



Government
of South Australia

Hon Susan Close MP

16MECD0169

Mr Bob Buckley
A4 Convenor
Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia
convenor@a4.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your email regarding strategies in place to address bullying towards autistic children and students in the school environment.

The Department for Education and Child Development recognises the right of all young South Australians to be happy, healthy and safe members of our community.

In South Australia, all schools have been required to have an anti-bullying policy since 2005. This was reinforced following the Cossey review in 2011, where schools are required to:

- Develop and review their anti-bullying policy annually.
- Provide links to the policy via the school's website.
- Provide updates to their Governing Council twice per year on bullying prevalence and any initiatives considered or being implemented by the school.

The Department's key curriculum resource in minimising harm through bullying and violence is the *Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum* with its four themes of the right to be safe, relationships, recognising abuse and protective strategies. Teaching respectful relationships to students through the child protection curriculum allows for an important contribution to increasing protective factors and decreasing bullying, harassment and violence in schools.

A robust, whole school approach, using the nine elements of the *National Safe Schools framework* is an effective strategic planning tool for schools to develop approaches to local issues, raise whole school community awareness through policy and practice and embed relevant topics in the classroom curriculum.

My Department will continue to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all its students and young people.

Yours sincerely

Susan Close
Minister for Education and Child Development

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Minister for Education and Child Development
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