



# HOW TO HELP KIDS WITH PINK SHIRT DAY



Many schools support Pink Shirt Day. It's an internationally celebrated anti-bullying campaign, which encourages tamariki to wear pink to celebrate diversity and kindness.

Here's some tips to help you navigate some of the questions your tamariki may ask you about Pink Shirt Day, and what to do about and around bullying.

## A WEE BIT OF THE HISTORY

Pink Shirt Day originated in Canada in 2007 after a couple of students stood up for their friend who was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. They responded by distributing pink shirts to all their classmates to wear the next day – but word got out and hundreds of students turned up in pink to support their anti-bullying movement. We love that.

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT BULLYING?

Bullying sucks – we've probably all been there. But some people experience way more than others. We know that bullying can have a severe impact on children's confidence, self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing. The more we identify bullying and take action against it, the better the outcomes for our kids.

## HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY KIDS TO TAKE PART IN PINK SHIRT DAY?

- Choose pink clothes and/or accessories they can wear on Pink Shirt Day, or make some together.
- Wear something pink too and get involved in your workplace.
- Try some of our Pink Shirt Day Sparklers activities at home.
- Destigmatise the colour pink by pointing out people wearing it – NZ refs, Drake, Kanye West, Lil Wayne, Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter), Pharrell – all wear pink.
- Talk about colours as colours rather than associated to gender or sexuality.

## WHAT DO I SUPPORT MY KIDS NOT TO BULLY?

- Talk about kindness and how it's important in your whānau – model kindness by speaking kindly about others, their race, gender, religion... point out when you see others being unkind on the TV or media and be clear that it's not okay. The deal is, that if you are kind, your kids will be kind too.
- Spend time with them every day – even just 15 minutes of free time with them lets them know they're loved and important. If they know this, they don't need look for 'power-based' feelings or compensate in any way with their peers.
- Have playdates, encourage positive talking and behaviour with siblings – praise their kindness, sharing and being a good friend any way you can.
- Social 'norms' sometimes are difficult to apply to children and they will point out the 'differences' they notice between themselves and others. This isn't 'rude' as such – they're just trying to make sense of the world. But it will be important to answer their questions simply and normalise what they're seeing e.g.  
*“Why is that man wearing a dress?”*  
*“Some men wear dresses.”*  
Generally children are very accepting, especially when this is modelled for them

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE WORRIED THEY'RE BULLIED?

We're big fans of encouraging tamariki to problem solve. If they tell you about a problem they're having with being bullied, it will be important to listen with lots of empathy but little judgment or 'quick fixes' – hard to do in the circumstances, we know!

Praise them for coming to you and looking for solutions. Let them know their feelings are really valid – “I can see this is really upsetting for you, that makes total sense.”

Gently work through some ideas together “What can we do about this?” or “What can we do that might help?” Then follow these through with your child – supporting them.

Many times our tamariki will witness bullying and feel powerless to act, but it makes a HUGE difference if they do – it stops bullying behaviour nearly 60% of the time!

The way tamariki can help is by being an Upstander – that means following one these are helpful actions when they see someone being bullied:

- Awahi/support the person being bullied
- Distract the bullying in some way
- Call it! – if tamariki feel safe they can name the bullying behaviour and ask that it stops
- Leave and act – this means waiting and letting the person who was bullied know you saw it, having a quiet word with the person bullying or seek help from others
- Get some other help – like from teachers, friends, or you!

More information can be found here:

[www.pinkshirtday.org.nz](http://www.pinkshirtday.org.nz)

## AND IF MY CHILD IS BULLYING?

It's likely that your kids will be kind (or kinder!) when you're around, but we can't be around all the time to either see how they're behaving with others.

If you suspect your child may be bullying, or had the school or parents contact you with this kind of news, here's some tips to get everything sorted!

- Come to this calmly!
- Explain what bullying is – leaving people out, saying mean things (in person or online), hurting other people, taking other's things, passing on mean stories or gossip about another person...
- It will be important not to interrogate your child about any situation you have been made aware of, much as you'd like to! This can cause our children to justify or perhaps feel compelled to lie about the incident which can further confuse and complicate things. Just let them know that you've had a complaint about their behaviour and it will be important to work on this together in order that they can be a good friend.
- Talk about how the other child/ren may be feeling and what this is like. Support them to understand this, modelling empathy yourself.
- Talk through some solutions and praise them for these.
- Take a look at above at 'How do I support my kid not to bully' get these few things in check.
- Work with the school to praise and encourage any kind and friendly behaviour they notice when they are with their peers.

