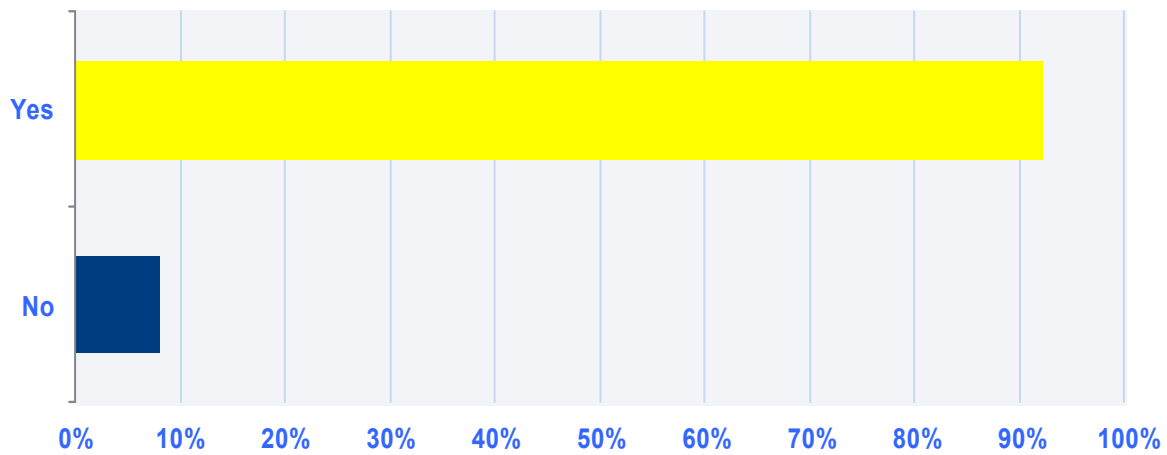SAASSO

Should Serial School Bullying Be Reported To The Police?

In 2010, SAASSO called for a tougher approach in dealing with cyber-bullying in schools - labelling it a cyber-assault.

The new Liberal State Government is now developing a new anti-bullying policy for our schools.

One idea being considered is banning serial bullies form using computers and mobile phones at school.

Given the dire and sometimes tragic consequences, there are also calls for serious bullying incidents to be reported to the police.

SAASSO recently asked parents and public school staff what they think of these proposals.

82% of respondents were parents & 51% work in a school.

Asked if serial bullies should be banned from using computers and mobile phones at school:

- 82% voted 'yes'.
- 18% voted 'no'.

Parents supported the ban more than non-parents.

76% of school staff favour a ban, compared with 85% of those who do not work in a school.

63% of principals support banning serial bullies from computers and devices - while 78% of teachers support the idea.

Asked whether serious school bullying should be reported to the police:

- 92% voted 'yes'.
- 8% 'voted no.

81% of principals support serious bullying offences being reported to police - compared with 85% of teachers.

Comments showed that both parents and school staff do not believe the current anti-bullying methods are working.

Most believe tougher action is needed to protect children from the devastating consequences of bullying.

While many acknowledged the difficulty in devising standard definitions of serial and serious bullying, most agreed the changes are necessary.

Many comments questioned if schools have the required resources to tackle bullying.

It's not just students who bully - staff do it too, and it's more serious! This should be a police matter.

Bullying is getting worse in primary schools thanks to all the access children are getting online at home and outside of school. Parents attitudes also are a big factor in shaping their children's attitudes and what they say/do to other children.

Computers not attached to the internet should be provided for bullies so they can complete their school work (Word, Powerpoint etc) without being able to harm others. They would not be permitted to BYOD or phones. So while I mentioned they should not be banned, their access would be restricted. This will help stop in-school cyberbullying but also send out a message to people of the penalties of such behaviour.

I don't think they should be banned from using school computers as they are used as learning resources. Mobile phones shouldn't be used by students at school for anything. Bullies will still find a way of attacking a person. Bullying doesn't just happen via phones and computers.

Q5 This depends on the context such as the age of the child and the nature of the behaviour. Do we report playground fights to police as assaults?

It should be reported, but the school must still be involved. By reporting to the Police it is not a chance for the school to walk away from or abandon a student. Do all schools have student councillors?

Mobile phones should be banned in Schools. Bullies will always find a way, so those in authority need to take a strong stance against bullies and follow through, rather than just use words and empty threats.

Parents need to involve police on bullying out of school.

Bullies need to be reprimanded but all students need to learn the capabilities of resilience to avoid a certain amount of being bullied and standing strong for yourself without violence. There is a high "lack of responsibility" with children and blaming others for actions which may result in being bullied.

Bullying verbally and or via social media, text messaging is a serious issue and I believe it should be reported to police. The short term and or long term affects can emotionally harm the victim if nothing is done to stop it.

Kids at our school are not allowed to have phones in class and are handed in each morning and cant say if anything happens using school computers ... Cyber bullying happens more outside school times.

Can't ban them at school during class as this could effect their education, but maybe parents could pay for the additional resource to watch over them while they use electronics during class & ban them from using them in the playground unsupervised.

I think bullies get far too comfortable with the modern guidelines. There is a girl at my child's school who had been bullying since reception, and now in yr 4 she continues to bully vulnerable children causing anxiety, declining standards of work and school refusals in kids who usually enjoy going to school and do well there.

Tougher penalties when first reported to nip it in the bud.

Bullying needs to be taken seriously. It can cause suicide.

Bullying can appear to be passive or really aggressive, however, it still is hurtful and has affected some people in such a big way that they take their own lives. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable and therefore we should all do our best to stomp it out of our school, work and social environments.

Zero tolerance.

I believe chasing around after all the bullies is a waste of time, it seems certain people get bullied, teach those people and all people how to deal with bullies, because they'll meet them in all walks of life, not only at school..

I think all students should be banned from using mobile phones at school.

Ban mobile phone use but allow computer use with apps that allow you to stop or monitor social media use.

Kids need to learn the difference between bullying and kids being mean. Parents also get caught up in what they perceive is bullying behaviour and other kids being mean.

Mobile phones yes - computers no - so they are able to do their work - under very close supervision eg computer access on for a task.

Stop appeasing the serial bullies let's find the root and help the ones who want help.

More authority given to school to deal with bullying i.e. lengthy suspensions or expulsions.

We need to stop bullying in pre-school and junior primary. A lot of it is learned behaviour from older peers and siblings, parents and other adults. Who is not guilty of EVER saying "What on earth did s/he look like?" or criticising for other reasons, in front of impressionable children.

School and Government responses to serious, and serial, bullying needs to be tougher and firmer to safeguard the welfare of the victims. There also needs to be a culture change to promote more kindness and respect for each other than the current attitudes to 'bring others down' by bullying.

Phones and personal devices should be banned in schools across the state to ensure focused learning environment without the fear of bullying. Funding should be provided to all public high schools immediately to implement adequate classroom technology necessary for research, learning supports for all learning difficulties and creation of a technology bullying free zone during school time.

As a parent I wouldn't know if my child is being bullied on his phone as it is password protected and he would have to tell me. I think children need to be taught how to manage their thoughts and feelings and how to be more resilient, understanding when to get help and where from before they resort to depression.

In relation to police reports - yes, if only to give bullys a bit of a scare. A separate "bully response team" would also be a good resource for the Education Dept to consider setting up to deal solely with this epidemic.