



DEFINING SCHOOL BULLYING IN AUSTRALIA AND ABROAD: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEING ON THE DEFINITION OF SCHOOL BULLYING

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ABSTRACT

School bullying can affect everyone, those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide.

This research paper will discuss the numerous definitions of school bullying. Also the issue of no agreed definition, and the importance of having an agreed definition of school bullying to enable school personnel, students and the community to comprehend the nature of school bullying.

This research paper will discuss the literature review of different selected definitions of school bullying from previous researches undertaken, for example, Ken Rigby, Peter K Smith, Dan Olweus, The movement against bullying, David Farrington and Xavier College. Moreover, will look at the Australian school definitions of bullying, and examine it. The paper will focus on distinguishing between the falling of school bullying incidents, from the falling of reporting incidents because the lack of understanding school bullying.

In addition, comparison of the definitions and discuss of which definition is more suited to school bullying.

Key Words: definition, bullying, agreed, understanding, consistent

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5.1 Introduction

Chapter five examines the difficulties of defining school bullying in literature and discuss the importance of having an agreed definition of school bullying to assist with preventing or stop bullying in the school environment and for a more successful implementation of restorative justice practice in schools. Furthermore, critically examines definitions from Australia and abroad to provide a clearer understanding of the disparity of the definition of school bullying. Moreover, critically examine previous research and in doing so adds to the literature in this area. Also, discussing the classifications of school bullying since the 1800s to 2000s, to provide a clearer understanding of how the perception of school bullying has changed over the past 200 hundred year period.

5.2 Difficulties of defining school bullying

In this chapter, this thesis will discuss the difficulties of defining school bullying in literature. Previous and more recent research of school bullying undertaken by Dan Olweus, Ken Rigby and Peter K Smith to name a few,¹ indicate the characteristics of school bullying are the same worldwide, and finding an agreed definition of school bullying proves to be difficult. The difficulties of defining school bullying are correlated to the research of bullying as scholars are unable to agree on definitions, repetitions and what behaviour is that of being school bullying and what is conflict response between students of equal status. In support of this Dan Olweus stated in his book *School Bullying: Development and Some Important Changes*:

In my view, this has been a successful and fortunate development by and large. Like any relatively new field, however, the field of bullying research is to some extent plagued by problems, disagreements, and unresolved issues. To achieve a solid and coherent body of

¹ Other researchers who have contributed to the study of school bullying are Jan Urbanski and Steve Permeth *the Truth about Bullying*, Sally Kuykendall *Bullying*, Ferenc Margitics, Erika Figula and Zsuzsa Pauwlik *New Perspectives in the Examination of School Bullying*, Jonathan Fast *Beyond Bullying Breaking the cycle of Shame, Bullying, and violence*. Although these are only a few of the scholars that are named here, there are many more who are not mentioned who contribute to the ongoing issue of school bullying.

knowledge with well-replicated findings, it is important to reach some consensus on important conceptual and methodological issues.²

In support of Olweus, Faye Mishna stated:

Bullying and victimisation remain difficult to define.³

A research undertaken by Mishna found that bullying behaviour was not easily defined by the victimised students, teachers or parents and there are two essential aspects that seem to cause confusion they are:

- (i) A Conflict between people's cognitive understanding of bullying and specific incidents of bullying. For example, a victimised teacher, student and parents were able to provide a definition of bullying that was consistent, but when they were given an example of bullying, they were unable to identify the specific act of bullying.
- (ii) Bullying amongst friends is difficult to recognise due to an inability to identify a power imbalance between friends.⁴

The finding by Mishna supports the theory of the challenges of defining school bullying. Especially bullying that occur between a group of friends as it could be mistaken for friends joking with each other, or as two friends disputing.⁵ In some cases school teachers could misinterpret bullying amongst friends as it could occur occasionally and not on a daily basis for example, two friends (frenemies) could get along one day and dispute the next, and the frenemy encourages all the group not to play or talk to the one who has now become the outcast of the group causing social rejection. Furthermore, in support of Olweus and Mishna, Evie Bald stated the following:

One of the biggest challenges for those who seek to end bullying among students has been defining exactly what bullying is.⁶

The statement provided by Bald supports the researches undertaken by Olweus and Mishna; there are challenges researchers are faced with when defining school bullying and providing an agreed definition proves to be difficult. The statement also indicates there are different factors to consider when defining school bullying, for example, there is a confusion of what behaviour is deemed to be harmless fun between peers and what others perceive to be bullying and lack of

² Dan Olweus, 'School Bullying: Development and Some Important Changes' (2013) 9 *Annu. Rev. Clin. Psychol* 752.

³ Mathew C Aalsma and James R Brown 'What is Bullying' (2008) 43 *Journal of Adolescent Health* 101-102

⁴Faye Mishna, Debra Pepler and Judith Wiener 'Factors Associated With Perceptions and Responses to Bullying Situations by Children, Parents, Teachers and Principals' (2006) 1 *Victims and Offenders* 256, cited in Mathew C Aalsma and James R Brown, 'What is Bullying' (2008) 43 *Journal of Adolescent Health* 101-102

⁵Faye Mishna, Debra Pepler and Judith Wiener 'Factors Associated With Perceptions and Responses to Bullying Situations by Children, Parents, Teachers and Principals' (2006) 1 *Victims and Offenders* 256, cited in Mathew C Aalsma and James R Brown, 'What is Bullying' (2008) 43 *Journal of Adolescent Health* 101-102

⁶ Evie Bald, 'Researchers and Schools Diverge in Definitions of Bullying' (2014) 34 *Education Week* 1-16.

training for school staff. Furthermore, there is an issue of disparity in the meaning of the words implemented to describe the actions associated with the behaviour of bullying which will be discussed later in this chapter. Maunder et al. in support of Mishna and Bald stated the following:

The differences in perceptions of bullying between pupils and staff indicate that teachers need to invest more time in talking with pupils about the nature of bullying. Indirect behaviour in particular need more attention to ensure they are included in definitions of bullying, and taken seriously.⁷

The disparity of the definition of school bullying is evident above. The difficulties associated with defining school bullying is the inconsistency of the definition of school bullying in literature. Having a non-agreed definition of school bullying means there is no understanding of the behaviours associated with bullying in the school environment. Therefore, this makes it difficult for the teachers to recognise harmful and unwanted behaviours between students.

Moreover, Maunder et al. statement provided above indicate there is a disagreement about the concept of school bullying, and without an agreed definition the cycle of school violence will continue. It is highly significant for an agreed definition of school bullying, for teachers to act accordingly to unacceptable behaviour among peers. Furthermore, it is highly essential for teachers to continue their research on school bullying to enhance their own knowledge, and implement this information into their classrooms to teach the children about the nature of bullying.

The Disparity in defining school bullying is an immense issue when providing a universally agreed definition of school bullying. There are other aspects to consider when providing a universally agreed definition, for example, the various meaning of school bullying in diverse languages and culture when translated into English as provided in Table 5.1. The actions of a bully are the same worldwide, but the term used to describe each action have a dissimilarity in the meaning. To support this theory, more contemporary studies undertaken also indicated the difficulties of cross-national comparisons is the comparability of terminology.⁸ *In Understanding school bullying, its nature and prevention strategies*, Peter K Smith states:

In various languages there is a range of terms [for bullying] with both subtle and sometimes obvious differences in meaning.⁹

This is evident in the definitions of bullying in different languages, as presented in table 5.1

⁷ Rachel E Maunder, Alex Harrop and Andrew J Tattersall, 'Pupil and Staff Perceptions of Bullying in Secondary Schools: Comparing Behavioural Definitions and Their Perceived Seriousness' (2010) 52 *Educational Research* 263 <<http://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/00131881.2010.504062?needAccess=true>>.

⁸ Peter K Smith, Helen Cowie, Ragnar F Olafsson and Andy P.D Lifooghe, Definitions of Bullying: A Comparison of Terms Used, and Age and Gender Differences, in a Fourteen-Country International Comparison (2002) 73 *Child Development* 1120.

⁹ Peter K Smith, *Understand School bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 14.

Table 5.1. Definitions of bullying (Adapted from Schott and Søndergaard, bullying definition)¹⁰

Language	Term	Definition
Arabic	التسلط Alttasallut تنمر Tanammr	Absolutism, complete power and authority. Wrong, bad, corrupt or unfair use of treatment. ¹¹ Flame up with rage, loose ones temper, turn into a tiger. ¹²
English The United Kingdom The United States of America	Bullying	Defined as a behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally, often aimed at certain groups for example, because of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. ¹³ Bullying is generally defined as an intentional act that cause harm to other, and may involve verbal harassment, verbal or non-verbal threats, physical assault, stalking, or other methods of coercion such as manipulation, blackmail, or extortion. It is aggressive behaviour that intends to hurt, threaten or frighten another person. An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim is often involved. Bullying occurs in variety of contexts, such as school, workplaces, political or military settings, and others. ¹⁴

¹⁰ Robin May Schott and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, *School Bullying: New Theories in Context* (Cambridge University Press 2014) 23, 24.

¹¹ <<http://www.almaany.com/en/dict/ar-en/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7/>>.

¹² <<http://www.almaany.com/en/dict/ar-en/%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%85%D8%B1/>>

¹³ The United Kingdom Government *Bullying at Schools* (27 March 2017) GOV.UK <<https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition>>.

¹⁴ US Legal *Bullying Law and Definition* (1997-2016) US Legal <<https://definitions.uslegal.com/b/bullying/>>.

Australia		Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). ¹⁵
New Zealand		Bullying is deliberate, there is an intention to cause physical and/or psychological pain or discomfort to another person. Bullying involves a power imbalance, there is an actual or perceived unequal relationship between the target and the initiator that may be based on physical size, age, gender, social status or digital capability and access. Bullying has an element of repetition, bullying behaviour is not usually a one-off. It is repeated over time, with the threat of further incidents leading to fear and anxiety. <i>Repeated acts of bullying may involve single acts with different targets</i> , as well as multiple acts with the same target. Bullying is harmful, there is short or long-term physical or psychological harm to the target, for example, as a result of coercion or intimidation. ¹⁶
French	Harcèlement	Harassment. ¹⁷
	Mobbing in der	The term mobbing is mostly associated in describing

¹⁵ Bullying.No Way!, *Definition of Bullying* (2017) The Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group < <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying>> see also The Department of Education ACT Safe and Supportive School Policy<http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/wellbeing/safety/safe-and-supportive-schools-policy>.

¹⁶ Education Government New Zealand, *Bullying Prevention and Response: A Guide for Schools* (2015) <<https://education.govt.nz/school/student-support/student-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing-programmes/bullying-prevention-and-response/bullying-prevention-and-response-a-guide-for-schools/>>.

¹⁷ Reverso Dictionary, (2016) <<http://dictionary.reverso.net/french-english/harc%C3%A8lement>>

German	Schule	workplace bullying. ¹⁸
Italian	Prepotenza/ violenza	Signifies bullying and implying violence, physical actions. ¹⁹
Japanese	Ijime	Mistreating someone, teasing, being cruel or annoying. ²⁰
Spanish	Acoso escolar	Harassment. ²¹

Although bullying may have similar behavioural patterns worldwide, the definitions in Table 5.1 have been translated into English, and it provides a clearer understanding of the considerable differences in the meaning.

The Arabic term for bullying is التسلط *Alttasallut* translated into English means authoritarianism. Authoritarianism provides an entirely different understanding of the sense of *Alttasallut* in English, the connotation changes to dictatorial, opposed to individual freedom, it is more suited to the government oppressing its people than to school bullying. Also, the term تنمر *Tanammr* translated into English means bullying, but it provides the acts associated with bullying, as discussed in Table 5.1 although aggression is related to bullying, not every aggression is bullying. Bullying does not have to be an act that is carried out by aggression alone, to classify bullying as a rage of anger is not suitable for school bullying.

This thesis examines in Table 5.1 definitions from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, New Zealand and Australia to provide a clearer understanding of the disparity in the terminology when defining school bullying. These four countries contribute mainly to the research of bullying and have similarities in culture. The concepts used to define bullying,

¹⁸ Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 25.

¹⁹ Robin May Schott and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, *School Bullying: New Theories in Context* (Cambridge University Press 2014) 23-24.

²⁰ Robin May Schott and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, *School Bullying: New Theories in Context* (Cambridge University Press 2014) 23-24.

²¹ Spanish Central (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated 2016) <<http://www.spanishcentral.com/translate/acoso>>.

although very similar still have a slight difference in meaning, for example, in the United Kingdom bullying is a repeated, intentional act that causes harm to others and mostly consist of racism and discrimination. In the United States of America, bullying is an intentional act, aggressive behaviour that causes harm to others, and an imbalance of power. In New Zealand, bullying is a deliberate intention to cause physical and psychological pain, imbalance of power and hurtful. In Australia, bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationshipsthrough repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm.It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. The example presented in Table 5.1 provides evidence of how the definition of school bullying varies from country to country. In support of this Janowski stated:

[When defining bullying in some languages such as Polish] one has to talk about the acts of *aggression, violence or oppression*.²²

Also, Smith stated in his book *In Understanding School bullying, its nature and prevention strategies*:

When one tries to translate the term *bullying* in other languages, there is no equivalent word that covers its meaning fully. This can even be the case in other English-speaking countries.²³

Mobbing was initially used by Lorenz to define a group of animals joining together to attack a stronger predator and used to characterise the action of a school class or group of soldiers who ganged up on different individuals.²⁴ It was later adopted by Peter Hienemann in 1973, and was used to refer to group violence against a different individual that occurs suddenly and subsides suddenly.²⁵ Furthermore, Olweus used the term mobbing, but subsequently extended the definition to include systematic one-on-one attacks of a stronger child against a weaker child, Olweus argued that:

A focus on the group obscures the role of individuals, puts the blame on the victim, who may be assumed to provoke the normal majority, and treats the group as a temporary constellation.²⁶

Mobbingin Australia, and the United States of America is more associated with workplace bullying, and not school bullying. Workplace bullying in Australia is against the law²⁷until now the law on school bullying in Australia is not enforced. It has been proven students who bully

²² Janowski A (1999) Sweden. In Peter K Smith, Y Morita, J Junger-Tas, D Olweus, R Catalano and P Slee (ed), *The Nature of Bullying A Cross-national Perspective* (Routledge 1999) cited in Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 25.

²³ Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 25

²⁴ Sally Kuykendall, *Bullying* (ABC-CLIO, 2012) 10.

²⁵ Peter K Smith, Helen Cowie, Ragnar F Olafsson and Andy P.D Lifooghe, Definitions of Bullying: A Comparison of Terms Used, and Age and Gender Differences, in a Fourteen-Country International Comparison (2002) 73 *Child Development* 1120.

²⁶ Robin May Schott and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, *School Bullying: New Theories in Context* (Cambridge University Press 2014) 23.

²⁷ Fair Works Acts 2009

their peers may grow into adults who are abusive towards their families, work colleges or become anti-social. Countenancing the perpetrator to get away with their actions at a young age will not guide them to become confident and active community members but allow them to comprehend that their bad behaviour is acceptable. Mobbing in the workplace is considered to a 'ganging up' practice by the leader(s) - organisation, superior, co-worker, or subordinate- who rallies others into systematic and frequent *mob-like* behaviour, it is a malicious attempt to force someone out of the workforce.²⁸ The initial use of the term to focus on a collective group resonated with the English word 'mob'. It is often used to identify a disorderly crowd, in Australia and New Zealand mob is referred to a herd or flock of sheep or cattle when droving or mob is used by the Indigenous to describe a family, kin or group of people. Hence, mob identifies a group or class of people, animals or things. Table 5.1 provides an apparent disparity in the definition of mobbing when translated into English.

Another few example of the difficulties of finding a comparable word when translating from a foreign language into English. The French term *Harcèlement* as presented in Table 5.1 translated into English it becomes harassment, although bullying and harassment are similar, someone hurts another by offensive, cruel and insulting behaviours. However, harassment is different from bullying in that it is a form of discrimination. The term *Prepotenza/ violenza* translated into English means bullying/ violence, *prepotenza* means overbearingness, unpleasantly or arrogantly domineering.²⁹

The Japanese term *Ijime* as presented in Table 5.1 translated into English means bullying, a person who is habitually cruel or overbearing, especially to smaller or weaker people.

The Spanish term *Acoso escolar* as presented in Table 5.1 translated into English, *Acoso* means harassment and *escolar* means school.

The literature presented above provides evidence of the disparity in defining school bullying. Although more countries are opting to use the English term bullying when defining school bullying,³⁰ there needs to be more done to ensure the definition of bullying is correlated the possibility of opting for words that are wider in meaning for example, instead of aggressive behaviour use negative behaviour and instead of abuse of power use imbalance of power. These two words negative and imbalance are better suited to the definition of school bullying as they offer a broader meaning than aggressive and abuse, this will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.3 Importance of an agreed definition of school bullying

²⁸ Michelle Barker, Sheryl Ramsay and Linda Shallcross, 'Workplace Mobbing: Expulsion, Exclusion and Transformation' 22nd ANZAM Conference 2008: Managing in the Pacific Century, Auckland, 2-5 December 2008) 3.

²⁹ Oxford Dictionary <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/overbearing>>.

³⁰ Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 25

This thesis argues the importance of having an agreed definition of school bullying, not only for future research but also for a legal purpose.³¹ Having an agreed definition of school bullying could allow for the restorative justice process to be implemented in schools, and bring justice for the victim and accountability for the perpetrator. Because having multiple definitions of school bullying with different meanings could present contradiction, furthermore, without an agreed definition of school bullying any methods applied to stop or prevent bullying may not succeed and the solution employed could be temporary because of the lack of understanding of the depth of school bullying. Moreover, the saying of having a multiple definition of school bullying enhances the understanding of school bullying, is beneficial for literature but not for the education department, as it could create confusion about what behaviour is considered to be bullying and what behaviours are not.⁶ Having a statutory definition of school bullying could create a more explicit understanding for school staff and students to recognise the behaviours associated with bullying in a school environment and could prevent any gaps that may occur when dealing with an incident. Also, providing a legal definition of school bullying could in the long term assist in addressing the issue appropriately and could create accountability for the perpetrator and having an agreed definition throughout the legal system could provide a correlated Federal and State legislation and penalty for schools who do not take the required actions to stop or prevent bullying. Moreover, this could deliver a more explicit and more precise definition of bullying in the school environment and enforce the law in schools to affirm that bullying is against the law and there are consequences for such unacceptable behaviour.³² There are laws in Australia that governs domestic violence, child abuse, work place bullying, common assault and other acts of violence, although these actions are correlated with school bullying, and there is a law that governs violence against teachers and students in schools 60E Assaults etc at schools it is not enforced. This will be discussed later in chapter seven the legal aspects of school bullying in Australia. In support to this Rachel E Maunder et al. stated:

How bullying is understood by members of the school community is important because differences in definition could result in an inconsistent approach and affect the success of intervention work.³³

Sally Kuykendall stated the following:

Having a standard definition [of bullying] that everyone agrees on allows comparisons that will help program developers to plan and evaluate programs.

³¹ Dorothy L. Espelage and Susan M Swearer, Research on School Bullying and Victimization: What Have We Learnt and Where Do We go From here? (2003) 32 *School Psychology Review* 365-383.

³² The discussion of accountability will be discussed in school bullying chapter four.

³³ Rachel E Maunder, Alex Harrop and Andrew J Tattersall, 'Pupil and Staff Perceptions of Bullying in Secondary Schools: Comparing Behavioural Definitions and Their Perceived Seriousness' (2010) 52 *Educational Research* 263 <<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/00131881.2010.504062?needAccess=true>>.

This statement by Kuykendall, indicates the importance of having an agreed definition of school bullying in the field of medicine. However, having a standard accepted definition of school bullying is essential for the legal system as it could provide a clearer and consistent definition of school bullying in the judicial system and could enforce the law on bullying in schools and in return hold schools accountable for their lack of intervention of incidents that may occur. The issue of having a legal definition of school bullying will be discussed in chapter seven the legal aspect of school bullying in Australia. Furthermore, having the law enforced in school could assist in preventing or stopping school bullying by correcting the behaviour of the students by making the perpetrator accountable for their actions, instead of pushing them out of the system and putting the responsibility of supervising these children during school hours on the community as there is a possibility the parents could work and leave the children unsupervised. Moreover, it could assist schools by providing a more consistent approach by implementing restorative justice process to address the needs of victims, families, school teachers, and the perpetrator, and enforcing schools to provide the appropriate counselling for students who are affected by bullying and adequate ongoing training for staff.

It is highly significant for an agreed legal enforced definition of bullying in Australian schools, as previous research undertaken on school bullying provides evidence of the impact bullying has on the victim and the perpetrator not only in their school years but also into their adulthood,³⁴ the correlation of domestic violence,³⁵ workplace bullying and school bullying is evident.³⁶ Without an agreed definition of school bullying and enforcing the law on students who victimise their peers will allow them to believe their behaviour is acceptable. Furthermore, having the law enforced in schools through the implementation of restorative justice process could teach children right from wrong at a young age,³⁷ and reduce the number of children who are suspended or expelled and rehabilitate the perpetrator and victim to become confident members of the community. There is an ethical dilemma when expelling and/ or suspending children from school as all children in Australia have the right to an education,³⁸ this will be discussed in chapter seven The Legal Aspects of School Bullying in Australia: Laws and Legislations used in Australia.

³⁴ Committee on the Biological and Psychosocial Effects of Peer Victimization: Lessons for Bullying Prevention Frederick Rivara and Suzanne Le Menestrel (ed) and Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education and Health and Medicine Division, *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice* (the National Academy of Sciences 2016) 6.

³⁵ Committee on the Biological and Psychosocial Effects of Peer Victimization: Lessons for Bullying Prevention Frederick Rivara and Suzanne Le Menestrel (ed) and Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education and Health and Medicine Division, *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice* (the National Academy of Sciences 2016) 1.

³⁶ Hesham Alkhalayleh and David Newlyn, 'Domestic Violence and School Bullying: An Examination of the Inextricable Link Between the two and the use of Restorative Justice to Break the Cycle' (2015) 8 *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law* 149.

³⁷ Laura Markham, *How Children Learn Right From Wrong* (07 March 2017) Psychology Today <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/peaceful-parents-happy-kids/201703/how-children-learn-right-wrong>> see also Restorative Justice Council, *Restorative Justice and Policing*

³⁸ *Humans Rights Act 1986* (Cth) and see also Australian Government, *Children's Rights in School Education* (December 1996) Australian Institute of Family Studies <<https://aifs.gov.au/publications/citizen-child-australian-law-and-childrens-rights/foreword>>.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, having an agreed legal definition of bullying enforced in school could prevent any gaps that may arise when dealing with the issue of bullying in a school environment and later on work place bullying and domestic violence (cycle of violence discussed in chapter three Nature and Prevalence of School Bullying in Australia and Abroad).

5.4 Defining School Bullying in Literature

Although there is no universally agreed definition of school bullying, the widely agreed on definition of bullying in literature provided by various scholars are similar, they are acts of aggression [1] negative behaviour intended to cause harm, [2] imbalance of power a more powerful person or group victimising a weaker person and [3] repetition a behaviour that occurs over a period of time.³⁹

The research on school bullying has expanded over the past decades, there have been significant changes to the way school bullying has been conceptualised,⁴⁰ what was accepted as being a standard conduct between student to student is now being perceived as being an unacceptable behaviour that cause a life time of harm for (some) victims and (in some cases) the perpetrator.⁴¹ The first reported case of school bullying in a daily newspaper, The Times, United Kingdom during the 1800s indicated how bullying was considered to be an acceptable behaviour which occurred by older students and teachers especially in boarding schools. The Times in 1885 reported the death of a twelve year-old boy who was a victim of bullying while attending the Kings School in Cambridge, it reported the student died from bullying behaviour by an older group. Furthermore, this incident was investigated by the council, and they perceived bullying as being a misadventure, the council stated:

This behaviour could be a normal part of a boy's school life.⁴²

This statement provided by the council, indicates that bullying was contemplated to being a typical behaviour associated with young male people attending school.⁴³ Also, it provides an insight of how bullying was formerly considered to being an irritating, but relatively harmless, behaviour that made a child tougher, and more able to deal with the harshness of this world.⁴⁴ More contemporary research on school bullying provide a comprehensible insight of the

³⁹ Tonja R Nansel, Mary Overpeck, Ramani S Pilla, June Ruan, Bruce Simmons-Morton and Peter Scheidt, Bullying Behaviours Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association with Psychosocial Adjustment (2001) 16 *JAMA* 2094-2100.

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⁴¹ Committee on the Biological and Psychosocial Effects of Peer Victimization: Lessons for Bullying Prevention Frederick Rivara and Suzanne Le Menestrel (ed) and Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education and Health and Medicine Division, *Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice* (the National Academy of Sciences 2016) 6.

⁴² Hyojin Koo, 'A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts' (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 110 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

⁴³ Hyojin Koo, 'A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts' (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 107 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

⁴⁴ Sally Kuykendall, *Bullying* (ABC-CLIO, 2012) 4

impairment caused for victims, families and the perpetrator ever-changing the opinion of how bullying is perceived nowadays. To support the philosophy of how bullying was regarded previously an article written by a news journalist for The Times in 1862 described bullying being as:

The bullying propensities of human nature have, generally speaking, these remarkable characteristics that they are not wandering around, volatile, oscillating, unsteady appetites, hoping about changing from one subject to another, but that they settle upon someone object and stick close and faithfully and perseveringly to it. They are the most unchangeable thing that this fickle world possesses.⁴⁵

This statement was written after John Flood a soldier who was continuously bullied by a fellow soldier John O’Dea. Although this statement is related to workplace bullying it is significant for this study as it indicates how bullying was perceived prior to more recent studies undertaken in the 1970s, furthermore it provides an understanding of the correlation of workplace bullying and school bullying regarding to the bully behaviour and how the victim is effected by the actions of the perpetrator. Flood took matters in to his own hands and shot O’Dea dead. This statement supports the notion that bullying in previous times was considered as a part of human nature manifested in a school, communities, workplaces, a camp, or a barracks, or a ship’s crew.⁴⁶ Furthermore, this statement indicates the behaviour of a bully may intensify over time if not rectified compelling the victim to take matters into their own hands out of despairing by turning to violence (bully victim) as a way to fight back against the bullying, putting victims at risk of further injury, disciplinary actions, or criminal charges.⁴⁷ This incident is another example of the importance of having an agreed definition of school bullying and enforcing the law on bullying in Australian schools and abroad to prevent bullying incidents and to correct the behaviour of young people by implementing restorative justice to make the perpetrator accountable for their actions to end the cycle of violence in schools and later in life. This will be discussed later in chapter six nature and prevalence of school bullying.

Although the research phenomenon of bullying in young people is recently new and there is now more awareness created about the harm caused for victims, families, community and the perpetrator, research provides evidence that bullying is not a contemporary problem, but it has occurred since the beginning of time.⁴⁸ The first significant article written about bullying among

⁴⁵Hyojin Koo, ‘A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts’ (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 109 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

⁴⁶Hyojin Koo, ‘A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts’ (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 109 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>, see also Sally Kuykendall, *Bullying* (ABC-CLIO, 2012) 4.

⁴⁷ Sally Kuykendall, *Bullying* (ABC-CLIO, 2012) 4.

⁴⁸Hyojin Koo, ‘A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts’ (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 107 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

young people was in 1897 by Frederic L. Burke, the article exposed the behaviour of the bully and victim, and furthermore it provided examples of victimisation among young people, and this article was the first to characterise a bully's behaviour.⁴⁹ In the 1950s, the term mobbing was introduced by Konrad Lorenz, this term was based on his lifetime of observation of animal behaviour as previously stated in 2.2 Difficulties of defining school bullying.⁵⁰ Although systematic research on bullying was relatively rare before Pika and Olweus in the 1970s, some characteristics of bullying could be discerned.⁵¹ Professor Dan Olweus from the University of Bergen was one of the first to recognise the harm of school bullying in the 1970s, prior to Olweus research bullying was considered as being a part of growing up among young people in school it is evident in previous reports in 1885 and 1862. Olweus' research into bullying in Swedish and Norwegian schools cultivated awareness about school bullying, and the long-term effects it could have on victims, families, communities and perpetrators.⁵² After Olweus research on school bullying, more researchers like Ken Rigby, Peter K Smith, and David Farrington⁵³ just to name a few have expanded the interpretation of bullying giving more awareness of the harm caused because:

- (i) there is more research about bullying
- (ii) parents are more involved in the process of dealing with incidents that occur at school
- (iii) and there is more publicity about school bullying.⁵⁴

Over a period of time the view of bullying has changed dramatically for example during the 18th to 20th centuries bullying was described as being:

- (i) verbal and physical harassment that usually related to death

⁴⁹Hyojin Koo, 'A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts' (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 110 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

⁵⁰ Konrad Lorenz was observing a gaggle of geese attack a fox, he concluded that animals act differently in a group, this idea of herd behaviour provides insights into why henchman and bystanders go along with bullying. see Sally Kuykendall, *Bullying* (ABC-CLIO, 2012) 10.

⁵¹ Hyojin Koo, 'A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts' (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 109 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

⁵² Ken Rigby, *Bullying in schools and what to do about it* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd 1996) 12-64, see also Rashmi Shetgiri, 'Bullying and Victimization Among Children' (2013) 60 (1) *Advances in paediatrics* 33, 51, see also Victoria State Government (28 November 2013) Education Training <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/impact.aspx>>, see also Stephen Allison, Leigh Roeger, and Nova Reinfeld-Kirkman 'Does school bullying affect adult health? Population survey of health-related quality of life and past victimization' (2009) 43 (12) *Australian and New Zealand journal of psychiatry* 1163- 1166.

⁵³ Other scholars who have contributed to the ongoing research of school bullying are: Robin May Schott and Dorte Marie Søndergaard, Jan Urbanski and Steve Permuth,

⁵⁴ The Movement Against Bullying, *The top six unforgettable cyberbullying cases ever* (19 October 2016) NoBullying.com <<https://nobullying.com/six-unforgettable-cyber-bullying-cases/>>.

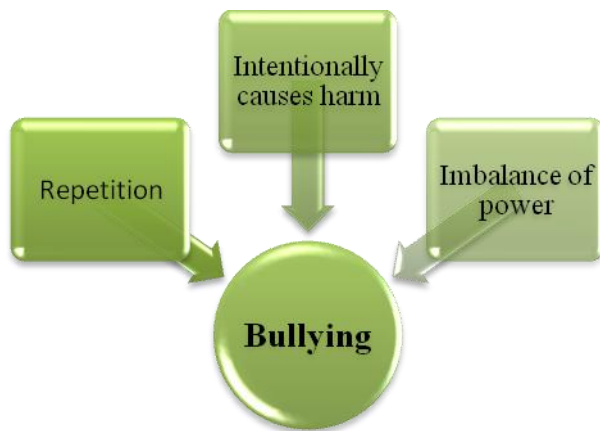
- (ii) strong isolation
- (iii) or extortion in school children.

In the 1950s bullying was perceived as being a form of misbehaviour in direct physical aggression and verbal taunting.⁵⁵ Since the 1970s Olweus described bullying behaviour among young people in school as being physical harm, other forms of bullying facial expression and indirect bullying was not included. In 1980s the meaning of bullying also included direct verbal taunting and social exclusion. In 1999 Olweus includes rude gestures and facial expressions. The definition of bullying has expanded over time to include more unacceptable behaviours, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

On school bullying, Smith observes:

Nevertheless, bullying has come to have a relatively well-defined meaning as behaviour that intentionally harms another person, typically with repetition and an imbalance of power.⁵⁶

Figure 5.1 Peter Smith's key words for bullying (adapted from Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies*).⁵⁷



The above observation of school bullying by Smith provides one of the most common definitions of school bullying, it provides the keywords *intentionally harm*, *repetition* and *imbalance of power*, all these characteristics are clearly apart of school bullying and Smith points out that school bullying is an intentional act aimed to harm others. Recent researches

⁵⁵Hyojin Koo, 'A Time Line of the of Evolution of School Bullying in Different Social Contexts' (2007) 8 *Asia Pacific Education Review* 112 <<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ768971.pdf>>.

R. Mathew Gladden, Alana M. Vivolo-Kantor, Merle E. Hamburger and Corey D. Lumpkin, 'Bullying Surveillance Among Youths Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements' (2014) 1 the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United States Department of Education <<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf>> 7.

⁵⁶ Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 14.

⁵⁷ Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 14.

indicated that bullying is a learnt behaviour which starts in the home environment. This will be discussed more in chapter six nature and prevalence of school bullying.

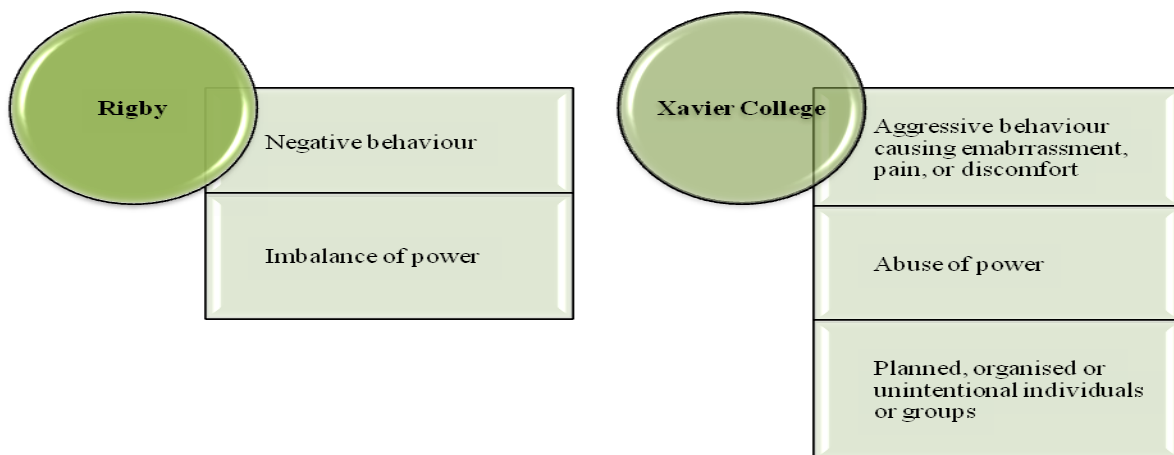
Professor Ken Rigby is one of the most prominent experts on bullying in Australia. Rigby's ongoing research has enabled school staff to better comprehend the problem of school bullying. Rigby has defined school bullying as being:

A continual negative behaviour (not merely thoughts) by a more powerful person in a situation where there is an imbalance of power (not in any situation) and the weaker person is really hurt.⁵⁸

To provide an understanding of how the definition of school bullying varies this thesis has inserted a definition Rigby has provided in *Bullying in schools and what to do about it* from Xavier College in Melbourne, Xavier College defines school bullying in their policy statement as being:

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another, it can take many forms: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised or may be unintentional; individuals or groups may be involved.⁵⁹

Figure 5.2 Ken Rigby and Xavier College comparison of key words for bullying (adapted from Ken Rigby, *Bullying in schools and what to do about it*).⁶⁰



⁵⁸ Ken Rigby, *Bullying in schools and what to do about it* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd 1996) 132.

⁵⁹ Ken Rigby, *Bullying in schools and what to do about it* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd 1996) 132.

⁶⁰Ken Rigby, *Bullying in schools and what to do about it* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd 1996) 132.

Rigby's definition of negative behaviour is more suited to school bullying between young people at school than that of Xavier College. The reason for this is negative behaviour has a broader meaning, for example, harmful, bad, and destructive, whereas Xavier College definition of aggression has a limited meaning, for example, violence, hostility, anger, and belligerence. Furthermore, although aggression is a part of bullying not all aggression is bullying as suggested by Xavier College, but all bullying is harmful, bad and destructive as suggested by Rigby. Moreover, Rigby describe bullying as an imbalance of power which is more suited to school bullying between students than abuse of power, imbalance of power could be a student who is larger (in size) than their intended target, whereas abuse of power would be more suited to someone who has authority and they abuse it for their own benefit, for example, a teacher bullying students and/or a manager who bullies their staff and or a government who bullies the community. There is inconsistency about school bullying being intentional or unintentional this will be discussed more in chapter three school bullying.

The definition of bullying provided by Centre's of Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Education in 2014 in the United States of America incorporated unwanted aggressive behaviour observed or perceived power imbalance, and repetition of behaviours or high likelihood of repetition. There are different methods and types of bullying the current definition provided by CDC and the Department of Education acknowledges two methods and four types of youth bullying. The two Modes of bullying include: (i) direct for example, bullying that occurs in the presence of the victim and (ii) indirect for example, bullying that occurs not directly at the victim by spreading rumours. The four types of bullying provided by CDC and the Department of Education are (i) physical force used by the perpetrator towards their victim for example hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, tripping, and pushing, although physical bullying is not limited to these examples, (ii) verbal for example, oral or written communication from the perpetrator to the victim, (iii) relational for example, behaviours from the perpetrator against the victim designed to harm their reputation and relationships, and (iv) damaging property this behaviour includes theft, alteration or damaging the victims property by the perpetrator that causes harm. This type of behaviour may include but not limited to the following (i) taking the victim's personal property and refusing to give it back, (ii) destroying the victim's personal property in their presence and (iii) deleting personal electronic information for the victim.

The movement against bullying an online forum for the purpose of educating, advising, counselling and all importantly, helping to stop bullying, in particular, cyber bullying has defined bullying as being:

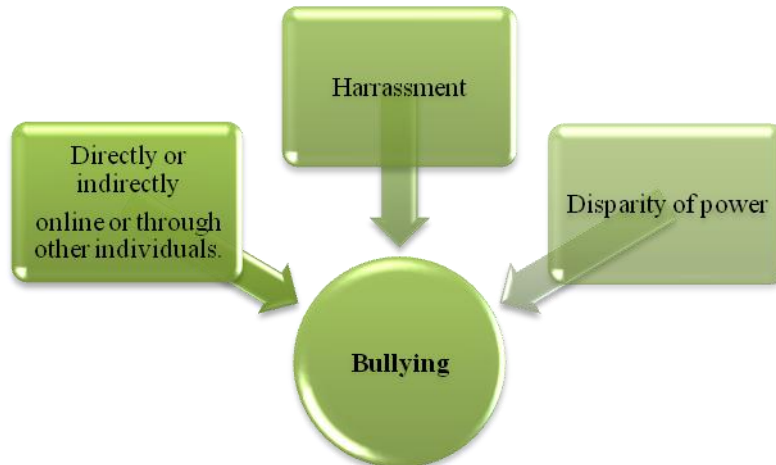
A repeated psychological and physical oppression of an individual with limited power by a more powerful person or group of people. Bullying can take place directly (in person) or indirectly (online or through other individuals).⁶¹

⁶¹ The Movement Against Bullying, What is the Definition of Bullying? The real Answers (27 March 2017) <<https://nobullying.com/what-is-the-definition-of-bullying-the-real-answers/>>.

The movement against bullying adds to this:

Bullying is different to other types of aggression, which usually include people of equal or similar power. People can be hurtful to others due to thoughtlessness, but mere annoyance and anger doesn't make a negative interaction bullying. Bullying is defined as a harassment that occurs because of a direct obvious disparity in power between one person and another.⁶²

Figure 5.3 Movement Against Bullying key words for bullying (adapted from The Movement Against Bullying, *What is the definition of bullying? The real answers*).⁶³



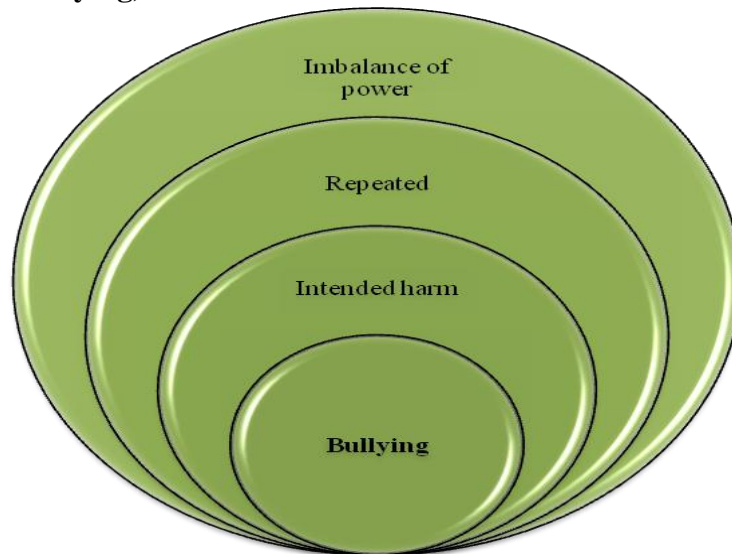
The movement against bullying defines school bullying as being *repeated* psychological and physical oppression, directly or indirect harassment that occurs between one person and another, in comparison to Ken Rigby's definition of negative behaviour and an imbalance of power Rigby's definition would be more suited than that of the movement against bullying. Negative behaviour has a broader definition, negative behaviour covers all aspects of unacceptable behaviour, for example, harmful, destructive and undesirable. Furthermore, the movement against bullying describes bullying as thoughtlessness for example, lack of consideration. When previous researchers examined school bullying it has been found that bullying is a learnt behaviour which starts at home. For example, when a student bullies their peer they see it as an acceptable behaviour because that is what they have learnt from their parents and siblings, thoughtlessness is not suitable for describing bullying because some perpetrators are aware of

⁶² The Movement Against Bullying, *What is the definition of bullying? The real answers* (21 September 2016) NoBullying.com < <https://nobullying.com/what-is-the-definition-of-bullying-the-real-answers/>>.

⁶³ The Movement Against Bullying, *What is the definition of bullying? The real answers* (21 September 2016) NoBullying.com < <https://nobullying.com/what-is-the-definition-of-bullying-the-real-answers/>>.

their actions, and they shame and humiliate their victim because it stimulates the physical experience of power.⁶⁴

Figure 5.4. Graphic depicting the definition of bullying (adapted from Dan Olweus definition of school bullying)⁶⁵



Dan Olweus defines the practice of bullying as being:

A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another. Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally) for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names. It is a negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches or restrain another – by physical contact.⁶⁶

Olweus adds to this:

⁶⁴ Mary C Lamis, *Why Bullies Don't Feel bad (or Don't know they do)* (1 March 2015) Psychology Today <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/intense-emotions-and-strong-feelings/201503/why-bullies-dont-feel-bad-or-dont-know-they-do>>.

⁶⁵Dan Olweus (1999), edited by Peter k smith, Yohji Morita, Josine Junger-Tas, Dan Owelus, Richard F Catalano, Philip Slee, *The Nature of School Bullying: A Cross-national Perspective* (Routledge, 1999) cited in Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 14.

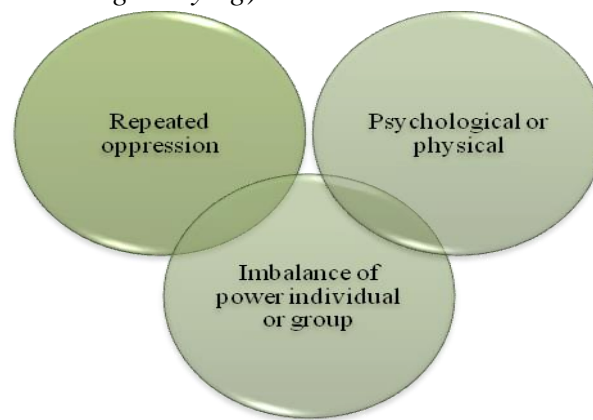
⁶⁶ Dan Olweus, *Bullying at School: What we know and what we can do* (Blackwell 1993), cited in Mark G. Borg 'The extent and nature of bullying among primary and secondary schoolchildren' (1999) 41 (2) *Taylor & Francis Group* 138.

In order to use the term bullying, there should also be an imbalance of strength (an asymmetric power relationship); the student who is exposed to negative actions has a difficulty in defending himself or herself and is somewhat helpless against the student or students who harass.⁶⁷

David Farrington, perhaps provides the most persuasive definition of bullying:

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons.⁶⁸

Figure 5.5 David Farrington key words of bullying (adapted from David P Farrington, *Understanding and Preventing Bullying*).⁶⁹



Rigby, Olweus and Farrington's definitions indicate that when a perpetrator pursues a victim, he or she considers that person to be of lesser repute and strength. A difference in power can be, for example, a noticeable physical difference such as size, age, or the number of students involved.⁷⁰ With this in mind, the definitions above indicate that when a perpetrator bullies their victim, they are fully conscious of what they are doing. This is usually not done out of aggression or outrage but as an act of power and control over their victims. Although violence, harassment, and discrimination may occur as a part of bullying, these behaviours also occur in one-off conflicts. For example, if two students who are equal to each other and disagree it is not categorised as bullying.⁷¹ When this occurs, it is vital to stop the conflict and investigate the dispute as it may

⁶⁷ Dan Olweus (1999), edited by Peter K Smith, Yohji Morita, Josine Junger-Tas, Dan Olweus, Richard F Catalano, Philip Slee, *The Nature of School Bullying: A Cross-national Perspective* (Routledge, 1999) cited in Peter K Smith, *Understand school bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 14.

⁶⁸ David P Farrington, *Understanding and Preventing Bullying* (University of Chicago Press 1993), cited in Ken Rigby, *Bullying in Schools And what to do about it* (Australian Council for Educational Research 1996) 15.

⁶⁹ David P Farrington, *Understanding and Preventing Bullying* (University of Chicago Press 1993), cited in Ken Rigby, *Bullying in Schools And what to do about it* (Australian Council for Educational Research 1996) 15.

⁷⁰ Jan Urbanski and Steve Permeth, *The Truth About Bullying: What Educators and Parents Must Know and Do* (The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing 2009)33.

⁷¹ Peter K Smith, *Understand School Bullying: Its nature and prevention strategies* (Sage Publications 2014) 15.

be an ongoing issue. Both Rigby, Olweus and Farrington define bullying as being a repeated behaviour this will be discussed later in the chapter.

Table 5.2 aims to clarify the differences in each definition above.

Table 5.2 Clarifying the differences in definitions and terms used to describe school bullying

Abuse of power	Improper use of authority
----------------	---------------------------

Aggression	violence, anger and hostility
------------	-------------------------------

Harassment	form of discrimination (sex, race, age and religion)
------------	--

Negative behaviour	harmful, bad and destructive
--------------------	------------------------------

Oppression	A situation in which people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom.
------------	--

Repeated	To do, make, perform, again: <i>to repeat an action</i> . To go through or undergo again: <i>to repeat an experience</i> . ⁷²
----------	--

Repetition	The act of repeating; repeated action, performance, production or presentation. ⁷³
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⁷²

The table highlight several fundamental differences: (i) abuse of power is more correlated to an organisation/ or government department, (ii) negative behaviour has a broader definition compared to aggression which has a limited meaning (iii) harassment and bullying are similar, however, harassment is a form of discrimination and (iv) oppression is people who are governed in an unfair way and prevented from opportunities. (v) repeated could be used for both the bully and the victim, for example the victim maybe subjected to bullying as a repeated act, or the bully repeats his act but with a possibility of different victims however it is still classified as being a repeated act. (vi) repetition is repeated actions, this is an open meaning for example bullying of one victim being repetition or multiple victims being repetition. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although bullying as a behaviour has been defined by most as being repeated over time, if not all research definition of bullying.⁷⁴ For example, Olweus's definition of bullying being, negative actions that is carried out *repeatedly over time*. The intent is to exclude occasional non-serious negative actions that are directed against one student at one time and against another on a different occasion.⁷⁵ As discussed in chapter seven the legal aspects of bullying, this thesis argues the point that bullying does not have to be a repeated offence but it could be a one off incident that causes fear for the victim of repetition *bullying phobia*,⁷⁶ in support to this thesis argument of bullying could be a one off incident Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy argue in their article *Pupils' Definition of Bullying* that it does not have to be a repeated offence to be considered as bullying, especially if the one off incident causes a fear of repetition.⁷⁷ Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy discuss in their article *Pupils' Definition of Bullying* although many researchers agree on the importance of repetition in defining bullying, but many acknowledge there could be occasions that arise when the incident is not repeated but could be considered as bullying.⁷⁸ Bullying described by Tattum as being:

⁷³

⁷⁴Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 251.

⁷⁵ Dan Olweus (1999), edited by Peter k smith, Yohji Morita, Josine Junger-Tas, Dan Owelus, Richard F Catalano, Philip Slee, *The Nature Of School Bullying: A Cross-national Perspective* (Routledge, 1999) cited in Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 251 see also, Des Butler, 'Liability for Bullying at Schools in Australia: Lessons to be Learnt (2006) 7 *Education Law Journal* 3 <<https://eprints.qut.edu.au/18405/1/18405.pdf>>.

⁷⁶ Bullying phobia is created for the purpose of this thesis, to provide an understanding of fear of repetition.

⁷⁷ Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, cited in Claire P. Monks and Peter K. Smith, 'Definitions of Bullying: Age differences in understanding of the term, and the role of experience' (2006) 24(4) *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 802.

⁷⁸ Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 251.

Bullying involved a desire to put a person under stress that this stress is created not only by what happens but by the threat and fear of what may happen.⁷⁹

This statement by Tattum indicate even a one off incident can be classified as being bullying, especially if there is fear of repetition, for example, *bullying phobia* the victim fears for their safety or fears of an reoccurrence every time they see the perpetrator in the school grounds or outside of school. In support to this statement Olweus also stated that:

A single stance of more serious harassment can be regarded as bullying under certain circumstances.⁸⁰

There was no indication of any exceptional circumstances provided by Dan Olweus, but however, it is possible that they related to the fear caused.⁸¹ Also, it could relate to how the victim may feel about the one off incident, for example, the perpetrator may have humiliated the victim in front of their peers about their appearance leaving the victim feeling anxious about repetition from the same perpetrator or from other peers.

Furthermore, in support of the argument this thesis put forward and Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy of school bullying being a one off incident in the *Australian Law Dictionary 2nd Edition* defined bullying as being:

Intentionally demeaning treatment of others, often but not necessarily repeated or persistent, which offends or belittles them (for example, by sustained teasing or sarcasm) or causes or risks causing physical or psychological harm. Bullying may be committed by individuals or groups, particularly in schools and workplaces (also called hazing).⁸²

The definition provide by the *Australian Law Dictionary* supporting evidence along with Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy that bullying is not necessarily repeated, as provided in table 5.2 repeated and repetition are both repeated acts but this does not necessarily indicate the act is committed against the same victim. This also supports the theory of a perpetrator bullying but not necessarily the same victim as it states *not necessarily repeated or persistent*.

⁷⁹ D.P Tattum, 'A Whole-School response: From Crisis Management to Prevention' (1997) 18 (2) *Irish Journal of Psychology*, cited it Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 251.

⁸⁰ Dan Olweus, *Bullying: What we Know and What we can do* (Oxford Blackwell Publishers 1993) cited in Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 251.

⁸¹ Suzanne Guerin and Eilis Hennessy 'Pupils' Definitions of Bullying' (2006) 76(3) *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 251.

⁸² Trisha Mann (ed), *Australian Law Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2nd ed, 2013) 105.

Although school bullying is primarily considered being of repetition or repeated behaviour as mentioned above, this thesis puts forward that bullying does not have to be a repeated act (towards one victim) or repetition, it can consist of being a one off incident, causing harm, humiliation and fear for the victim (bullying phobia) for example, the victim is ridiculed for their appearance, in front of their peers in or out of the classroom causing humiliation by inviting others to laugh at the victim creating fear for the victim of repetition.

Students who bully their peers in a one off incident which causes harm, humiliation and fear and without appropriate action taken by the schools personnel allows the perpetrator to get away with their misconduct, in doing this, the school environment has created the possibility of repetition. Furthermore, by not correcting the behaviour of the perpetrator, this will give them a sense of *I can do whatever I want and get away with it attitude*,⁸³ giving them the wrong message that bullying is okay. Also, there is a risk of the victim not only being bullied by the original perpetrator but also by the circle of friend associated with the bully, down playing this behaviour will put the victim at risk as they may be reluctant to come forward in the future making them an easy target. Although repeated and repetition are the most common terms used in defining school bullying, this thesis argues that:

Repeated negative behaviour could relate to the perpetrator misconduct towards their peers, it does not have to be a repeated act towards just one victim, it could be a repeated act towards multiple victims as different stages. For example, the perpetrator could bully a victim one day and move on to another victim the next, causing harm, humiliation and fear. This behaviour could include being pushed one day, having access blocked the next, and being excluded from the lunch table on a subsequent occasion.⁸⁴ The notion of the term repeated/repetition when defining school bullying in literature does not specify the action refers to the victim or the perpetrator.

A continual negative behaviour (not merely thoughts) by a more powerful person in a situation where there is an imbalance of power (not in any situation) and the weaker person is really hurt

The word ruthless is used, as it describes the actions of the bullying concisely, someone who has no pity or compassion (pitiless; merciless). Bullies do not have empathy or solicitousness for their victim/s, they are blustering, quarrelsome, over bearing person who browbeats smaller or weaker people. Susan Butler (ed), *Macquarie Concise Dictionary* (Macquarie Dictionary Publishers Pty Ltd, 6th revised ed, 2013) 151,1047.

Using the word repeated in defining school bullying could take two forms (i) the bully repeatedly bullies the same victim/s (ii) the bully may repeat their behaviour towards different victims during a single day or throughout the week. Both are still classified as being repeated ruthless and negative behaviour.

⁸⁴ Jan Urbanski and Steve Permeth, *The Truth About Bullying: What Educators and Parents Must Know and Do* (The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing 2009)33.

⁸⁴ Ken Rigby, *Bullying in Schools and what to do about it* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers 1996) 87, 88.

Generally, if the bully is not somehow stopped, his or her behaviour escalates into causing terror into the bullied.⁸⁵

Although, none of the actions may occur more than once a day and/or a week, it is still categorised as potential repeated bullying behaviour because these actions occur repeatedly over time with different victims. A different problem with this form of bullying is the possibility the perpetrator is bullying one victim, and then moving on to the next victim on a daily basis. Because there is no consistent bullying of one victim, it is harder in these instances for the school staff to recognise or comprehend that bullying is taking place, unless proper recording of incidents take place to provide evidence of different incidents occurring.

This thesis has provided its own definition of school bullying, by selecting specific sections from Olweus, Rigby's, Smith and Guerin and Hennessy definitions which this thesis feel is more suited to school bullying and describing young people behaviour. Furthermore, taking into consideration of the definition of each word and how they are portrayed in society for example, when using the word oppression it is associated with lack of opportunities and freedom and abuse of power is associated with authority.

This thesis defines school bullying as being:

School bullying is a direct or indirect ruthless and negative behaviour that could be a one off activity, repeated, or have the possibility to be repeated. It is an imbalance of power between students (the bully seeks victim/s of lesser repute and strength), that causes fear and psychological harm. It does not have to be physical, it can be verbal, a gesture or intimidation that may cause the victim to have fear for their wellbeing.

This thesis also adds:

School bullying does not have to be an act of aggression, it does not have to be only physical, it could be any act that is not acceptable behaviour towards their peers. School bullying could be any unwanted negative behaviour that causes harm to the victim, not only physically but also psychologically. School bullying could be a one off activity that humiliates the victim and/ or makes the victim fear for their wellbeing, with the potential to be a repeated behaviour from the perpetrator (the word 'repeated' used in this thesis

means that it's a repeated behaviour from the perpetrator but not necessarily the same victim).

5.5 Defining School Bullying Abroad

To provide more examples of discrepancy in the definition of school bullying worldwide this thesis has also included definitions of school bullying from the United States of America, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada. In the United States of America the statutory definition of bullying cited in Dewey Cornell and Susan P Limber article *Law and policy on the concept of bullying at school* as follow:

Bullying means any aggressive and unwanted behaviour that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyberbullying. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.⁸⁶

In New Zealand bullying is defined as being:

Bullying is a form of aggressive or threatening behaviour, either at school, in the workforce, or in the wider community. Bullying is usually deliberate, the bully intends to cause pain or discomfort. Involves a power imbalance, this could be based on status, physical size, age, or gender. [It involves] a pattern of behaviour over time that leads to fear and anxiety, it's not usually a one-off thing. [Bullying] causes short or long term physical or psychological harm.⁸⁷

In Canada bullying is defined as being:

Bullying is a form of aggression where there is a power imbalance; the person doing the bullying has power over the person being victimized.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Dewey Cornell and Susan P Limber, 'Law and policy on the concept of bullying at school' (2015) 70 *American Psychologist* 339.

⁸⁷ New Zealand Government, *Bullying* (12 June 2017) New Zealand Government <<https://www.govt.nz/browse/law-crime-and-justice/abuse-harassment-domestic-violence/bullying/>>.

⁸⁸ Canadian Red Cross, *Definitions of Bullying and Harassment* (1 November 2017) <<http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/violence--bullying-and-abuse-prevention/educators/bullying-and-harassment-prevention/definitions-of-bullying-and-harassment>>.

In the United Kingdom there are no legal definitions of bullying, although the Government has declared that some forms of bullying may be illegal and the authorities must be involved if they occur. The Government in the United Kingdom stated as followed:

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police these include, violence or assaults, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages and hate crimes.⁸⁹

The government in the United Kingdom clearly states that some forms of bullying is against the law, but still there is no legal definition they provide to clearly state bullying is against any convention for example, human rights, discrimination laws and other relevant Acts.

This thesis puts forward the legal definition of school bullying could be updated to a modern era, bullying in the school environment has evolved over the past decades and more acts could be associated with the term. The term bullying utilised in schools is to cover any unwanted negative behaviour between peers and in some cases school staff and students, a new legal definition of school bullying could also cover all aspects of violence, discrimination, theft and harassment. Bullying is no longer just about imbalance of power, it is about gangs ruling schools,⁹⁰ and it is about diversity in culture because of little awareness from the family environment.⁹¹

5.6 Defining School Bullying In Australia

This thesis provides different definitions from several different law organisations to provide an understanding of discrepancies in the definition. Lawstuff defines school as being:

Bullying is a repeated behaviour that is harmful, targets a particular person or group of people, embarrasses, dominate or intimidates the person being bullied. Bullying includes, verbal insults like teasing, name-calling, harassing. Psychical behaviours [which include] hitting, kicking, pushing and mucking about that goes too far. Cyber bullying [which includes] offensive SMS and emails, on Facebook or in Chat

⁸⁹The United Kingdom Government, *Bullying at School* The United Kingdom Government <<https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school>>.

⁹⁰ Sharita Forrest, 'Bullying more Violent in School with Gangs Nearby, Study Finds' on Sharita Forrest *Public Affairs/ Illinois*, 18 April 2013 <<https://news.illinois.edu/blog/view/6367/204837>>.

⁹¹ BullyingNoWay, *Diversity and Bullying* (2017) BullyingNoWay.gov.au <<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/UnderstandingBullying/WhyDoesBullyingHappen/Pages/Diversity-and-bullying.aspx>>, see also

rooms [and any] anti-social behaviour [which includes] exclusion, gossip, spreading rumours, or offensive gestures.⁹²

The definition above is provided by Lawstuff know your rights. Lawstuff is an organisation that offers legal advice for students in each state and territory in Australia who are attending public or private schools and are victims of bullying. Providing a definition which include the acts that are associated with the behaviour could provide a limited understanding for what psychological actions would be considered to be bullying, for example, a perpetrator may pinch or throw things at their victims. It is highly significant to have a broader definition or use of words to define school bullying and not limit it to specific actions. Bullying has been proven by previous researches undertaken, bullying does not have to be a repeated act, it could be an one off incident with the potential to happen again, or the victim may have fear it could happen again and it could be a repeated act but with different victims.

FindLaw Australia defines school bullying as being:⁹³

Bullying is any cruel or hurtful behaviour, including physical violence, threats or harassment, by one student or a group of students, towards another student. Harassment means on-going verbal or physical attacks on another person.⁹⁴

Although harassment is a part of school bullying, the legal term for harassment described by the Australian Human Rights Commission is associated under the discrimination law, it is linked to treating someone unlawfully due to their sex, race, disability or age. Harassment can include behaviours such as telling insulting jokes about particular racial group, sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages, displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers, making derogatory comments or taunts about a person's disability, or asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life. It is highly significant for all students in the school environment to learn harassment is against the law and there are laws that govern all forms of discrimination. This will be discussed in chapter seven the legal framework of school bullying in Australia.

As discuss in defining school bullying in literature another legal term to define school bullying as provided in the *Australian Law Dictionary 2nd Edition*:

Intentionally demeaning treatment of others, often but not necessarily repeated or persistent, which offends or belittles them (for example, by sustained teasing or sarcasm) or causes or risks causing physical or psychological harm. Bullying

⁹² Lawstuff Know your Rights, Bullying at School (17 March 2015) Lawstuff <http://www.lawstuff.org.au/nsw_law/topics/bullying/bullying-at-school#what>.

⁹³ FindLaw Australia is a business of Thomson Reuters that provides legal information that is free to read and profile of lawyers in Australia that can assist the public with any legal problems.

⁹⁴ Find Law Australia, *Bullying at School* (2017) National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC) for State Schools <<http://www.findlaw.com.au/articles/230/bullying-at-school.aspx>>.

may be committed by individuals or groups, particularly in schools and workplaces (also called hazing).⁹⁵

The definition provided above produces a comprehensive definition of school bullying, which is acceptable clear and concise. This definition covers all areas of physical and psychological and does not pin point it to specific actions. This definition provided above of school bullying supports the theory this thesis puts forward, school bullying does not necessarily needs to be repeated, but it could have the potential to be repeated, or it could be a repeated action by a perpetrator with different victims.⁷⁷This is previously discussed in defining school bullying in literature.

5.6.1 Department of Education Australia: National Safe School Framework (NSSF)

The national definition of school bullying in Australia was developed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group, which consist of State and Territories Federal Education Department in Australia as well as the national Catholic and independent school representatives. The national definition has been as part of the NSSF and can be found on the Australian Government Student wellbeing hub. The NSSF provide several definitions of school bullying for different years at school. The NSSF definition of school bullying in Australia for years 10-12 as followed:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

NSSF definition of bullying for years 5-6 and 7-9:

Bullying is when one person (or a group of people) with more power than someone else tries to upset or hurt them. This power can come from being more popular, stronger or part of the group. They might repeatedly try to hurt the person physically, socially isolate them, or say and do mean or humiliating things to them. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious or hidden.

NSSF definition of bullying for years 3-4:

Bullying is when someone, keeps picking on you again and again and tries to make you feel bad, says or does lots of mean things that upset you, makes fun of you a lot, tries to stop you from joining in or make others not like you, keeps

⁹⁵ Trisha Mann (ed), *Australian Law Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2nd ed, 2013) 105.

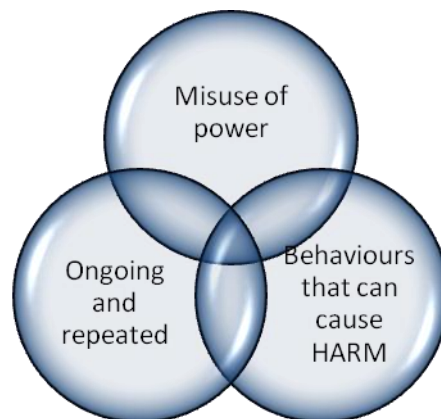
hurting you such as hitting or punching you. Bullying feels awful. You feel like you can't stop it. Bullying can happen in person or online. It might be something people can see or it might be hidden.

The above definitions provided by the Working Group has singled out different years at school, the definitions provided above cause some confusion to what is constituted as bullying. Although these three definitions of school bullying are used to simplify for each targeted group there could be some confusion of bullying for example, (i) being an on-going misuse of power in a relationship (ii) they might repeatedly try to hurt you and (iii) someone picking on you again and again. Repetition is used in the field of sociology or psychology researchers, however, repetition is not necessary for criminal law to harm someone could consist of being one-off incident.

Behaviour that is not considered to being acts of bullying according to the Working Group are as followed:

- (i) Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance).
- (ii) Not liking someone or single act of social rejection.
- (iii) One-off acts of meanness or spite
- (iv) Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Diagram 5.6.1 Three Main Characteristic of Bullying (Adapted by Bullying No Way!).⁹⁶



5.6.2 Defining School Bullying in Australian States and Territories

In Australia the national agreed definition has been developed as part of the National Safe Schools Framework, the national group includes all state, territory and federal education departments, as well as the national catholic and independent schooling representatives. The

⁹⁶ Bullying No Way!, *Definition of Bullying* (2017) Bullying No Way!
<<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying>>.

national agreed on definition of school bullying in Australia and the Australian Capital Territory:⁹⁷

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).⁹⁸

New South Wales has recently dropped the Safe Schools anti-bullying program and has opted for a program for all students and not for the selected groups. The New South Wales Department of Education revised definition of school bullying is defined by three key features as followed:

It involves a misuse of power in a relationship, it is ongoing and repeated and it involves behaviour that can cause harm.⁹⁹

To provide a clearer understanding of the dissimilarity in the definition of school bullying in the private and public sector this thesis has provided a definition from The Kings School private school and Granville South Performing Arts School in New South Wales.

The Kings School defines bullying as being:

Bullying is the deliberate intention to harm someone who does not have the power to stop it. Bullying, harassment or any form of discrimination, is immoral and can be unlawful because it interferes with the right of a person to feel safe and valued as a member of a community.

Kings school added to this:

Bullying takes many forms. It can be: face-to-face [for example, fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating and invading personal space], -and behind-the-back [writing threatening messages, sending distressing emails, and writing anonymous notes that are hurtful]. It could be

⁹⁷ The discussion of the relevant research of school bullying in Australia will be discussed in chapter three school bullying.

⁹⁸ Bullying.No Way!, *Definition of Bullying* (2017) The Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group < <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying>> see also The Department of Education ACT Safe and Supportive School Policy<http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/wellbeing/safety/safe-and-supportive-schools-policy>.

⁹⁹ New South Wales Department of Education, *Defining Bullying* (23 October 2017) New South Wales Department of Education < <https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/Defining-bullying>>.

done individually [mocking and teasing] or in a group [social exclusion or hate group recruitment]. Physical or psychological, Sexual harassment and racial harassment, and cyberbullying. Causing hurt and distress, repeated, involves the use of power in an unfair way.¹⁰⁰

Granville South High Creative and Performing Arts High School defines bullying as being:

Bullying is a repeated verbal, physical social psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Granville South added to this:

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation, and all forms of harassment, including that based on race, sex, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have a long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Although there is a subtle similarities in both definitions of school bullying, The Kings School has indicated bullying could be unlawful because it goes against the fundamental rights of a child to feel safe at school. Both these definition do not explicitly define repeated behaviour as being from the perpetrator or repeated torment for the victim. Although schools are clear of repeated action is essential to establish bullying occurring. This thesis points out there is no definition stating it has to be a repeated torment for the victim or repeated offence for the perpetrator. The Northern Territory Government defines bullying as being:

Bullying is a misuse of power resulting in a repeated pattern of harmful verbal, physical, or social behaviour. Bullying can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more people. It can occur face to face, at a distance, or using technology. Cyberbullying is bullying through the internet or mobile devices.

The Northern Territory Government add to this:

Cyberbullying uses online technology to bully an individual or group of people with the intent to cause social,

¹⁰⁰ The Kings School, *Anti-Bullying Policy* <<http://www.kings.edu.au/documents/announcements/Anti-Bullying-Policy.pdf>>.

psychological or physical harm. [Which could include the following actions] Abusive text and emails, harmful messages, images or video footage, harmful gossip and chat, imitation and excluding others.¹⁰¹

Queensland Government defines bullying as being:

Bullying is a repeated pattern of harmful verbal, physical or social behaviour which involves the misuse of power. Cyberbullying is bullying through the internet or mobile devices.¹⁰²

South Australia Defines bullying as being:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or on line [cyberbullying], and it can be obvious or hidden.¹⁰³

Tasmania defines bullying as being:

Bullying is a repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It is intended to cause harm distress and fear. Cyberbullying is bullying that is carried out through the internet or mobile phone technologies. Harassment is abuse of power that can affect safety and wellbeing.¹⁰⁴

The Victorian Government defines bullying as being:

Bullying is a repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or a group

¹⁰¹ The Northern Territory Government, *Health and Wellbeing of Students* (12 July 2017) Northern Territory Government <<https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/health-and-wellbeing-of-students/bullying-cyberbullying-and-cybersafety>>.

¹⁰² Queensland Government, *Bullying* (14 March 2017) Queensland Government <<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/pages/bullying.html>>.

¹⁰³ South Australian Government, *Identifying Bullying, Harassment, Violence and E-crime* (14 December 2016) <<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-wellbeing-and-special-needs/identifying-bullying-harassment-and-violence>>.

¹⁰⁴ The Department of Education Tasmania, *Staying Safe in Tasmanian Government schools* (July 2017) <<https://documentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/Documents/Infosheet-Health-Bullying.pdf>>.

directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.¹⁰⁵

The definition provided by all States and Territories indicate the possibility of an action to be constituted to being bullying must consist of a repeated pattern, each definition provide explicitly state that it must consist of repeated behaviour but do not explicitly specify who is the repeated behaviour directed at for example, the bullying behaviour is repeated or the victim is repeatedly victimised by their perpetrator/s. This thesis argues the point of one off incidents could be of bullying,¹⁰⁶ although the bully may target a victim on a one off incident he may also target other victims for example, breaking someone's property, the next victim calling out insulting names, humiliating them in front of other peers about the way they look as presented in Table 5.1 Definition of Bullying. Although these may seem harmless to the school staff allowing this behaviour to continue could send the wrong message, it is important to keep record of all complaints and cross reference as it could be a growing pattern occurring.

Western Australia defines bullying as being:

Bullying is when an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group intentionally threaten or harm them on more than one occasion. This may involve verbal, physical, relational and psychological forms of bullying.¹⁰⁷

Although the definitions of school bullying in Australia are similar they do have a subtle difference. Although there is a legal requirement from each state and territory to provide its own anti-bullying policy, (which will be discussed in chapter seven) there is still an importance of having one correlated definition of bullying in Australian schools to provide a method which could offer a long-term solution.

5.5 Summary

An interesting element to consider would be is the term bullying implemented in the school environment applied to actually down play what is really happening? This thesis has provided considerable amount of evidence about the definition of school bullying. In all occasion school bullying is being linked to harassment and violence, both these acts if occurred in a home or the community outside school could warrant an arrest or some other form of legal action. Leaving

¹⁰⁵ Victorian Government, *Bully Stoppers What is Bullying* (07 July 2017) <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>>.

¹⁰⁶ This thesis provides its own definition of *one off incidents*, a perpetrator bullies different victims and not necessary the same victim. This action indicate how significance it is for schools to document all incidents that may occur to map out a pattern of behaviour for perpetrators and for the victims, to provide the adequate assistance to prevent or stop the bullying from reoccurring.

¹⁰⁷ The Department of Education Western Australia, *Preventing and Managing Bullying* <<http://det.wa.edu.au/studentssupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/safe-and-supportive-schools/preventing-and-managing-bullying-in-schools/>>.

children to believe there is no real consequences for their unacceptable behaviour could allow for them to grow into unsupportive and not real community members. This thesis is not recommending children to be penalised by the statutory system, but is highly recommending a legal definition of school bullying is implemented in all States and Territories public and private schools. Hence, it will allow for restorative justice process to be implemented into all Australian public and private school and not just selective schools. Restorative justice process could allow for students to be rehabilitated back into the community by offering the appropriate help for example, rehabilitation, restoration and accountability. Furthermore, having an agreed national definition of school bullying in Australia could allow for a state and federal correlated definition of bullying. Which could allow for a clearer and concise definition of bullying in the school environment and assist students, teachers and other members of the community to recognise the behaviours associated with the acts of bullying.

What would it mean to have a statutory definition of bullying in a school environment, there are a few different possibilities that could arise from having a statutory definition they are as followed:

[1] Could provide a nationally legal definition of school bullying, which could be implemented into all schools, private or public

[2] Could allow for restorative justice process to be implemented in private and public schools nation wide

[3] Could assist school staff to recognise the behaviours associated with bullying in the school environment, hence providing adequate help to rehabilitate the perpetrator and provide the required assistance for the victim so they become confident community members

[4] Could allow students to learn there are consequences for their transgression against their peers and for breaking the law, to break the cycle of violence from home, school, workplace and home.

[5] Prevent any gaps that may arise when dealing with the issue of bullying in a school environment.