

**Safe Spaces, Sound Minds:
Creating inclusive school
environments that enhance perceived
safety and improve mental health**

Dr Jacinta Francis
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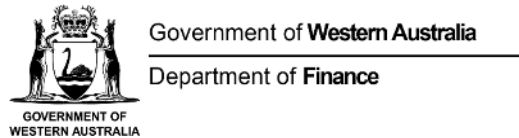


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, CSI UWA acknowledges that their operations are situated on Noongar land, and that the Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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Parry and Rosenthal **Architects**

Research Team

Research Advisory Team

Dr Jacinta Francis
 Emeritus Professor Donna Cross
 Professor Gina Trapp
 Dr Natasha Pearce
 Melanie Epstein

Research Assistants

Dr Sharmila Vaz
 Stephanie Maher
 Sarah Falconer
 Kate Erceg

Volunteers

Emily Gizzarelli
 Pratishtha Sachan
 Jessica De Agrela
 Niamh Doherty
 Sarah Arbon

Co-authors

Associate Professor Natalie Strobel
 Professor Sharyn Burns
 Professor Ashleigh Lin
 Associate Professor Hayley Christian
 Professor Karen Martin
 Dr Kevin Runions
 Zoe Waters

Students

Emily Gizzarelli
 Senuri Abeysekera
 Jordee Stewart
 Janette Inwood
 Bhakti Sharma
 Phyan Chew
 Nicolas Tabanera Valle
 Anna Beattie
 Elizabeth Ross

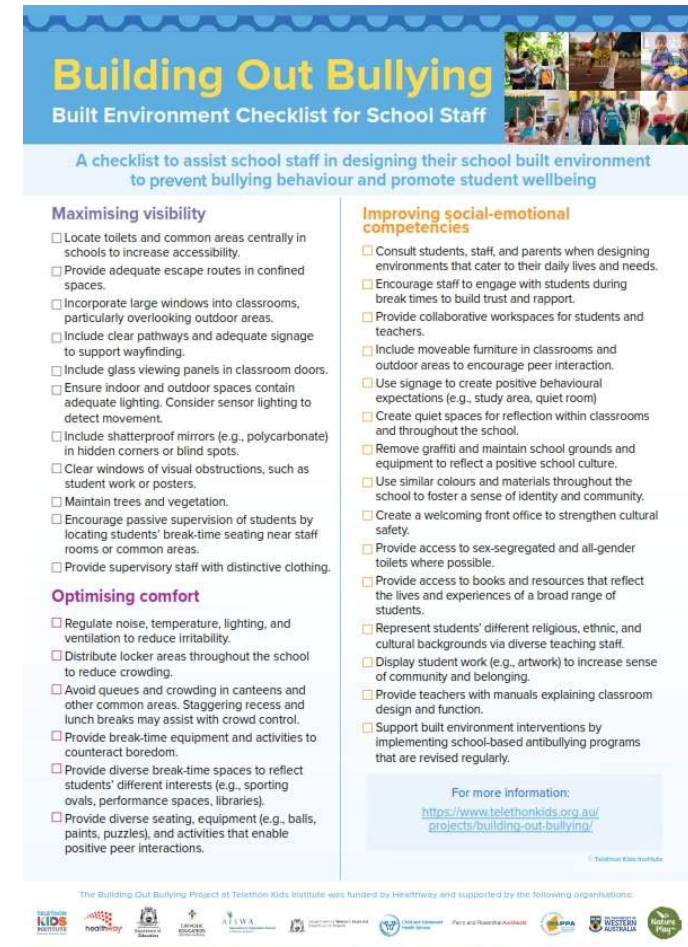


HONOURS STORY: EMILY GIZZARELLI



Overview

- About me
- Background
- Methodology
- Research findings
 - Preventing bullying behaviour
 - Optimising perceived safety
 - Promoting mental health
- Conclusions and resources



Building Out Bullying
Built Environment Checklist for School Staff

A checklist to assist school staff in designing their school built environment to prevent bullying behaviour and promote student wellbeing

Maximising visibility

- Locate toilets and common areas centrally in schools to increase accessibility.
- Provide adequate escape routes in confined spaces.
- Incorporate large windows into classrooms, particularly overlooking outdoor areas.
- Include clear pathways and adequate signage to support wayfinding.
- Include glass viewing panels in classroom doors.
- Ensure indoor and outdoor spaces contain adequate lighting. Consider sensor lighting to detect movement.
- Include shatterproof mirrors (e.g., polycarbonate) in hidden corners or blind spots.
- Clear windows of visual obstructions, such as student work or posters.
- Maintain trees and vegetation.
- Encourage passive supervision of students by locating students' break-time seating near staff rooms or common areas.
- Provide supervisory staff with distinctive clothing.

Optimising comfort

- Regulate noise, temperature, lighting, and ventilation to reduce irritability.
- Distribute locker areas throughout the school to reduce crowding.
- Avoid queues and crowding in canteens and other common areas. Staggering recess and lunch breaks may assist with crowd control.
- Provide break-time equipment and activities to counteract boredom.
- Provide diverse break-time spaces to reflect students' different interests (e.g., sporting ovals, performance spaces, libraries).
- Provide diverse seating, equipment (e.g., balls, paints, puzzles), and activities that enable positive peer interactions.


Improving social-emotional competencies

- Consult students, staff, and parents when designing environments that cater to their daily lives and needs.
- Encourage staff to engage with students during break times to build trust and rapport.
- Provide collaborative workspaces for students and teachers.
- Include moveable furniture in classrooms and outdoor areas to encourage peer interaction.
- Use signage to create positive behavioural expectations (e.g., study area, quiet room)
- Create quiet spaces for reflection within classrooms and throughout the school.
- Remove graffiti and maintain school grounds and equipment to reflect a positive school culture.
- Use similar colours and materials throughout the school to foster a sense of identity and community.
- Create a welcoming front office to strengthen cultural safety.
- Provide access to sex-segregated and all-gender toilets where possible.
- Provide access to books and resources that reflect the lives and experiences of a broad range of students.
- Represent students' different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds via diverse teaching staff.
- Display student work (e.g., artwork) to increase sense of community and belonging.
- Provide teachers with manuals explaining classroom design and function.
- Support built environment interventions by implementing school-based antibullying programs that are revised regularly.

For more information:
<https://www.telethonkids.org.au/projects/building-out-bullying/>

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About me

- School years living on the urban fringe
- Background in public health and health promotion
- High-quality public space matters
- How do school environments impact mental health?



Background

- Lack of perceived school safety = strongest predictor of mental health difficulties in adolescents.[Lamoreaux et al 2021; Nijs et al 2014]
- Bullying or peer victimisation is one of the most common causes of feeling unsafe at school.[Mori et al, 2021]
- Bullying = repeated, intentional harm of a person who has less power than the aggressor.



Why is bullying problematic?

- Bullying has been linked to physical and mental health problems.
- The economic cost of bullying in schools in Australia is estimated to be \$2.3 billion for each school year group.
- 1 in 6 students aged 7-17 years bullied at least once per week.



Bullying interventions

- Effective anti-bullying interventions are often whole-school initiatives, comprised of multiple program components. (Gaffney et al, 2021)



- The effectiveness of many school based, anti-bullying intervention is mixed and modest. (Fraguas et al, 2021; Gaffney et al, 2021)
- New approaches to prevent bullying are needed.

Built environment

- Built environment = all buildings, spaces and objects that are created or modified by people.
- A safe and healthy built environment has been recognised by the World Health Organization as an essential component of health-promoting schools.



Images: Swanbury Penglase

Building Out Bullying Project

Aim: To explore how the school built, social and policy environments influence the bullying behaviour and mental health of primary and secondary school students in Western Australia.



Building Out Bullying Program

- >7,500 articles published prior to July 2021
- 70 individual interviews with four study samples:
 - Policy makers and practitioners ($n=22$)
 - School staff ($n=12$)
 - Students in grades 4-6, 7-8 and 9-10 ($n=18$)
 - Parents of students in grades 4-6, 7-8 and 9-10 ($n=18$)

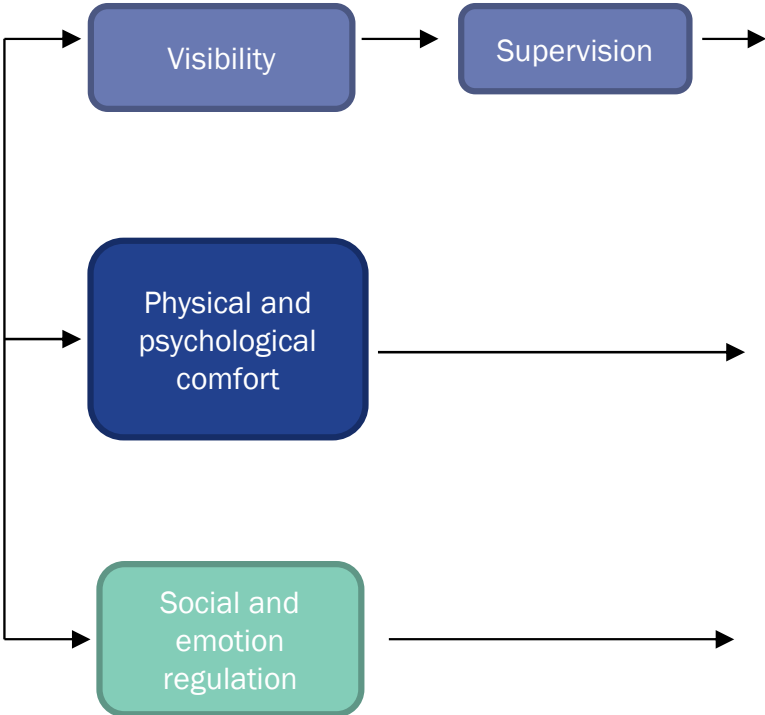


Built Environment Factors

Lighting and windows
School and building design
Crowding and school size
Security cameras

Ventilation
Temperature
Acoustics and noise
Queues
Aesthetics, vandalism, maintenance
Furniture and seating

Collaborative workspaces
- open plan classrooms
- activities, clubs, equipment
Spaces for reflection/ mood regulation
Inclusive environments



Bullying behaviour

1. Visibility and supervision

Obstructing visibility

[Bullying has] always been associated with things like toilets, or in the locker rooms or places where there is the ability to not have the teachers or people seeing it. (Policy Maker #11)

Optimising visibility

*We place the teacher's preparation areas - where their desks are - in the middle of active hubs where the students are during or in-between class time.....we have the walls transparent because we want [the teachers] to see outside...we find **if teachers aren't there, because the hub is there, students act differently.** (Practitioner #1)*



Visibility and supervision

- School and building design

*Clarity of order is really important...knowing that you are going in the right direction; **you're confident** and you can clearly see the way from a to b, discourages bullying... even for the bully-er, when you're moving from space to space, **you have less time to bully and less opportunity to bully.***

(Practitioner #1)

- Population density

*What you don't want is a **big conglomeration of 200 lockers** in one small room...[students] are all trying to get in and get out...it **elevates the risk** for some bullying or some rough and tumble and it's **hard to supervise** because the lockers themselves block sight lines. (Practitioner #2)*



Image: Brad Griffin, Swanbury Penglase



Image: Sam Noonan, Swanbury Penglase



2. Physical and psychological comfort



- Acoustics

[The impact of noise and physical discomfort on bullying] works in two ways: one, if you are the person being bullied, you are already nervous in that space and the bullying will affect you more because you are not feeling safe and secure....then if you are a person who is doing the bullying, already you are grumpy from [the noise and discomfort] and [bullying is] what you are using to sort of relieve that or express it. (Policy Maker #1)

- Ventilation and temperature

The [outdoor] undercover areas are so cold and gray... children are having to sit and eat their food on a really cold floor ... it's uncomfortable and you tend to see the children getting restless and starting to pick on each other. (Policy Maker #5)

Physical and psychological comfort



Image: Swanbury Penglase

- Aesthetics, vandalism and maintenance
There were some schools where the upkeep was so poor that the kids saw no value for the school and they also saw no value then in the children who were attending it...If the culture is one of neglect of the school, then it's one of neglect of the students as well.
(Policy Maker #9)



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects

- Furniture and seating
The power of a chair cannot be understated...People often arrange gardens so that they are aesthetically pretty, rather than thinking about the social dynamics of that environment. Straight-line walls are terrible because that encourages all the kids to sit on the wall and judge all those that are going by ...a curved-wall... encourages conversation...more children are welcomed in. (Policy Maker #7)



Image: Brad Griffin; Swanbury Penglase



Image: Erin Erceg; Telethon Kids Institute

3. Social and emotional regulation



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects

- Collaborative workspaces

If you ...create a break-out space, then suddenly you can see these teachers can collaborate more, the pedagogy can become more stream directed, curriculum can be more integrated, and the sense of community extends beyond the classroom. (Policy Maker #08)

- Equipment

[Students] that feel left out are the ones that are going to be either picked on because they're not doing anything, or they're going to be the ones that are trying to get in and cause those issues in the first place. [Preventing bullying]... is definitely having things for them to keep them occupied. (Parent #18)



Image: Swanbury Penglase

Social and emotional regulation

Inclusive environments

There's been this development of male toilets, female toilets, and then a unisex toilet. So there's a choice...for some transgender [children] who feel that they are girls, they may well feel quite victimised going into a male toilet because that's probably a site of bullying. (Policy Maker #9)



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects

Quiet spaces for reflection and mood regulation

Places need to teach children how to regulate their emotions... children who get really angry, really quickly ...are often children who have been victimised themselves... sometimes these self-soothing rooms and reflection rooms are fabulous for children who are reactive bullying or bully-victims. (Policy Maker #7)

Enhancing perceived safety

- Increase in physical security measures
- Excessive security measures can negatively impact perceived safety. (Lamoreaux et al., 2021)
- Connected and welcoming environments perceived as safer. (Lamoreaux et al., 2020)
- School design needs to balance physical safety and psychological wellbeing.



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects

Safe spaces



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects



Safe spaces: Libraries



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects

*[The library is a safe space because] first and foremost, it's **heavily monitored by staff**, by older people.... the silent and heavy presence of staff to enforce rules, I think that's what makes a safe haven. (Parent #08)*

*The library is a welcoming environment if [students] are feeling sad or lonely ... I think that's a safe environment because **you do always have people in there, but you can also be alone.** (Parent #05)*

Safe spaces: Classrooms



Image: Parry & Rosenthal Architects

[The classroom pods are] normally set up really cosily. They have a couch, they have carpet, a coffee table, some plants... class library books. So it's a very calm space. Lots of soft materials as well. (School staff #02)

*There must be **activities where the children are relating to each other**. It's **critical that there aren't computers**, so it's not a computer room at lunch time, because the **lonely children will sit in front of a computer and never build their social skills**. But if **board games** are put out, there's another lonely child that they'd be sitting across that might start to build a relationship. **[These spaces need to facilitate] relationship building because children are less likely to be bullied or targeted if they've got friends**. (Policy Maker #07)*

Safe spaces: Outdoors



You're generally more calm when you're in nature. So it'll only make sense that if you've got greenery, trees, plants, shade, it's going to make [students] calmer. (Parent #10)

*A lot of [students]... use up all their energy in the classroom interacting with people and they need that time [outdoors] to withdraw and re-energise by being on their own or in a very small group... I think that some cosier spaces in high schools are important ...**a tree with overhanging branches...a little rock cubby** where you have a few rocks placed in a semicircle and you can step on the rocks and clamber over them... **anything where I feel like my back is safe and I don't feel like this space is too big for the size of the group I am in.** (Policy Maker #03)*

Safe spaces: Wellness rooms



There was a school that I worked at...that had something called a "breathe easy room"... a room that they sent children who were behaving badly...it was filled with **bean bags, soft lighting**. It was a gentle room. It had **no hard edges**...There was **music** going on in the background, it was soft. It was always **supervised by a gentle, kind teacher** who had a lot of banked credit with children and the whole **purpose of that room was to help the child to learn to soothe themselves...it was taking them into a place that was, by its design, dictating the kinds of behaviours that children should be thinking about. And when they felt suitably calm, they were allowed to go out and join the group.** And often that person who was in there might give them a couple of little **activities**, some **deep breathing**, some **mindfulness** stuff. So **it wasn't writing lines. It was learning how to regulate your emotions.** And I thought that was such an important space to create for children. And it was a school that had children with high learning needs, and so particularly important, but **all schools have children who can't regulate their behaviour.** (Policy Maker #07)

Features of safe spaces

- Soft music
- Comfortable seating and furniture
- Adequate equipment and activities
- Images and colours inspired by nature
- Supportive staff members
- Co-locating rooms with other services to enhance privacy

*I would have a room where [students] can just go and relax if they're getting worked up or stressed...I'd probably just have some **soft music** going with a **couch and carpet** and **not very bright lights**. They might have **stuffed animals** in there for them...Because then they can just give them a hug and just talk to them, then they feel like someone's listening...probably one of the helper teachers for a little while. And then they could just go and sit outside the room and let the person have a little bit of time for themselves.*

(Student #17, 12 years)



Co-location of safe spaces



Image: https://mpys.com.au/youth_centres/y-lounge-youth-centre/

*One of the best designs I've seen is where the kids actually walk into this **big open space** where there's **beanbags and books and Wi-Fi access, like a drop-in centre**. And then **the offices for the psychologist and the nurse and the year coordinators are actually off that space**. So, they can then go and visit who they need to, but they've got that nice open space that they can just chill out in. And it also means that people like **the psychologists can wander out and just touch base with them**, "Oh, do you want to come for a chat?"...it's a lot more casual for the kids and takes a lot of the stigma away from it...it can be like a drop-in place where those kids who are really struggling at recess and lunchtime can come and feel safe. But **if it's right up where the admin building is the kids aren't going to go there because they don't want to feel like they're in trouble**. It has to be somewhere like the library that's quite centrally located, that is quite relaxed, and they can just feel safe going in there. (Policy Maker #18)*

All-gender toilets

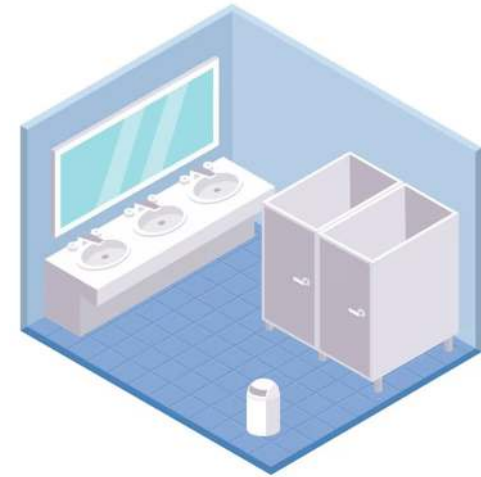
- School toilets = least safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students. (Kosciw et al, 2018)
- Especially hostile for trans and gender-diverse students; sites of verbal, physical and sexual assault. (James et al; Murchison et al, 2019; McBride et al, 2022)
- Toilet avoidance can result in dehydration, urinary tract or bladder infection, urinary leakage, and poor concentration. (McBride et al, 2022, Hardacker et al, 2019; Herman 2013)
- Introducing all-gender toilets in schools may be a strategy to prevent bullying and assault of LGBTQ+ students.



What is an all-gender toilet?

All-gender toilets are accessible to all students regardless of gender identity.

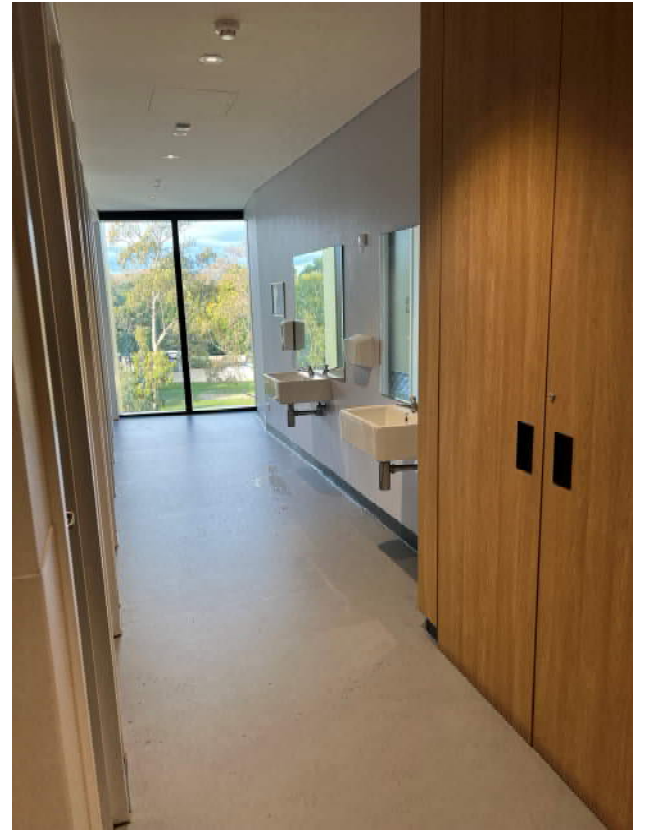
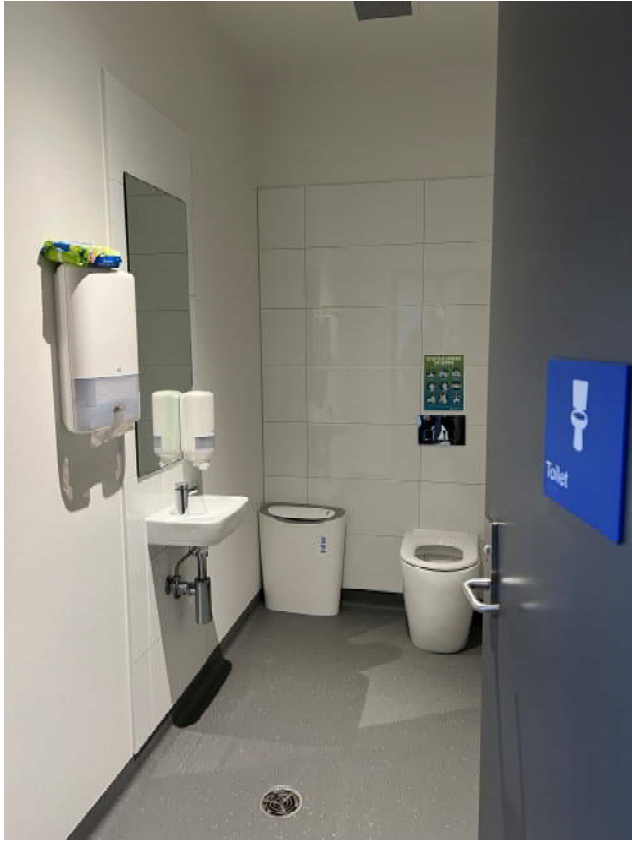
Some configurations allow students to occupy a shared space, while others are single, self-contained spaces with a toilet and a hand basin.

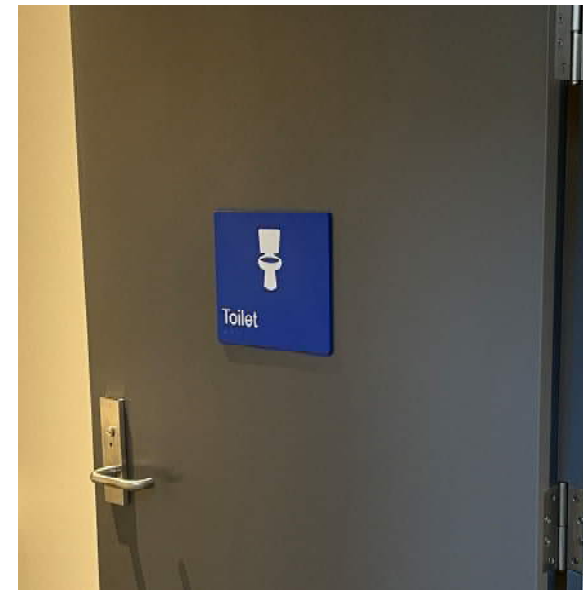


Multi-stall toilets



Self-contained toilet







Our findings

- School toilets were potential bullying hotspots for trans and gender-diverse students.
- Increased request for all-gender toilets.
- Widespread support for all-gender toilets.

I used to think it was okay to have the disabled toilet, but my Principal corrected me the other week and said “Absolutely not, they should be able to go into the toilet of the gender which they identify”. (School staff #09)

Barriers



Financial and spatial costs



Cultural appropriateness



Resistance from parents and students

There's some cultures where mixing males and females is seen to be very culturally inappropriate.
(Policymaker #11)

I can't see us putting in gender-neutral toilets into a primary school....It would be great but also with challenges. Parents wouldn't allow it. (Policymaker #11)

Barriers



Privacy and confidentiality concerns

[Trans students] didn't disclose the bullying because it might lead to a disclosure about their gender identity, which would stigmatise them or make them more of a subject of bullying.

(Policymaker #9)



Building code compliance restraints

There are some code compliance issues around gender-neutral toilets because under the National Construction Code there are stipulated numbers of female, [disabled], or male toilets and it doesn't accommodate things like non-gender.

(Policymaker #11)

Conclusions

- Interrelationship between individuals and built, social and socio-cultural environments.
- Educating students and staff.
- Schools need to balance physical safety with psychological safety.
- Schools need to provide students with a range of toilet design and access options.



Conclusions cont.

- Prioritising budget allocation to schools with:
 - maintenance and repair needs
 - significant histories of violence or behavioural problems
 - higher rates of property crime
 - population risk factors, such as low SES.
- Cost-effective anti-bullying interventions.



Publications

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How does the school built environment impact students' bullying behaviour? A scoping review

Jaciata Francis^{a,b,c}, Natalie Strobel^c, Gina Trapp^{a,d}, Natasha Pearce^{a,d}, Sharmila Vaz^a, Hayley Christian^{a,d}, Kevin Runions^a, Karen Martin^d, Donn Cross^{a,b}

^a Telethon Kids Institute, 15 Hospital Ave, Nedlands, Western Australia, 6009, Australia
^b Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands, Western Australia, 6008, Australia
^c Kärenborgstr. Kämpin, Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research, Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley, Western Australia, 6050, Australia
^d School of Population and Global Health, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands, Western Australia, 6009, Australia

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ABSTRACT

Rationale: School bullying is a public health concern affecting the physical and mental health of children and young people. While school-based interventions to prevent bullying have been developed internationally, the effectiveness of many interventions has been mixed and modest. Despite a growing recognition that the school built environment may impact bullying behaviour, few anti-bullying interventions have addressed the built environment.

Objective: This systematic scoping review explored existing literature for evidence that the school built environment influences bullying behaviour in school students.

Methods: The review was guided by Arksey and O'Malley's methodological framework for scoping reviews. A search of six databases (Medline, PsycINFO, ERIC, EMBASE, CINAHL Plus and The Cochrane Library) identified studies addressing primary, middle and secondary school students, bullying, school bullying locations, and school built environment. Peer-reviewed journal articles published in English prior to July 19, 2021, were included.

Results: In total, 7568 documents were screened by title and abstract. Following a full-text review, 61 studies (68 articles) were selected; 43 studies identified school bullying locations, and 19 studies linked features of the school built environment to bullying behaviour. Classrooms, playgrounds, and corridors were identified as common bullying locations. Features of the school built environment linked to bullying behaviour included security cameras, architectural design, aesthetics, seating, and vandalism.

Conclusions: This review identified key school settings for anti-bullying interventions and identified gaps in existing built environment and bullying literature. Further analyses of published studies will inform anti-bullying policy and practice.

1. Introduction

Bullying is recognized as a major public health concern affecting children and young people globally; a meta-analysis of 50 international studies of young people aged 12–18 years reported mean bullying prevalence rates of 38% for involvement in face-to-face bullying and 10% for cyber bullying (Mokrova et al., 2019; Strickman and Levantsev, 2019). Defined as the repeated, intentional harm or humiliation of a

person who has less power than the aggressor (Olweus, 1993; Vaillancourt et al., 2010), bullying can include physical attacks (e.g., pushing), verbal harassment (e.g., name calling), spreading rumours, obscene gestures, and social exclusion (Moore et al., 2017). Bullying has been associated with physical and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, increased risk of self-harm, attempted or completed suicide, poor academic performance, and criminality and delinquency (Juvonen et al., 2011; Lereys et al., 2015; Olweus, 1993; Trofi et al.,

* Corresponding author. Telethon Kids Institute, 15 Hospital Ave, Nedlands, Western Australia, 6009, Australia.
E-mail addresses: jaciata.francis@telethonkids.org.au (J. Francis), n.strobel@ecu.edu.au (N. Strobel), gina.trapp@telethonkids.org.au (G. Trapp), natasha.pearce@telethonkids.org.au (N. Pearce), sharmila.vaz@uwa.edu.au (S. Vaz), hayley.christian@telethonkids.org.au (H. Christian), kevin.runions@telethonkids.org.au (K. Runions), k.martin@uwa.edu.au (K. Martin), donna.cross@telethonkids.org.au (D. Cross).

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Article

School Built Environments and Bullying Behaviour: A Conceptual Model Based on Qualitative Interviews

Jacinta Francis ^{1,2,*}, Gina Trapp ^{1,3,†}, Natasha Pearce ^{1,3}, Sharyn Burns ⁴ and Donna Cross ^{1,2}

¹ Telethon Kids Institute, 15 Hospital Avenue, Nedlands, WA 6008, Australia
² Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy., Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
³ School of Population and Global Health, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy., Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
⁴ School of Population Health, Curtin University, Kent St., Bentley, WA 6102, Australia
^{*} Correspondence: jacinta.francis@telethonkids.org.au; Tel.: +61-8-9319-1471

Abstract: Interest in how the school built environment impacts bullying behaviour has gained momentum in recent years. While numerous studies have identified locations within schools where bullying frequently occurs, few studies have investigated the potential conceptual pathways linking school locations to bullying behaviour. This study aimed to (i) identify school built environment factors that may prevent or facilitate bullying behaviour in primary and secondary schools; and (ii) develop a conceptual model of potential pathways between the school built environment and bullying behaviour for future anti-bullying intervention research. Sixteen individual semi-structured interviews were conducted between May and December 2020, with policymakers ($n = 22$), school staff ($n = 12$), parents ($n = 18$), and students ($n = 18$). School staff, parents and students, were recruited from six metropolitan primary and secondary schools in Perth, Western Australia. Interviews were conducted online and face-to-face using semi-structured interview guides. A thematic analysis was undertaken. Participants identified school bullying locations (e.g., locker areas, bathrooms, corridors) and built environment factors linked to bullying behaviour via (i) visibility and supervision; (ii) physical and psychological comfort and safety; and (iii) social-emotional competencies. The findings have policy and practice implications regarding the design of school built environments to prevent bullying behaviour.

Keywords: bullying; peer victimisation; built environment; school; children; qualitative; conceptual model



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Article

Gender-Neutral Toilets: A Qualitative Exploration of Inclusive School Environments for Sexuality and Gender Diverse Youth in Western Australia

Jacinta Francis ^{1,2,*}, Prathibha Sachan ¹, Zoe Waters ^{1,3}, Gina Trapp ^{1,4,†}, Natasha Pearce ^{1,4,†}, Sharyn Burns ⁵, Ashleigh Lin ^{1,2} and Donna Cross ^{1,4,†}

¹ Telethon Kids Institute, 15 Hospital Avenue, Nedlands, WA 6008, Australia
² Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy., Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
³ School of Psychological Sciences, The University of Western Australia, 38 Stirling Hwy., Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
⁴ School of Population and Global Health, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy., Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
⁵ School of Population Health, Curtin University, Kent St., Bentley, WA 6102, Australia
^{*} Correspondence: jacinta.francis@telethonkids.org.au; Tel.: +61-8-9319-1471

Abstract: School toilets have been identified by sexuality and gender diverse (SGD) students as the least safe spaces in educational institutions. They are sites of verbal, physical and sexual victimisation. Providing gender neutral toilets in primary and secondary schools may reduce the bullying and victimisation of SGD students, particularly those who are transgender or gender-diverse. This study explored factors influencing the inclusion of gender-neutral toilets in primary and secondary schools in Western Australia. Thirty-four interviews were conducted from May to December 2020 with policy makers or practitioners ($n = 22$) and school staff ($n = 12$) in Perth, Western Australia. Interviews were conducted online and face-to-face using semi-structured interview guides. A thematic analysis of the cross-sectional qualitative data was undertaken. School staff, policy makers, and practitioners identified school toilets as sites of bullying and victimisation of SGD youth and expressed support for gender neutral toilets as an anti bullying strategy. Perceived barriers to introducing gender neutral toilets in schools included financial and spatial costs, building code compliance constraints, resistance from parents and students, privacy and confidentiality concerns, and cultural appropriateness. Including gender-neutral toilets in schools may reduce school-based bullying and victimisation, and improve the mental and physical health of SGD youth.

Keywords: bathrooms; toilets; transgender; LGBTQ+; schools; bullying; qualitative



Citation: Francis, J.; Sachan, P.; Waters, Z.; Trapp, G.; Pearce, N.; Burns, S.; Lin, A.; Cross, D. Gender-Neutral Toilets: A Qualitative Exploration of Inclusive School Environments for Sexuality and Gender Diverse Youth in Western Australia. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2022**, *19*, 10089. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610089>

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School staff responses to student reports of bullying: A scoping review

Emily Gizzarelli^{1,2} | Sharyn Burns¹ | Jacinta Francis^{2,3}

¹Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health, Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia

²Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, WA, Australia

³Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, Perth, WA, Australia

Correspondence
Sharyn Burns, Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA, 6845, Australia.
Email: S.Burns@curtin.edu.au

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Abstract

Issue addressed: Bullying in schools has been associated with poor academic and mental health outcomes in students. While students are often encouraged to report bullying incidents to school staff, some students avoid reporting incidents as they lack faith in staff members' ability to intervene. This scoping review explored what is known about: staff responses to student reports of bullying; individual and school factors influencing staff responses; and strategies to improve staff responses when students report bullying incidents.

Methods: Articles published between 2000 and 2021 were identified from six databases: ProQuest, EMBASE, PsycInfo, MEDLINE, CINAHL Plus and Taylor & Francis.

Results: Fifteen studies were included in the final review. Three studies explored staff responses to student reports of bullying, while 12 studies examined responses to observed or hypothetical bullying incidents. Staff responses to student reports of bullying included no response, as well as responses addressing bullying targets, perpetrators, peers, and the school and wider community. Staff preparedness was a predictor of staff involvement following bullying incidents. Strategies to improve staff responses included whole-school antibullying programs and training to increase staff efficacy.

Conclusions: Few studies have examined real-life responses to student reports of bullying, with most addressing staff responses to hypothetical bullying incidents. Professional development and preservice education for school staff should address responses to student reports of bullying.

So what?: Further research is needed to understand staff responses to real-life student reports of bullying. Addressing individual and school factors influencing staff responses may ultimately prevent bullying behaviour in schools.

KEYWORDS

bullying, review, students, teacher, teacher responses

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Exploring Primary School Staff Responses to Student Reports of Bullying in Australia: A Qualitative Study

Emily Gizzarelli^{1,2} · Sharyn Burns¹ · Jacinta Francis^{2,3}

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Abstract

Bullying behaviour often increases in late childhood and peaks in early adolescence. While interventions to address bullying behaviour typically encourage students to report bullying incidents to school staff, students are often reluctant to report incidents for fear it will worsen their situation or because they lack confidence in a staff members' ability to intervene effectively. This study explores school staff responses to student reports of bullying behaviour. School staff were recruited from Catholic and Independent schools in Perth, Western Australia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school staff ($n = 19$) working with students in grades four to six (approximately 8–12 years). A thematic analysis of the data was undertaken with the assistance of qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Staff reported a variety of responses to student reports of bullying incidents. Responses involved bullying targets, bullying perpetrators and the school community. School and individual factors found to influence staff responses included life experiences, adequate time to deal with bullying and the influence of colleagues. Suggested strategies to improve staff responses were clear school policies and procedures, scheduled times to deal with student reports, databases to record bullying incidents and professional development for school staff.

Keywords Bullying · Teachers · Policy · Schools · Children · Qualitative

Introduction

Bullying is a significant public health problem affecting school students (Rigby, 2020a). Bullying behaviour increases in late childhood and peaks in early adolescence (Cross et al., 2009). A 2015 study with 287 Australian primary schools found approximately 20% of students in grade four reported being bullied by peers on a weekly basis (Thomson et al., 2017). In another Australian study, approximately 60% of students in grade four, six and eight reported being bullied at least once in the same term the survey was administered (Lietz et al., 2015).

Often referred to as peer victimisation (Eisenberg & Aulasma, 2005), bullying can be defined as "...any intentional and repeated

behaviour which causes physical, emotional or social harm to a person who has, or is perceived to have, less power than the person who bullies" (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2020, p. 364). Bullying can be 'overt' or 'covert'. Overt behaviours are more easily witnessed and can include any physical act such as hitting or shoving, while covert behaviours are less visible and can include social exclusion or gossiping (Byers et al., 2011). Furthermore, cyber bullying uses technology platforms such as mobile devices or the internet to spread harmful and offensive material (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2020).

School bullying has been associated with a range of psychological and emotional health problems. In the short term, bullying targets can experience headaches, sleep disorders, anxiety, low-self-esteem, lack of concentration and poor educational achievement (Karatas & Ozturk, 2011). Bullying perpetration has been linked to mental health problems and involvement in antisocial behaviours (Espelage et al., 2013; Karatas & Ozturk, 2011). Bystanders to bullying behaviour are also at an increased risk of experiencing depression and anxiety and fear becoming the next target of the bullying perpetrator (Midgett & Doumas, 2019).

School staff play a vital role in responding to student reports of bullying behaviour as they are within the vicinity

✉ Emily Gizzarelli
emilygizzarelli@outlook.com

¹ Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health (School of Population Health), Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia

² Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, WA, Australia

³ The University of Western Australia, (Centre for Child Health Research), Perth, WA, Australia

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Building Out Bullying

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Maximising visibility

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- Ensure indoor and outdoor spaces contain adequate lighting. Consider sensor lighting to detect movement.
- Include shatterproof mirrors (e.g., polycarbonate) in hidden corners or blind spots.
- Clear windows of visual obstructions, such as student work or posters.
- Maintain trees and vegetation.
- Encourage passive supervision of students by locating students' break-time seating near staff rooms or common areas.
- Provide supervisory staff with distinctive clothing.

Optimising comfort

- Regulate noise, temperature, lighting, and ventilation to reduce irritability.
- Distribute locker areas throughout the school to reduce crowding.
- Avoid queues and crowding in canteens and other common areas. Staggering recess and lunch breaks may assist with crowd control.
- Provide break-time equipment and activities to counteract boredom.
- Provide diverse break-time spaces to reflect students' different interests (e.g., sporting ovals, performance spaces, libraries).
- Provide diverse seating, equipment (e.g., balls, paints, puzzles), and activities that enable positive peer interactions.

Improving social-emotional competencies

- Consult students, staff, and parents when designing environments that cater to their daily lives and needs.
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- Represent students' different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds via diverse teaching staff.
- Display student work (e.g., artwork) to increase sense of community and belonging.
- Provide teachers with manuals explaining classroom design and function.
- Support built environment interventions by implementing school-based antibullying programs that are revised regularly.

For more information:

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Article

School Built Environments and Bullying Behaviour: A Conceptual Model Based on Qualitative Interviews

Jacinta Francis ^{1,2,*}, Gina Trapp ^{1,3}, Natasha Pearce ^{1,3}, Sharyn Burns ⁴ and Donna Cross ^{1,2}

- ¹ Telethon Kids Institute, 15 Hospital Avenue, Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
- ² Centre for Child Health Research, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
- ³ School of Population and Global Health, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Hwy, Nedlands, WA 6009, Australia
- ⁴ School of Population Health, Curtin University, Kent St, Bentley, WA 6102, Australia
- * Correspondence: jacinta.francis@telethonkids.org.au; Tel: +61-8-6319-1471

Abstract: Interest in how the school built environment impacts bullying behaviour has gained momentum in recent years. While numerous studies have identified locations within schools where bullying frequently occurs, few studies have investigated the potential conceptual pathways linking school locations to bullying behaviour. This study aimed to (i) identify school built environment factors that may prevent or facilitate bullying behaviour in primary and secondary schools; and (ii) develop a conceptual model of potential pathways between the school built environment and bullying behaviour for future anti-bullying intervention research. Seventy individual semi-structured interviews were conducted between May and December 2020, with policymakers (*n* = 22), school staff (*n* = 12), parents (*n* = 18), and students (*n* = 18). School staff, parents and students, were recruited from six metropolitan primary and secondary schools in Perth, Western Australia. Interviews were conducted online and face-to-face using semi-structured interview guides. A thematic analysis was undertaken. Participants identified school bullying locations (e.g., locker areas, bathrooms, corridors) and built environment factors linked to bullying behaviour via (i) visibility and supervision; (ii) physical and psychological comfort and safety; and (iii) social-emotional competencies. The findings have policy and practice implications regarding the design of school built environments to prevent bullying behaviour.

Keywords: bullying; peer victimisation; built environment; school; children; qualitative; conceptual model



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1. Introduction

Bullying is the repeated, intentional harm or humiliation of a person who has less power than the aggressor [1,2]. In Australia, meta-analyses of studies involving children and young people have indicated a lifetime prevalence for traditional bullying victimisation of 25% and perpetration of 12% [3]. Meta-analyses of international studies involving adolescents have estimated mean prevalence rates of 35% for traditional bullying victimisation and 15% for cyberbullying [4]. The consequences of bullying victimisation during childhood can include depression, anxiety, poor general health and suicidal ideation and behaviour [5–9]. In addition, involvement in childhood bullying has been associated with poor academic performance, criminal behaviour or delinquency, and adult unemployment [10–12].

School-based anti-bullying interventions typically target the whole-school community—including students, school staff and parents—and comprise multiple program components addressing school climate, policies, classroom rules, curriculum, teacher training, and parent engagement [13]. These multi-faceted interventions are often guided by social-ecological models that recognise the reciprocal influences on the bullying behaviour of individuals, peers, schools

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Improving social-emotional competencies

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- Provide teachers with manuals explaining classroom design and function.
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International recognition

- First scoping review exploring school built environments and bullying
- School design and safety
- International grant applications

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JEDI DAY

2024

Friday 22
March

| | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| Perth WA | 8:00am - 12:00pm, AWST |
| Sydney NSW | 11:00am - 3:00pm, AEDT |
| Melbourne VIC | 11:00am - 3:00pm, AEDT |
| Auckland NZ | 1:00pm - 5:00pm, NZST |

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Join us for the very first Learning Environments Australasia Trans-Tasman JEDI Day

We are bringing together designers, architects, educators, researchers and consultants for a four part workshop day that will be delivered in synchronous across four centres based in New Zealand and Australia.

Participants will explore aspects of inclusivity for learning environments design for both physical and educational outcomes. Practical insights will be shared at each workshop that can be applied to both participants professional and personal lives.

We are delighted to have Kim Becherand from New South Wales as part of the JEDI Day. She will provide us with a narrative journey to enable us to gain insights into inclusivity and diversity through her work with the 'Touched by Olivia Foundation'.

The JEDI day will be broken down into four sessions plus a break for some light refreshments. The day will provide a greater understanding of JEDI with workshops ranging from practical, hands on/interactive workshops to research and narrative, with a constant focus on designing inclusive learning environments.

Dynamic Interactive Workshops

- Designing for Well-Being
- Inclusivity & Diversity, with guest speaker Kim Becherand
- Hearing the Voices
- Breaking Down Barriers

Locations

Perth WA - Seton Catholic College, Samson

Sydney NSW - BVN, Level 11, 255 Pitt St, Sydney

Melbourne VIC - St Kilda Primary School, St Kilda

Auckland New Zealand - National Library, 8 Stanley Street Parnell, Auckland

Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion



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Thank you



Parry & Rosenthal Architects

Jacinta.Francis@uwa.edu.au

