

# THE STRAITS TIMES

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The Sunday Times says

## Speak up to stop bullying


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As sorry as the sociopathy of bullies and as pitiable as the plight of victims is the moral limpness of the many who witness vile acts and simply do nothing. Typical is the reported reaction of a Secondary 4 prefect from a top school who chose to look the other way to avoid being a target himself. In a recent bullying case at Shuqun Secondary School, none had intervened in a video of two pupils being hit repeatedly by an aggressor.

This was another instance of the potential power of many to stand up against a wrong that lay frozen because all doubted each other. Unsurprisingly, a response unlearned in schools and at home is often absent in the adult world, when a sense of moral justice is not translated into action.

Incidences of bullying in schools are significant enough for educators and parents to give it more attention. A Touch Cyber Wellness survey showed that one in three secondary school students have been subject to cyber bullying. This is the least common form of bullying here, according to studies by the Singapore Children's Society which also cited name calling, vulgar abuse, violence and relational bullying like ostracism. In all these cases, more must be done st teaching victims to seek help and counselling bullies.

The universal reality is that there will always be individuals who prey on the weak. And there will be anonymous groups who victimise perceived bullies in the name of mob justice. As the young can't be shielded from such excesses, they must learn strategies like speaking up, standing united and not going overboard themselves. When something upsets one's belief system, moral courage must be demonstrated if ethical principles are to mean anything at all.