

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Preventing bullying in our schools

Local schools urged to focus on early intervention

Principals Australia Institute is calling on all schools across Australia to focus on bullying prevention.

The Institute strongly endorsed the goals of the *National Day of Action Against Bullying (Friday March 21)* but calls on schools to act on more than just one day.

“While community attention often focuses on punishment of perpetrators – it is more effective to create positive school communities where bullying is not welcome,” says Jim Davies, CEO of Principals Australia Institute.

“We need to increase attention on prevention, promotion and early intervention (PPEI).”

“This requires what we call a whole-school approach – where students, teachers, parents and care-givers are all engaged.”

“Principals and schools can be supported through programs such as KidsMatter Primary and MindMatters.”

The call to action comes as KidsMatter Primary reaches its 1,900th school this week.

About 40% of Australian school children are now connected to KidsMatter – with the national wellbeing initiative connecting with around 685,000 children and 53,000 teachers across the country.

“Creating positive school cultures and productive and inclusive school communities should be an essential and core focus for all school principals.”

“It is critical that principals take an active leadership role in the prevention of bullying. It is a complex task and principals are often responding to bullying that extends well beyond school boundaries.”

“We also need to recognise that corrective intervention is required with bullies and restorative practices are required for those that are bullied.”

“Inclusive schools don’t happen by chance; they become inclusive when the whole school is on board and they take a deliberate, strategic approach to creating the conditions for inclusivity to flourish.

“These schools are positive, respectful communities – but this is not enough. They also ensure that they promote the development of resilience in their students, make a point of engaging and working closely with parents, families and the community, and notice, and enable the provision of additional support to any children or young people who may be struggling.”

Over the last decade Principals Australia Institute has had a focus on supporting schools to create the conditions of access, participation and positive relationships all children and young people need. This has been done primarily through the MindMatters, KidsMatter and Dare to Lead projects.

Local schools: We can connect you with a school in your region who is linked to KidsMatter or MindMatters

Interviews: Jim Davies, CEO, Principals Australia Institute is available for comment.

Media contact: Shannon Short
Communications Manager, Principals Australia Institute
Ph 08 8394 2155
Mob 0419 276 676

Principals Australia Institute (PAI) provides professional learning, leadership development and support to the nation’s 10,000 principals and schools. PAI is a not-for-profit organisation supporting primary and secondary schools across all schooling sectors (government, Catholic and independent).

KidsMatter Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative has been developed in collaboration with beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society, Principals Australia Institute and, with funding from, the Australian Government Department of Health and beyondblue.