



Bullying in Mobs/Packs/Troops and Units

Bullying and similar behaviour is a concern for us all especially if it affects our meetings and activities.

Australian studies for people such as the Criminal Research Council and others show research results from 1996 to 2002 which give the worrying estimates that 1 in 5 children (20%) between the ages of 5 and 17 are bullied each week and 1 in 10 admit to being bullies.

Schools resorted to various measures to overcome bullying including punitive action, control theory, curriculum, peer support, conflict resolution, Glasser theory, choice theory, curricula changes, teaching assertive behaviour; social partnership techniques; understanding bullying approach, bullying committees, the Olweus program, other collaborative partnerships with parents, and various other divergent views often under parent pressure. (*Olweus 1993 – Smith et al 1994, 1999 - Rigby 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003*)

Results show that schools can expect a 12% to 15% success ratio at best. Only one technique was more successful and this involved the entire school, teacher, parent and community. It relied heavily on dedicated trained teachers and was designed to operate at school and at home.

Scouting is not immune to the effects of bullying and bullies. Many have tried school programs, although with the short time we have available to interact with our members and the often 'my child doesn't bully' attitude they were doomed to failure and did not cure the bully. However there is a way we can minimise bullying in the Group.

Adolescent behaviour is a professional 'special' interest of Warwicks. Over recent years he has studied most of the recognised scientific journals and books on bullying and he has looked at what Scouts in the USA, Canada and the UK are trying to do to combat this ever present problem.

Other Scouting bodies have also found school based programs are not suitable BUT reliance on techniques that involve our Mob/ Pack/ Patrol/Unit System work quite well if applied properly. The best of these is the one promoted by the UK Association which has been available to its Leaders since July 1998 and used with good success.

With their permission we have taken the system and, without changing the basic structure, made some slight Australian changes. They are in two Leader Support Guides (LSG 11 *Managing Behaviour in the Mob or Pack* and LSG 12 *Promoting Good Behaviour in the Troop or Unit.*) and are scheduled to be on this web site (www.nsw.scouts.com.au) in the Leaders section under Leader Guides, by end of May 2005.

We trust they will be recommended for use by those who might have a problem and that they can assist. Even if you don't feel you have a problem in your Mob, Pack, Troop or Unit, they are worth a look.

State Headquarters Support Team

Dr Warwick Bateman OAM (State Commissioner - Members Support)

Robert Rodgers. (Assistant State Commissioner - Members Support)

Regional Support Team

Consult your Region Office for their contact details.