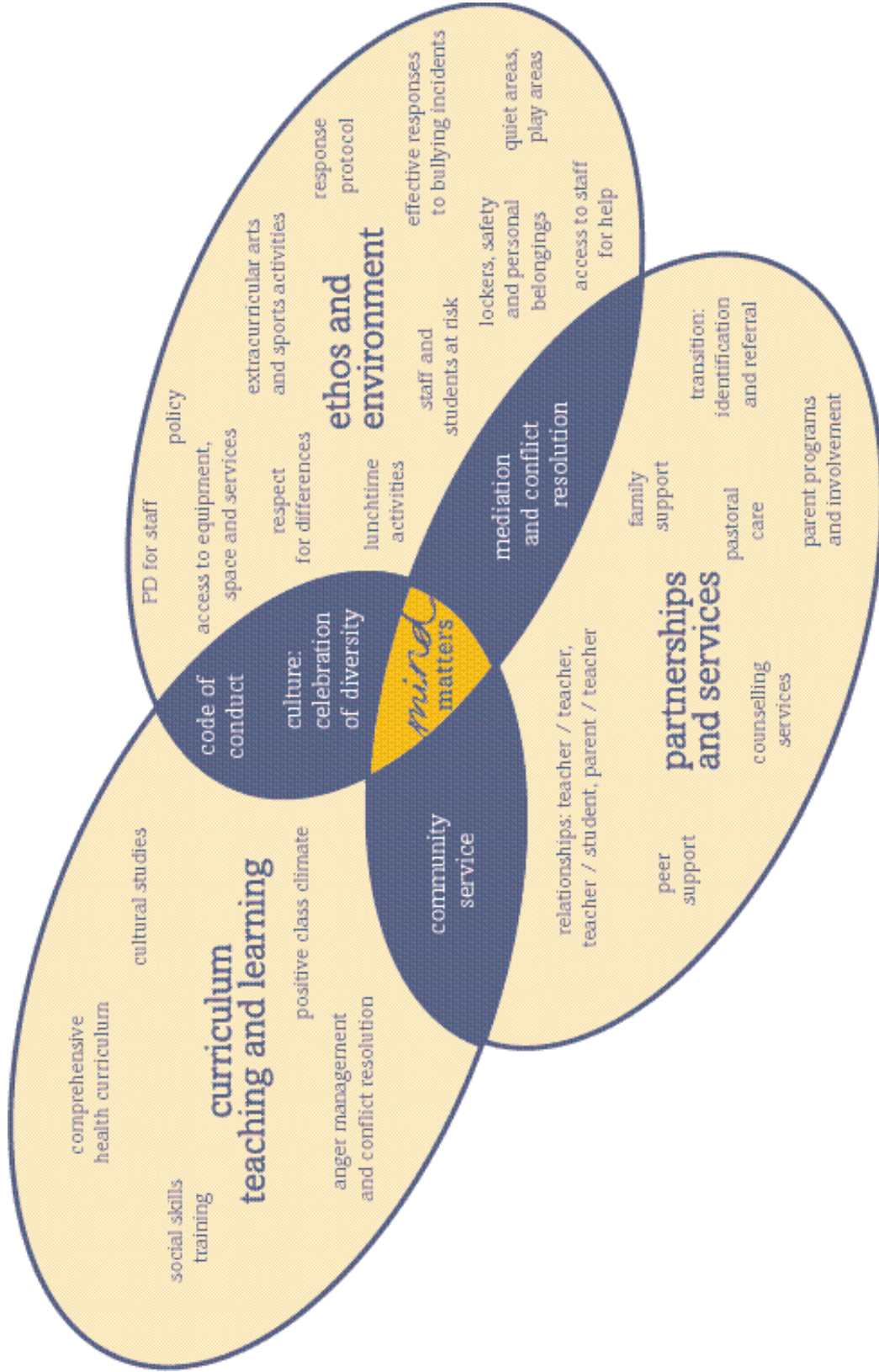
- effective bystander responses.

### Specialist peer support available through trained:

- peer support leaders
- peer mediators.

### Parents supported through:

- knowledge of school policies and procedures involvement
- development and maintenance of policies training / workshops
- knowledge of pastoral care staff for assistance.



## A whole school approach to dealing with bullying and harassment