

# Bullying-Free NZ Week

14–18 May 2018

Let's

TALK

about it!

**Be heard**  
A media guide  
for schools



**TOGETHER WE CAN STOP  
BULLYING AT OUR SCHOOL**

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[www.bullyingfree.nz](http://www.bullyingfree.nz)

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## Who we are

Bullying-Free NZ Week is coordinated by the Bullying Prevention Advisory Group (BPAG). BPAG is an interagency group of 17 organisations, with representatives from the education, health, justice and social sectors, as well as internet safety and human rights advocacy groups. BPAG members share the strongly held view that bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable and are committed to ensuring combined action is taken to reduce bullying in New Zealand Schools. Find out more at <https://www.bullyingfree.nz/about-bullying-free-nz/bpag-who-are-we/>

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# Why use the media?



Many New Zealanders get information and form opinions about issues through local news coverage.

Bullying is more than an interaction between individuals. It occurs because of what happens in peer groups, families and whānau, schools, their communities and the wider environment. That means that steps to prevent bullying and build a safe and caring school environment need to include the whole community.

You can use the news media to help your community understand what bullying is, the importance of preventing bullying, and how they can work with you to prevent it. It can also be a good way of promoting your anti-bullying event or project.

Bullying is everyone's business and making sure that the whole community knows and supports their school's strategies is part of a whole-school approach.

## What is news?

For a news media outlet to be interested, your event or project needs to be interesting and newsworthy for their readers and listeners. Journalists use 'news values' to identify if something is newsworthy:

- It is new
- It is happening – events, new projects
- impacts people
- has local significance – matters to local people and the community
- names and actions of high profile people
- unexpected or out of the ordinary
- timeliness – recent event, or marks a milestone
- conflict
- human interest/people stories.

Most often you will be able to identify one or more news values in your media activity.

- "Students teaching the teachers about bullying prevention" (novelty)

- "All Blacks visit school" (high profile people)
- "Wellington schools shut after transport strike" (local significance)
- "Riverton schools involve community in Pink Shirt Day" (happening now/local significance).

The language of news is bold and simple. News is pitched to a reading age of 12 years. We scan newspapers and magazines, rarely reading every word. When we listen to the radio we are usually doing something else at the same time.

To be effective in the media you need to use the language of the media – bold words, strong statements, colourful quotes.

- Schools join forces to stop cyberbullying epidemic
- Buddy system nips bullying in the bud
- Undercover bullying system no secret weapon for college.

# Developing key messages



To work with the media effectively, you need strong, clear key messages – these are the core things you want to say and want people to remember.

Effective key messages are easy to understand, easy to remember, and motivate people to do something. Examples which have successfully changed attitudes include:

- smoking in cars harms children
- depression affects all kinds of people
- drinking and driving kills
- wearing seatbelts saves lives.

Messages about bullying prevention could include:

- Bullying is harmful - it is not a normal part of growing up.
- Bullying involves a power imbalance.
- Bullying is usually not a one-off - it is repeated over time.
- Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional or online (cyberbullying).
- Bullying is a serious issue which all schools face.
- Schools need the support of whānau and communities to provide safe, positive learning environments for children and young people.
- We all need to work together to prevent bullying.

Key messages can answer the obvious questions, for example:

- **WHAT** your activity is
- **WHY** it is important or different
- **WHO** is taking part
- **WHEN** and **WHERE** it will take place
- **HOW** whānau can be involved.

A key message may also be a 'call to action' – something you want people to do, e.g. 'if you think your child has an issue with bullying, talk to their class teacher first'.

Make sure your key messages are:

- easy to understand – avoid jargon
- brief / concise
- consistent (not contradict each other)
- correct and verifiable.

Typically, three or four are enough – no more than five or six. They need to be statements your audience can relate to and agree with.

You can use key messages in different ways:

- to promote what your school is doing
- to inform your community about something
- to encourage parents and whānau to do something
- to include in all of your newsletters or on social media
- specific messages when responding about a particular issue such as a serious bullying incident.

Use your key messages in all your media activity – repeating strong, clear messages reinforces the point you want to make.

# Your key messages



List your key messages here. Put them in newsletters, on posters and in emails.

**Key Messages are:**

1

2

3

4

5

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# News outlets



To be effective in the news media, you need to know who your local news media are and what they are looking for. The Community Comms Collective has a list of generic [newsroom contacts](#), which is a good starting point when you're looking for who to contact about a story opportunity.

## Newspapers

By providing news stories for your local newspaper you can ensure your community understands what bullying is and how they can work with you to prevent it. You can also develop a relationship with the newspaper and perhaps bring the editor on board with the issue.

Newspapers – there will be at least one daily newspaper in your community and at least one, but probably more, community newspapers.

### Dailies

Daily newspapers are usually published six days a week. They want fresh news that's happening now, like:

- statistics and trends
- surveys and research results
- a visit or speech by an important person
- new anti-bullying plans and programmes
- student-led events and activities
- human interest stories (stories about people and their experiences, e.g. a student who has changed from bullying others to being a mentor to others).

Daily newspapers will have space for features once or twice a week. These are longer articles, which take an in-depth look at a topic or issue such as local trends. Most national daily newspapers will have a reporter responsible for reporting on social issues.

## Community Newspapers

Community newspapers are usually published weekly and delivered free to every household in a specific geographical area. They rely on contributions from their readership community, and will often give space for a regular column to community organisations.

Community newspapers need news that doesn't go out of date over the week, such as:

- events
- profiles of people and organisations
- programmes
- human interest stories.

Local and community newspapers are particularly keen for good images – providing photography or a good photo opportunity is helpful.

## Magazines

New Zealand has a range of magazines with different audiences. Many of these publish articles on bullying from time to time. They include:

The Listener	Women's Weekly
Mana Magazine	Metro
North and South	Next
Spasifik	

There are also many ethnic and special interest magazines. Magazines take an in-depth look at issues and people. They have a long life and may sit around for months in homes and waiting rooms. Getting your messages into magazines may reach a lot of New Zealanders.

# News outlets



## Radio

Radio is the most immediate of all news outlets. It's first with the news and can update stories hourly. Radio wants short, sharp news and stories with quotes that are easy to understand and make a point quickly and succinctly (the 20 second sound bite).

There are three national radio networks in New Zealand, plus many local and special interest stations. Radio likes big news events but there are many community stations interested in publicising local events and initiatives and talking to local people about local issues.

Radio New Zealand (RNZ) is our state-owned radio network. It has no commercial advertising and has newsrooms all over the country. RNZ also has documentary and magazine style programmes where issues are examined in more depth. They also have a dedicated education reporter.

There are two commercial radio networks with stations nationwide:

**MediaWorks Radio** operate nine national radio stations including Geroge FM, Magic, MORE FM, Radio Live, The Breeze, The Edge, The Rock, Mai FM and The Sound, and several local radio stations. <http://www.mediaworks.co.nz/home/our-brands.html>

**NZME** operate 14 radio stations including Newstalk ZB, The Hits, iHeart Nation, and Coast <http://advertising.nzme.co.nz/brands/>

**Radio Waatea** ([waateanews.com](http://waateanews.com)) is a national radio station and online news website, and there are a number of local iwi radio stations – find out more at [www.irirangi.net](http://www.irirangi.net).

**Radio NZ** features a bulletin of news on topics of interest to Māori listeners which is run several times a day.

There are 12 **community access radio** stations around the country, with programmes made by individuals and groups in the local community (<http://www.acab.org.nz/stations/>)

**Niu FM** is a Pacific Island radio station networked nationally.

The [Bullyingfree.NZ](http://Bullyingfree.NZ) website also includes a section on sharing good practice.

Send your media releases to us too at [info@bullyingfree.nz](mailto:info@bullyingfree.nz)



# News outlets



## Television

Television reporters look for stories with drama that can be told by interviews and pictures.

Television newsrooms are mainly located in the main centres, but there are some regional reporters for TV1 and TV3.

TV1 has Breakfast from 6am and regular news bulletins in the morning, early evening and late evening. Seven Sharp screens after the 6pm news and takes a closer look at the issues of the day. Te Karere covers events and stories of interest to Māori.

TV3 has The AM Show from 6am, regular news bulletins, and The Project (a news / entertainment show) that screens weeknights at 7pm.

Prime has a news bulletin at 5.30pm each day.

Māori Television's news programme Te Kāea is at 5.30pm each day.

Television documentaries look at a topic in depth - for example, how someone has been affected by bullying.

## Digital news hubs

Increasingly, many New Zealanders get their news online. Most major news outlets have online sites carrying the latest news and stories from across their outlets .

For example:

- TV One News at [www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news](http://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news)
- Newshub (TV3's online news site) at [www.newshub.co.nz](http://www.newshub.co.nz)
- Stuff, the Fairfax newspapers site at [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz)
- The Herald at [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz)
- Scoop at [www.scoop.co.nz](http://www.scoop.co.nz)
- Radio New Zealand at [www.radionz.co.nz](http://www.radionz.co.nz)
- Newstalk ZB (Radio Network's news site) at [www.newstalkzb.co.nz](http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz)
- Radiolive (RadioWorks news site) at [www.radiolive.co.nz](http://www.radiolive.co.nz)
- The Spinoff at [www.thespinnoff.co.nz](http://www.thespinnoff.co.nz)

# Being in the news



There are two ways to be part of news stories:

**Responding** to news such as:

- a serious bullying incident
- comments by public figures
- new research on bullying.

If you are a responding to a media incident, read the advice on page 14.



**Creating** the news by releasing information such as:

- success stories from your anti-bullying initiatives
- a bullying prevention event at your school
- student wellbeing survey results
- new bullying prevention initiatives or programmes.

When you have news you can:

- phone a reporter with an idea
- send a media release
- write a letter to the editor
- let your local newspapers know about a photo opportunity.

Get to know your local media personnel; developing relationships with reporters is invaluable. Once they know you and what you do, they'll come to you for information and comment on news events. Having an existing good relationship might also help bring local media on board if an issue arises. Invite reporters to your meetings, send them your newsletters, make sure they know about events you are part of, such as Bullying-Free NZ Week, Pink Shirt Day or Children's Day.

Don't be afraid to email or ring a print journalist directly if you know of a good photo opportunity.

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# Writing a media release



A media release is the most common way to let the media know about news in your school community.

News outlets get hundreds of media releases a day, so yours should stand out to be noticed. Make it newsy, easy to read, with strong statements. Media releases are written in the inverted pyramid structure where the most important information is at the top, and the least important further down. If there is limited space, a journalist can trim copy from the bottom and still include the most important information. Always write in the third person.

A good press release has:

- a strong headline to grab attention — short enough to tweet. Be local and topical
- a clear, simple message
- a concise lead paragraph that is interesting, succinct and sets out your main key message – if a journalist only reads as far as this, have they the essential information?
- a second paragraph with more information that expands on the lead paragraph
- a call to action if you want your community to take part or contribute
- the date, your school details, your role, and contact details
- indicates if for immediate release or embargoed until a time and date
- one page only.

Use:

- your key messages
- statistics to back up your messages
- examples to add human interest
- quotes to make your media release more interesting or personal, or to express a particular viewpoint (must be attributed)
- third-party endorsements to show outcomes and build reputation (they should also be prepared to speak to media).

A media release should be sent out well in advance of the day or your event – at least one week beforehand. Also follow it up with a call to the newsroom to check they have received it and to talk to them in more detail and find out what more information they may need. That personal contact can make the difference in getting your story run.

## A letter to the editor

A letter to the editor is an expression of opinion by a person or organisation. You can use it to make a statement on an issue, or to recount a personal experience, or to compliment or criticise a news outlet,

Keep letters to the editor short, otherwise they'll be shortened by the editor, who may take out your most important points. Most newspapers give a maximum word count on their letters page.

Being interviewed by a reporter, whether it is for radio, television or a newspaper article, can often take you out of your comfort zone. Being prepared is essential.

# Sample media releases



[School]  
[Address]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **[School] celebrates Bullying-Free.NZ Week with <event or project>**

**[School]** staff and students are marking New Zealand's Bullying-free.NZ week in May with <description of event or project here>

The **[Name of Event]**, taking place at <venue> on <date to be added> will see the school coming together with whānau and the local community to promote a shared understanding of what bullying looks like and how it can be prevented.

Principal <name to be added> said “[statement in support of the event of project] .....”

<Further description of what will take place at event, including any photo opportunities>

### **For more information**

<contact name>  
<contact email and phone>

## **Art and an All Black take on bullying**

*Students at Kiwi School are using art to take a stand against bullying with a new mural to mark Bullying-Free NZ Week in May. The mural will be officially unveiled by local All Black Richie Carter at a special assembly on 14 May.*

*The national Bullying-Free NZ Week takes place each year, in conjunction with Pink Shirt Day, to raise awareness of bullying. This year's theme is 'Let's Talk About It'. The mural encourages kindness and respect, and is already sparking conversations about bullying across the whole school community.*

*The idea for a mural came from students in Years 7 and 8 as a way of encouraging students to speak up and reminding students all year of what they can do to help make school a safe, kind and happy place for everyone.*

*Principal Mrs Smith said: “We take bullying very seriously. Students can find it hard to talk to adults about bullying, so it's important we have ways to get them talking about it like Bullying-Free NZ Week. The students have produced this amazing mural and we're thrilled Ritchie Carter will help start our conversation. The mural will help keep us focused on how we can continue to stop bullying in our school.”*

*The special assembly will take place at 9.15 am. Parents and whānau are welcome to attend, but entrance is by ticket only. Tickets are available on first-come-first-served basis by contacting the school office.*

# Tips on media interviews



## Before the interview

Here is a checklist to ensure you go in to the interview as prepared as possible.

When the reporter calls, ask:

- what news organisation are they from?
- is the interview live or pre-recorded? (radio/TV)
- what news programme is it for?
- what issues does the reporter want to discuss?
- who else have they spoken to?
- why are they ringing you today?

If you are happy to be interviewed, always take time to prepare – tell the reporter you are happy to speak and set a time for an interview.

- Always follow your media policy.
- Prepare and practice your key messages.
- Imagine the worst question the reporter could ask you and have an answer ready.
- If it is face-to-face, manage the setting for the interview – place, room, time.

## During the interview

- Aim for responses between 10 and 20 seconds
- Avoid using YES and NO
- Avoid using jargon
- **Always** stay on the record
- Pause and think before you speak
- If you're unclear, ask them to clarify the question
- Stop talking when you are finished
- Ring back if you have anything further to add
- Remember you are being interviewed because you are the expert
- Use strong statements and interesting language
- Give facts, lists and examples
- Remember who your audience is - local or national, specialised or general.

## Following the interview

- If you agree to provide further information, make sure you do.
- Are you able to see the article before it goes to press?
- When you see the story in the newspaper or hear it on the radio, ring the reporter if there are any factual mistakes. This will help to ensure these mistakes are not repeated in future stories.

## Dos and don'ts

### Do:

- Always call reporters back or they'll call someone else.
- Know what you are going to say. Practise with a colleague, don't be hurried by the reporter, take ten minutes to prepare.
- If you don't want to answer a question, have a refusal ready ("I'm sorry I don't have the information to answer that question").
- Know and respect deadlines, and give them time to do their job. It's difficult for media to use information they receive right on the deadline – by tomorrow it will be out of date.

### Don't:

- Go off the record – give information to the reporter and ask them not to use it. Assume EVERYTHING is on the record.
- Lie.
- Comment on other organisations or people; speak for your own school only.

# Involving students in media activity



A news media outlet may want to interview or take photographs of your students to support coverage of an event or project. A priority will be to ensure the wellbeing of children and young people in your care and to protect their privacy.

If you have invited media to attend your event, seek prior written permission from parents and caregivers for publication of images of their children. On the day, staff will need to ensure that students whose whānau have not given permission are not filmed or photographed.

If a journalist wants to talk to students associated with a project, seek prior written permission from their legal guardian (particularly if they are under the age of 16). Allow sufficient time to prepare students for the interview. Consider nominating students who are resilient and confident, and therefore more likely to be comfortable with the process.

Be clear with the journalist before the interview what questions they will ask students. Be prepared to stop the interview at any time if a student becomes uncomfortable.

Depending on the age of the young person, you could help them prepare for a media interview by encouraging them to write down their top three key messages and practising some likely questions.

## Checklist:

- Are under-age students being interviewed with the consent of adults?
- Is the interview being conducted in a child-friendly manner, including having an adult they trust present, allowing sufficient time and a comfortable environment?
- Have the potential consequences of the student's comments, both short-term and long-term, been considered and explained to the interviewee?
- Have they been told what will be done with what they say?

## SAMPLE CONSENT FORM – photos/video/artwork

**Permission to allow <insert media outlet name> to interview/publish photos/video your child/your child's artwork.**

On <date> our school will be holding an event <details to be added> which media may attend. We are seeking permission in advance from whānau for students to feature in media coverage about the event.

Please circle one:

- I give permission for my child to be filmed/interviewed and understand that the resulting article and images may be published in print and online.
- I do not want my child to appear in coverage of the event.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_ class: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or legal guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return your completed form to your child's teacher by <insert date>.*

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# Responding to media following an incident



There may be significant media interest following a serious bullying incident. It is essential that schools anticipate this and have guidelines in place for liaising with the media. Reporters have a job to do and it's important to understand that, while also knowing exactly what your rights and responsibilities are.

## Be prepared

Does your Board have a media policy?

Establish a process for when media contact the school. For example, when a call is received, it is referred to the Principal, who contacts the Chair of the Board of Trustees before responding to the caller.

Appoint one media spokesperson with authority to speak to media, usually the principal or chair of the Board of Trustees (and a reserve spokesperson).

Make sure staff know and understand the policy (i.e. they should not speak to media). Remind staff not to comment.

Think about what you may be asked and what you will say - agree up to 5 key messages that sum up their story, what happened and what is being done about it. Prepare a media statement in advance.

Understand your obligations as a crown entity and as an employer – both the Privacy Act and the Official Information Act apply to schools when dealing with issues about/from staff, students, parents or Official Information Act requests.

Think about media training or people that can help. Contact NZSTA for advice.

## When contacted by media

Record their name and contact details, then listen.

Say you will call them back. Do not feel under pressure to respond on the spot or comment until you're ready – "I'll need to get all the facts before I

respond / agree to an interview. What's your deadline?"

Find out:

- Where the reporter is from
- What kind of story is it (e.g. news or feature)
- What information do they need
- Who else they are talking to – what have they said?
- What you are responding to.
- What the deadline is.

If they are requesting an interview, also find out:

- Who will be the reporter or interviewer
- Who else is being interviewed
- What the key questions will be
- Will it be live or pre-recorded.

Keep a detailed log of all calls / events / video or photographs taken on school grounds.

## Decide

Think about if it is in your school's best interests to go ahead with the interview, or respond with a prepared statement, or only to questions by email.

The opportunity to talk about our side of the story and what you are doing needs to be balanced with whether you are in a position to say anything: it may be too early or be about a matter you are unable to publicly speak about e.g. an employment proceeding or subject to legal proceedings.

# Responding to media following an incident



Remember it is likely the reporter will go ahead with a story even if you don't take part – weigh up the risks of having no comment and a potentially unbalanced story.

## Before an interview

Set a time for the interview.

Take time to prepare and be confident of your messages – make sure you have all the background information, have sought relevant advice, and rehearse what you will say.

Make sure your messages are not speculative, blame others, or provide unconfirmed causes.

Inform anyone who may be affected (staff, parents and whānau, Ministry of Education) before the story goes out.

Ensure the wider school community are kept as informed as the media – and remember anything you tell them is in the public arena and can quickly reach media.

## The interview

Always be open and honest – answer questions firmly and directly. Use plain language and avoid using jargon, slang or waffle.

Stay calm and think about what message your tone and body language give e.g. concerned, thoughtful, enthusiastic.

Keep to the issue and use your key messages. Repeat key messages and try to link negative questions back to your positive key message. Flag them to ensure attention, e.g. 'the most important...', 'the best part...', 'the bottom line...'

Stick to facts and what you know – if you are unsure or don't know, say you don't have the information to answer that now and will get back to them. Don't add unprepared information to your key messages to fill reporters' pauses. If you are unclear, ask them to clarify the question.

Avoid opinion – don't speculate or make personal comments, or criticise other people or organisations. Avoid saying 'no comment' – it can come across as defensive and obstructive.

Say why not if information cannot be shared – make sure the privacy of students is maintained.

Manage photos and any filming on school grounds. Make sure any permissions from parents of students are provided.

## Next steps

Follow up with any information you have agreed to provide.

Ask if you are able to see the article before it goes out.

Seek feedback from others involved.

Review your actions – what could you have done differently? What can you learn from this? Does your media policy need adjusting?

