



Kōrero mai Kōrero atu

**SPEAK UP
STAND TOGETHER
STOP BULLYING**

Māuri tū Māuri ora

Pink Shirt Day Kaiako/Teacher Guide

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE



Mental Health Foundation
OF NEW ZEALAND
mauri tū, mauri ora

PINKSHIRTDAY.ORG.NZ



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*He aha te mea nui o te ao.
He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.*

*What is the most important thing in the world?
It is people, it is people, it is people.*



Kia ora, welcome

On Pink Shirt Day, Friday 15 May 2026, Aotearoa will be transformed into a sea of māwhero/pink as we stand together to spread aroha, celebrate diversity and end bullying!

Thank you for celebrating Pink Shirt Day this year and raising money to support this important kaupapa! Your kura/school and taura/students are part of a powerful movement that’s spreading aroha and kindness, and ending bullying.

This guide includes information, ideas and inspiration to help you bring Pink Shirt Day to life in your kura/school. You can order a **free event pack** filled with goodies like posters, flyers and wallet cards to help you celebrate the day!

If you choose to **fundraise** for Pink Shirt Day, e mihi ana! Your support will help reduce bullying in Aotearoa by enabling the Mental Health Foundation to provide free resources for schools and workplaces, support rainbow rangatahi across Aotearoa, grow the **Upstander** movement, and deliver innovative programmes that lift mental wellbeing.

We are so thrilled to have you on-board this Pink Shirt Day. Your dedication to the kaupapa helps to make Aotearoa a kinder, more inclusive place for everyone.

The Pink Shirt Day team

Pink Shirt Day is an opportunity for you and your taura to Kōrero Mai, Kōrero Atu, Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora – Speak Up, Stand Together, Stop Bullying!



Why is Pink Shirt Day important?

Aotearoa has the third highest rate of school bullying out of 38 OECD countries.



We all have the power to create a kinder Aotearoa. Pink Shirt Day is about coming together to celebrate diversity in all its forms, and supporting schools, workplaces, and communities to be safe, supportive, welcoming, and inclusive. It's a reminder to stand alongside anyone affected by bullying, and to nurture inclusivity, kindness, and understanding.

By taking part and wearing pink on Friday 15 May, your kura or school can show their commitment to creating a kinder, more inclusive environment where all tamariki and rangatahi feel safe, valued, and respected regardless of who they are.

Did you know?

Pink Shirt Day began in Canada in 2007 when two students took a stand against homophobic bullying after a new student was harassed for wearing pink. The [Mental Health Foundation](#) has run Pink Shirt Day in Aotearoa since 2012.



Each year, in Aotearoa, thousands of schools, workplaces and organisations show their support and Kōrero Mai, Kōrero Atu, Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora – Speak Up, Stand Together, Stop Bullying!

Bullying is a serious issue for tairā in Aotearoa.

- In Aotearoa, 13% of students are frequently bullied, compared to 9% on average across OECD countries (OECD, 2023).
- In Aotearoa, tairā who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, takatāpui or other sexuality and gender diverse communities – also referred to as rainbow communities – experience higher rates of bullying.
- Many studies show tairā who are bullied are more likely to experience mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

Getting ready

Creating a positive culture and environment, free from bullying, where diversity is celebrated, takes more than one day. Change takes time and it takes the commitment and energy of the whole kura/school whānau.

Here's a checklist of things to do before Pink Shirt Day arrives.

FROM THE START OF SCHOOL YEAR:

Sign up for Pink Shirt Day 2026

Sign up for updates to hear when our event packs, downloadable resources and the official Cotton On t-shirt, tote bag and pin are available.

Create a Pink Shirt Day committee

To make your Pink Shirt Day bigger, brighter and bolder, set up a committee. Involve taura and other kaiako/teachers to help plan and organise activities and promote the day to your kura/school community.

Prepare for an increase in reporting

Campaigns like Pink Shirt Day can increase the reporting of bullying, particularly cyberbullying. Advise the pastoral care team to make sure they know how to respond. Educate staff on the expected referral process and what support services and helplines are available (see page 14).

Visit [InsideOUT](#), [Netsafe](#) and [Bullying Free NZ's](#) websites for resources and information for promoting safe environments for your taura.



IN APRIL:

Order or download your pink resources

Order your **free event pack** loaded with goodies to bring Pink Shirt Day to life! Check out our full suite of Pink Shirt Day resources that can be downloaded [here](#).

Choose your Pink Shirt Day activities

Check out our fun activities on pages 7 and 8 to start planning how you'll celebrate the kaupapa. Run the ideas past your taura and see what they're keen to do!

Assembly presentation

Start the kōrero about bullying prevention ahead of Pink Shirt Day by talking about it at an assembly. Use information from our [website](#) and share the [Upstander actions](#) with taura. You may want to talk about how your kura or school will be celebrating on the day, and any fundraising activities.

Celebrate any day!
 Don't worry if your kura or school has something else planned on Friday 15 May! Just hold your Pink Shirt Day on another day that suits!



ONE MONTH OUT:

Buy your Pink Shirt Day t-shirt

We know you'll love this year's new merch from Cotton On! Buy a t-shirt, tote bag or pin to show your support, and promote them to your kura or school community. 100% of net proceeds from Cotton On Foundation's products and donations will go to the Mental Health Foundation so we can provide free resources for schools and workplaces, support rainbow rangatahi across Aotearoa, grow the Upstander movement, and deliver innovative programmes that lift mental wellbeing. T-shirts, totes and pins are available online and in selected Cotton On, Cotton On Body, Cotton On Kids and Typo stores from late April.

Spread the word

Share information about Pink Shirt Day, what it means, its values and how you plan to celebrate with your kura or school whānau through newsletters and social media pages. Visit here for newsletter copy.

Display Pink Shirt Day posters

Download or order Pink Shirt Day posters and display them around your kura or school.

Plan a fundraiser!

We'd love your kura or school to hold a Pink Shirt Day fundraising event. See page 10 for fundraising inspiration!



Pink Shirt Day is more than just a day – it's a movement. Your donation fuels our ability to reach more people and create lasting change. We do this by delivering free tools to schools and workplaces, educating people about the impacts of bullying and how to create cultures of inclusion and kindness.



Ideas and inspiration

Fun activities to help bring the Pink Shirt Day kaupapa to life. Change these activities to suit your kura or school and remember to be mindful to ensure activities don't exclude anyone.

We've teamed up with our friends at [Sparklers](#) to bring you classroom activities that will get your tamariki in the Pink Shirt Day spirit! Click the images below to learn about each activity and more!

SPARKLERS / KINDNESS & FRIENDSHIP

Common Ground

An interactive game that explores all the things we have in common, rather than focusing on our differences.

SPARKLERS / KINDNESS & FRIENDSHIP

Compliment Posters

Make fun, feel-good posters for your classroom.

SPARKLERS / KINDNESS & FRIENDSHIP

Culture of Kindness

A co-design approach to creating a culture of kindness in your classroom and school.

SPARKLERS / KINDNESS & FRIENDSHIP

Superheroes and the Colour Pink!

We've created this activity to encourage tamariki to think about Pink Shirt





Kaiako/Teacher compliment cards

Download our [teacher compliment cards](#) and surprise your taura with messages that celebrate how they demonstrate Pink Shirt Day values. Available in Te Reo Māori and English.

Assembly awards

Recognise your kura or school's Pink Shirt Day champions at assembly! Who embodies the Pink Shirt Day values? Who went the extra mile in their advocacy or fundraising efforts? Download [Pink Shirt Day certificates](#) to hand out.

Get creative!

Encourage taura to bring along an old t-shirt and then get busy with paint, feathers, ribbons, sequins. Download and print our [stencil](#) to help with designs. Encourage taura to wear it if you're holding a non-uniform day.

Learn the official PSD waiata and dance

Stream the official waiata, Iarere Aio, and learn the [lyrics](#) with your class! Whakanuia tō auahatanga.



FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Compliment stickers and posters

Order a [Pink Shirt Day event pack](#) to receive our tear-off compliment poster, and encourage taura to share compliments with each other. Don't forget to order [compliment stickers](#) and hand them out to people who have done something kind. Remind taura that small actions, like this, can really make someone's day. You could also get taura to create their own compliment cards!

Random acts of kindness

Encourage taura and kaiako to do random acts of kindness for the day, or the week leading up to Pink Shirt Day. Taura could reflect on how being kind and receiving kindness made them feel.

Create a Pink Shirt Day pledge

Ask taura to develop and design a Pink Shirt Day [Upstander](#) pledge. Display it in your classroom all year round!

Kindness wall

Select a wall (e.g. in a shared hallway) where taura and staff can leave positive messages to spread kindness or hope to others. Draw an outline of a shape (like a t-shirt or a heart) and leave some post-it notes and pens for people to share messages. Have someone there to help.

Download our rangatahi guide

Our [rangatahi guide](#) has been developed for secondary students, but there are some fun activities and resources that your senior classes may be interested in.

Register your school for our social action project, Rangatahi Rise

Rangatahi Rise is a youth-led social action project which empowers rangatahi to lead the conversation about mental health and improve wellbeing within secondary schools. For more information contact rangatahi@mentalhealth.org.nz.

Get to know each other better

With a range of simple questions to choose from, taura can learn more about each other with our [kōrero starter card](#) activity.

We want to see how you're taking part in Pink Shirt Day!
Show us and others what you're doing on the day by sharing photos and videos on social media. Tag us @pinkshirtdaynz and use the hashtag #pinkshirtdaynz.

Keep the kaupapa going

It takes more than one day to make Aotearoa a place free from bullying. That's why it's important to carry on the Pink Shirt Day kaupapa all year round.

Curriculum activities

Include information about Pink Shirt Day in the curriculum – leading up to and after Pink Shirt Day. Your taura could explore the origins and messaging behind the day through writing, spoken word, posters, videos, dance, and drama. Some questions to consider may include:

- What are the origins of Pink Shirt Day? Why is it important?
- What would the world be like if everyone was the same?
- Why is it a good thing that we're all different?
- What is your school policy around bullying? Would you consider changes to it?
- What does it mean to be an Upstander? (also see page 13)
- How can schools/kura across Aotearoa create environments that are safe and inclusive for everyone?
- How can we show kindness to others, and what are the physical/psychological effects of being kind?

InsideOUT resources

InsideOUT is a charity that works to give rainbow young people in Aotearoa a sense of safety and belonging in their schools and communities. It provides resources, information, workshops, consulting, and support for individuals, schools, workplaces, and community organisations. Check out InsideOUT's resources, including Ending Rainbow-Focused Bullying and Discrimination, Creating Rainbow-Inclusive School Policies and Procedures, as well as video resources sharing the voices of rainbow tamariki.

Pause Breathe Smile activities

In partnership with the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Southern Cross, Pause Breathe Smile is a mind health programme for children aged five to 12 in New Zealand. Teacher training is fully funded for primary and intermediate schools. The programme has shown significant increases in positive behaviour and wellbeing, and reductions in negative behaviour. You can learn more here.



Is your school's bullying prevention policy visible?

It's important for your school to have a bullying prevention policy and for your kura or school whānau to understand it. Promote the policy in newsletters and on the school website.

Keep bullying prevention front of mind

Check out our book reviews on topics like anxiety, bullying, and resiliency. These books have been reviewed by teachers, school counsellors, librarians, health professionals, parents, and rangatahi. Speak about the books in class and encourage taura to read them.

Knowledge is power

Access tools such as the Wellbeing@School survey to gather data around how taura feel about their experiences of bullying at your school. Over time, repeat the survey and compare the results to track progress. Use resources such as Tāhūrangi – New Zealand Curriculum's mental health education guides to further promote student wellbeing in your school.

InCommon tamariki quiz activity

This activity nudges tamariki to explore what they have in common with each other, even tamariki they may think are different to them. Download the quiz and other activities from InCommon's website.

Fundraising

The Mental Health Foundation is working to create a kinder, more inclusive Aotearoa, where everyone feels safe and valued, and unafraid to be themselves.

With the funds raised on Pink Shirt Day, the Mental Health Foundation will:

- Continue to build a movement of Upstanders – people who use words and actions to help someone being bullied.
- Reach kura/schools across the motu, providing them with the tools to teach ākongā/students and kaiako/teachers about the impact of bullying, and how to create a culture of kindness.
- Provide workplaces with access to free tools to help them build positive environments and prevent bullying, all year round.
- Support InsideOUT to provide free help to rainbow rangatahi in schools across Aotearoa.
- Create innovative programmes for schools, workplaces and communities that lift mental wellbeing.

Got the goods?

Order our [event pack](#) or print your own posters, photo props, bunting, cupcake toppers, and more from our [resources page](#).

Māwhero/pink non-uniform day

Transform your school into a sea of māwhero by encouraging staff and taura to wear something pink in exchange for a donation. Taura could wear their customised pink tee!

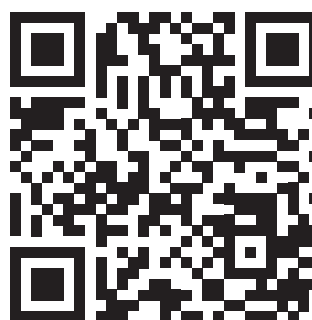
Have a bake sale

Hold a lunchtime bake sale full of pink treats and donate the proceeds to Pink Shirt Day. Don't forget to use our [cupcake toppers](#) and [bunting](#)!



Fundraise online

Set up a fundraising page on our website and collect online donations from parents and students. Sign up by visiting [here](#) or scan the QR code below.



Show off your customised t-shirts

Organise a fashion show or an art exhibition with taura, displaying the t-shirts they added their own flair to in class (see page 8). You could charge a donation to enter the fashion/art show or for other students to vote for their favourite t-shirt. Invite the school community along too.

How to make your donation

Make a donation online [here](#). This is the easiest way and helps us keep costs down but you can also make your donation via bank transfer too.

Bank details

Bank: BNZ
Name of account: Mental Health Foundation of NZ
Account number: 02-0100-0752592-097
Reference: <please enter your school name>
Code: PSDsch

By fundraising for Pink Shirt Day, you're helping create a kinder, more inclusive Aotearoa, where everyone feels safe, valued, and unafraid to be themselves.

About bullying

It's really important to remind people that it's okay to be different from others and that it's not okay to bully people just because they're not the same as you.

What is bullying?

It isn't uncommon to hear someone say something insensitive or mean to someone else. Although these comments or actions are not okay, bullying has some specific features that make it much more serious and harmful.

Bullying is unreasonable, repeated behaviour that causes harm to an individual or group of people. Bullying can take many different forms:

- **Physical** (hitting, tripping up)
- **Verbal** (insults, threats)
- **Social** (spreading gossip or excluding people)
- **Cyberbullying** (bullying online, via the internet, mobile phones and social media)
- **Microaggressions** (casual jokes, misgendering, everyday disrespect)
- **Covert** (withholding information, or overloading workloads).

Why do some people get bullied?

Sadly, people can be bullied simply for being different from others.

That's why it's so important to celebrate diversity and embrace our differences. Everyone should feel safe to be themselves regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, or cultural background.



We aren't all the same and that's a great thing!

Why do some people bully others?

Just as there are many reasons someone might experience bullying, there are also many reasons why someone might bully someone else.

- They feel unhappy.
- They have been the target of bullying themselves.
- They want to feel important or powerful.
- They don't realise how their behaviour harms others.
- They believe being different is a bad thing.

While the bullying behaviour isn't okay, someone who bullies others often needs our help and awhi/support too.



Is bullying harmful? Why prevent bullying?

A 2023 **OECD report** found that in Aotearoa:

- 6% of students reported not feeling safe on their way to school (OECD average: 8%);
- 6% of students reported not feeling safe in their classrooms at school (OECD average: 7%);
- 13% of students reported not feeling safe at other places at school, for example in a hallway, cafeteria or restroom (OECD average: 10%).

Many studies show that rangatahi who are bullied are more likely to experience mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts. This can impact on their learning, relationships and ability to feel good about who they are.

- Bullying harms the person being bullied, the person doing the bullying and can also harm those who witness it (bystanders).
- Rangatahi who bully others, or are bullied (or both), are more likely to skip classes, drop out of school, and perform worse academically than schoolmates who have no conflict with their peers (OECD, 2017).
- New Zealand students experience higher rates of bullying than most other developed countries (Te Kāhui Tika Tangata, Human Rights Commission, 2020).
- One in five learners from ethnic communities in New Zealand reported experiencing racist bullying in the last month, and over half witnessed others being bullied because of their ethnicity (ERO, 2023).
- By taking bullying seriously and celebrating the diversity of taura, all rangatahi can feel safe and supported, and flourish at your school.

Cyberbullying

There is a growing number of reports from and about young people, who experience a disproportionate amount of harm online compared to other age groups (Netsafe, 2021). **Online bullying or cyberbullying** is when digital technology is used in a way that intends to harm another person or group. Cyberbullying can take many forms including:

- Name calling.
- Repeated unwanted messages.
- Spreading rumours or lies.
- Fake accounts used to harass people.
- Excluding people from social activities.
- Embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

One in five teens have experienced an unwanted digital communication that had a negative impact on their daily activities

(Netsafe, 2023).

Bullying experienced by the rainbow community

Taura who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or other sexuality and gender diverse communities, experience higher rates of bullying.

Identify's 2022 **community and advocacy report**, which surveyed rainbow youth in Aotearoa, found that:

- More than half felt their school was not supportive of their rainbow identity.
- Over a third said they had experienced bullying at least once in the past 12 months. The proportion of trans and non-binary students who had been bullied was significantly larger than cisgender students who had been bullied.
- One in six felt unsafe or very unsafe at their school as a rainbow person.

For information about how to help keep your rainbow taura safe, check out InsideOUT's **Ending rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination** resource.



Being an Upstander

We all have the power to prevent bullying!

If you see someone being bullied, be an Upstander, not a bystander. Using your words and actions to support someone who is being bullied can make a huge difference.

There are lots of ways you can support someone who is being bullied.

Five Upstander actions:

✓ **Āwhinatia / Support the person**

- Encourage them to ask for help or go with them to get help.
- Let them know you have seen what has happened, and that they're not alone.
- Share our [help and advice](#) page with them.

✓ **Haukotia / Distract**

Interrupt the bullying in some way:

- Ask the person experiencing bullying if they want to go for a walk or do something else.
- Help them to leave the situation they're in.

✓ **Karangahia / Call it!**

- If you feel safe to do so, let those doing the bullying know that it isn't right. It can be hard to speak up in the moment, but saying something like 'that's not okay' can make a big difference.
- Use your words to show aroha and kindness to those involved.

✓ **Taihoa ake, ka haumarū / Leave and act**

If you don't feel safe to step in while the bullying is happening:

- Move away from the situation.
- Later, let the person experiencing the bullying know you saw and ask what might help.
- You might want to have a quiet word with the person doing the bullying.

✓ **Tautokohia / Get some other help**

- Support the person being bullied to get help from others, such as whānau, kaiako/teachers, kaimahi/colleagues, a friend or a helpline.
- Tell someone you trust what you have seen, and ask them to check in with the person who has been bullied.
- Remember, there are many avenues and ways that you can seek help and ask for advice. Keep trying until you find one that works for you.

For more tips on how to be an Upstander, and to safely support someone who is being bullied, visit pinkshirtday.org.nz/upstander.



Help and advice

Below are some helplines and websites that can offer support and advice.

You can also visit www.mentalhealth.org.nz for more information.

Talk to someone

Youthline – Free call 24/7 on 0800 37 66 33, free text 24/7 at 234, [webchat](#) between 10am and 10pm, message on WhatsApp 09 886 5696, or direct message on Instagram [@youthlinenz](#) – for young people and their parents, whānau and friends.

1737 – Need to talk? – Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor.

Lifeline – 0800 543 354 or free text '4357' (HELP).

What's Up – 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP), [chat online](#) or email whatsup@barnardos.org.nz – for 5–19 year olds. Phone counselling is available Mon-Sun 11am–11pm. Online chat is available Mon-Sun 11am–10:30pm.

Samaritans – 0800 726 666, for confidential support to anyone who is lonely or in emotional distress.

Suicide Crisis Helpline – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO) – for people in distress, and people who are worried about someone else.

Get support online

thelowdown.co.nz – Visit the [website](#) for support for young people experiencing depression or anxiety.

Netsafe – Text 'Netsafe' to 4282 or call 0508 638 723 (0508 NETSAFE) for advice on how to stay safe online.

Find support around sexuality or gender identity

InsideOUT – email hello@insideout.org.nz or visit facebook.com/insideoutkoaro or [@insideoutkoaro](#). InsideOUT works to make Aotearoa a safer place for all young people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities.

OutLine Aotearoa – 0800 688 5463 (0800 OUTLINE), for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Free phone counselling is available every evening, 6pm–9pm.

RainbowYOUTH – complete the contact [form](#) or visit facebook.com/rainbowyouth or [@rainbowyouth](#). RainbowYOUTH offers support for young queer and gender diverse people aged 13–27.

Pink Shirt Day is creating a long-lasting impact and changing New Zealanders' lives for the better. An independent Ipsos survey in 2025 showed Pink Shirt Day reached 83% of New Zealanders that year, and 67% of those who saw the campaign said it helped them to do something to stop bullying when witnessed.

Thank you for joining with other kura and schools around the country to Kōrero Mai, Kōrero Atu, Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora – Speak Up, Stand Together, Stop Bullying!

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