



*Kōrero mai Kōrero atu*

**SPEAK UP  
STAND TOGETHER  
STOP BULLYING**

*Māuri tū Māuri ora*

## **Pink Shirt Day Rangatahi Guide**

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE**



Mental Health Foundation  
OF NEW ZEALAND  
*mauri tū, mauri ora*

[PINKSHIRTDAY.ORG.NZ](http://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 e hoa!

**The Mental Health Foundation is proud to bring you Pink Shirt Day on Friday 15 May 2026, the day Aotearoa New Zealand comes together to spread kindness and take a stand against bullying.**

Want to make your school or kura tuarua a kinder, safer place for you and other rangatahi?

Pink Shirt Day is your chance to celebrate the diverse, awesome people around you and take real steps to prevent bullying.

This guide will help you bring Pink Shirt Day to life in your kura tuarua or school. Order your free **event pack**, filled with resources to help you spread the word about Pink Shirt Day.

If you choose to **fundraise for Pink Shirt Day**, arohanui! 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.

Pink Shirt Day is powered by people like you! Your dedication to the kaupapa helps to make Aotearoa a kinder, more inclusive place for all New Zealanders.

**The Pink Shirt Day team**

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



# Why it's important to celebrate Pink Shirt Day

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 rangatahi feel safe, valued, and respected regardless of who they are.

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!*

## So why should you get involved?

Bullying is a real issue in Aotearoa – we have the third-highest rate of school bullying out of 38 OECD countries (OECD, 2023).

Pink Shirt Day brings people together to send the message that bullying is not okay. It's the first step to helping create an environment where everyone feels respected and safe to express themselves at school.

### 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.

**“Students are writing kindness cards, taking photos in a photo booth they are creating, doing a gold coin collection and of course wearing pink! The staff can buy pink cupcakes with the proceeds being donated, it's going to be FUN on Pink Shirt Day!” – Willow Park School**



# What is bullying?

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 in the workplace, or overloading workloads)

## Some people are more likely to be targeted

While all young people are potential targets of bullying, some groups can experience higher rates.

## Bullying experienced by the rainbow community

Homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic bullying all refer to bullying based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. In Aotearoa, rangatahi who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, takatāpui, or other sexuality and gender diverse communities (also referred to as the rainbow community), experience higher rates of bullying.

Identify's 2022 [community and advocacy report](#), which surveyed rainbow youth in Aotearoa, found:

- 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.

Check out InsideOUT's [Ending rainbow-focused bullying and discrimination](#) resource.

## Online or cyberbullying

**1 in 5 teens have experienced an unwanted digital communication that had a negative impact on their daily activities** ([Netsafe, 2023](#)).

**Online or cyberbullying** is when digital technology is used in a way that intends to harm another person or group. Online bullying can take many forms, including:

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

Visit [Netsafe](#) for more tips on dealing with online bullying.



Check out our [guide](#) for what to do if an image of you is being shared without your permission.

## High school students launch nationwide campaign for gender neutral bathrooms in schools

A group of students at Auckland's Albany Senior High successfully campaigned their school's leadership team to introduce gender neutral bathrooms.

"Our original goal was just getting gender neutral bathrooms at our school. So we started doing research, and as we dug deeper on the internet, we discovered how much of an issue the lack of gender neutral bathrooms is nationwide. So we decided to switch up our plan and try to focus on a country-wide scale."

For Asher, who is non-binary, not having gender neutral bathrooms at school has had a massive impact on their physical and mental health.

Fortunately, due to their Impact Project kaupapa, Asher and students like them are able to use gender neutral bathrooms at Albany Senior High, sending a strong message of inclusivity to the entire school population.

"It meant I could start taking care of myself again and being comfortable with something as basic as going to the bathroom," says Asher.

"And it's also good to help younger, not necessarily quite as open or out trans and gender diverse kids. It shows that our school and our community values them and sees them and cares about their issues, and it helps us create a safe space."



# Get ready to celebrate Pink Shirt Day



**By celebrating Pink Shirt Day, you're helping create a safe, inclusive, and accepting school environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging.**

**Here are some ideas to help you get started with your Pink Shirt Day celebrations.**

## **Sign up for Pink Shirt Day 2026 today**

**Sign up** for updates about all the tips and tools you need to get ready for the big day.

## **Get some backup!**

Have a kōrero with a kaiako/teacher, support staff or other rangatahi about how you want to celebrate Pink Shirt Day at your school. They can awahi/support you to make it happen!

Spread the workload by setting up a committee. If your school has a rainbow group, see if they're keen to be involved or just gather like-minded students to help organise activities and promote the day.

## **Order/download Pink Shirt Day resources**

Order your free **event pack** that includes posters in Te Reo Māori and English, compliment posters and other resources to help promote the kaupapa. You can also download a range of resources and activities from our **website**.

## **Choose your Pink Shirt Day activities**

Check out our fun activities on page 7 to start planning how you'll take part on the big day.

## **Start the kōrero**

Open the kōrero about bullying ahead of Pink Shirt Day by talking about what it stands for at assembly or in your form class. Visit our **website** to get more information about Pink Shirt Day, and **bullying prevention**, or download our **About Bullying fact sheet**. Talk about the importance of celebrating everyone's differences.

## **Register your school for our youth-led 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](mailto:rangatahi@mentalhealth.org.nz).

## **Learn and share how to be an Upstander**

Learn how to be an **Upstander**, so you know what to do if you see bullying happening.

## **Plan your fundraiser**

Have you thought about running a Pink Shirt Day fundraising event? Your donations support the important kaupapa. See page 8 for fundraising inspiration!

## **Buy your Pink Shirt Day merch**

We know you'll love this year's new merch available to purchase from select Cotton On, Cotton On Body, Cotton On Kids and Typo stores. Buy a t-shirt, tote bag or pin to show your support, and promote them to your kura tuarua or school. 100% of net proceeds from Cotton On Foundation's products and donations 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, tote bags and pins are available **online** and in selected stores from late April.

## **Spread the word**

Share information about Pink Shirt Day and your fundraising event with your kura tuarua or school whānau through newsletters and social media pages. Click **here** for ideas on how to get involved, and download our **newsletter template** to help you share your event far and wide.

## **Did you know?**

*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.*

# The big day

## The pinkest day of the year is here, how are you going to celebrate?

**Here are some ideas you could use or get creative and come up with your own activities! Just be mindful not to exclude anyone.**

### Compliment posters and stickers

Make sure you've ordered our **event packs**, which include our tear-off **compliment poster** so people can share compliments with each other. Don't forget to order **compliment stickers** too, and hand out to people who've done something kind. To spread more positivity, create your own compliment cards to give away – a small action like this can really brighten someone's day.

### Kindness wall

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

### Random acts of kindness

It's cool to be kind! Carry out random acts of kindness for the day or the week leading up to Pink Shirt Day.

### Turn your school māwhero/pink!

Display the posters and other resources from your free **event pack!** We also have pink bunting, cupcake toppers and more for you to **download** and print.

### Celebrate your rainbow friends, whānau and kaiako/teachers

Chalk or paint rainbow colours on the footpath or wear rainbow stickers/flags to show you are a safe and welcoming place for rainbow people.

### Learn the official Pink Shirt Day waiata and dance

Stream the official waiata, Iarere Aio, and learn the **lyrics** so you can sing along with your friends and whānau! **Whakanuia tō auahatanga!**



PHOTO CREDIT: OTAGO BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

### Create a Pink Shirt Day pledge

Work with your student council/leadership team to develop and design a Pink Shirt Day Upstander pledge. Display it in common areas and classrooms!

### Wear pink on game day

Encourage your school's sports teams to wear pink socks, arm bands or t-shirts on the game day closest to Pink Shirt Day. The more people wearing māwhero, the better!

### Get to know each other better

Use our **kōrero starter card** activity to get to know the people in your school community better. Find out what makes you different from one other, and learn what you have in common.

### Take our pink quiz

Make your day even pinker with our **pink themed quiz!** Featuring general knowledge questions with a focus on all things pink, this quiz is a fun way to bring people together on Pink Shirt Day.

**Show us how you're taking part in Pink Shirt Day! Share photos and videos on social media. Tag us @pinkshirtdaynz and use the hashtag #pinkshirtdaynz.**

# Help us make Pink Shirt Day more powerful – hold a fundraiser!

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

We know that to reduce bullying we need to create positive and respectful environments where bullying can't thrive.

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 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?

Print your own posters, bunting, cupcake toppers, and more from our [resources](#) page.

## Māwhero/pink non-uniform day

Work with teachers to pick a day that you can transform your school into a sea of māwhero (it doesn't need to be on Pink Shirt Day). Encourage staff and rangatahi to wear something pink in exchange for a donation.

## 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](#)!



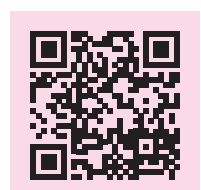
**By fundraising for Pink Shirt Day, you'll be helping to make Aotearoa a kinder, more inclusive place, where diversity is celebrated and rangatahi feel safe, valued, and unafraid to be themselves.**

## Organise a fashion show or t-shirt art exhibition

Add your own style to your pink t-shirts and hold a fashion or art show. You could charge a donation to enter, or for other students to vote for their favourite t-shirt. See if your school's art classes or creative technology classes want to be involved.

## Promote the official Pink Shirt Day t-shirt

Encourage rangatahi and staff to purchase the official Pink Shirt Day t-shirt, tote bag or pin from select Cotton On, Cotton On Body, Cotton On Kids and Typo stores! 100% of net proceeds from Cotton On Foundation's products and donations will go to the Mental Health Foundation. Tees, pins and tote bags are available online and in selected stores from late April.



**Scan to visit the Pink Shirt Day fundraising page for more ideas or to register to fundraise**

# Keep up the mahi

## Preventing bullying takes more than one day!

While Pink Shirt Day is celebrated once a year, its messages can carry on all year round. Here's how you can keep the kaupapa going:

### Start a Rangatahi Rise social action group

Run by the Mental Health Foundation, 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.

The project provides schools and youth-based organisations with resources and tools to help rangatahi drive the changes they want to see.

Keen to get involved? Email [rangatahi@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:rangatahi@mentalhealth.org.nz) to find out more.

### Start a rainbow group (or join one!)

Rainbow groups are student-led groups or clubs that offer a safe and supportive environment for rangatahi of diverse sexualities and genders as well as those with variations of sex characteristics (intersex), and their allies. These groups are one way to take an active role in preventing bullying at your school!

To help you get started, download InsideOUT's [Starting and Strengthening Rainbow Diversity Groups](#) resource, and check out their [website](#) for other helpful content. Kōrero with a kaiako/teacher about starting a group too.

### Celebrate Schools Pride Week!

Sign your school up to take part in InsideOUT's [Schools' Pride Week \(15-19 June\)](#) and join a celebratory week of events that support rainbow rangatahi to have a sense of belonging in their schools and communities.



### Book reviews

Check out our [book reviews](#) on topics like anxiety, bullying, feeling different, and resiliency. Ask your school or community librarian if these books are available, and for them to be displayed in the library during Pink Shirt Day, and beyond.

### Encourage your school to be inclusive

[InsideOUT](#) offers rainbow workshops and resources for schools across Aotearoa. Visit their website to find more information!

### Review your school's policies and processes

Talk to a trusted kaiako about reviewing your school policies and processes to make sure your school is a safe environment for all students.

To support you with this, check out InsideOUT's [Creating Rainbow Inclusive School Policies and Processes](#), [Making Schools Safer for Trans and Gender Diverse Youth](#) and [Legal Rights at School for Rainbow Young People](#) resources.



# How to be 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.

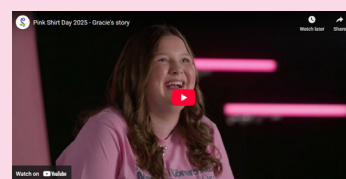
### ✓ **Tautokohia / Get some other help**

- 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 how to support someone who is being bullied, visit [pinkshirtday.org.nz/upstander](http://pinkshirtday.org.nz/upstander).

### Gracie's Upstander story

When Gracie was being bullied, she felt completely alone. Someone at her school showed Gracie kindness and supported her to ask for help. Just knowing someone had her back, made a huge impact. [Watch Gracie's story](#) to learn how being an Upstander can make a big difference.



# Help and advice

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

Below are some helplines and websites that can offer support and advice. You can also visit [www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://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](https://www.instagram.com/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](mailto: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](mailto:hello@insideout.org.nz) or visit [facebook.com/insideoutkoaro](https://www.facebook.com/insideoutkoaro) or [@insideoutkoaro](https://www.instagram.com/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](https://www.facebook.com/rainbowyouth) or [@rainbowyouth](https://www.instagram.com/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.**

# Information for teachers / school support staff

*This guide's Pink Shirt Day activities are designed to be student-led. However, to help keep the kaupapa going it's a good idea to have a teacher or school support staff involved. Check out our [teachers' guide](#) – designed for primary school teachers, it also includes relevant information to keep all rangatahi safe.*

## Other ways your school can support rangatahi

### Challenge co-curricular norms

Ensure language use and rules around events such as the school ball are inclusive of diverse genders and sexualities. Meet with teachers and coaches to discuss strategies to stamp out homophobic banter at team training sessions and in the stands.

### Knowledge is power

Access tools such as the [Wellbeing@School](#) survey to gather data around how rangatahi feel about their experiences of bullying at your school. Over time, repeat the survey and compare the results to track progress.

### Getting help and advice

Visit our [website](#) for more information about who you can talk to for help, advice, and further support. Display this information on noticeboards, in classrooms, and in communal areas. Check out more ways to support rainbow rangatahi with [this guide](#) developed by the Ministry of Education.

### Make your school's bullying prevention policy visible

It's important for your school to have a bullying prevention policy and for students to understand it. How easy is it to find your school's policy?



### InsideOUT's 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 latest [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.

InsideOUT School Coordinators are based throughout Aotearoa and help schools to create safe, inclusive environments for rainbow rangatahi.

Visit their [website](#) to find your local contact.

### Online bullying

For more information and resources to help keep your rangatahi safe in an online environment, visit [Netsafe](#).

### Register your school for our youth-led 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](mailto:rangatahi@mentalhealth.org.nz).



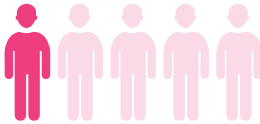
# Appendix

Studies show that people who are bullied are more likely to experience poor mental health, including experiences such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Bullying is a serious issue for rangatahi in Aotearoa.

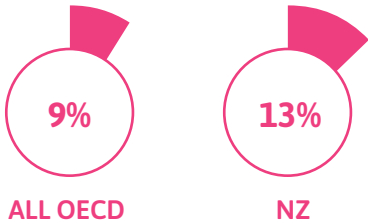
**Did you know:**



Aotearoa has the third-highest rate of school bullying out of 38 OECD countries (OECD, 2023).



Over one in five transgender students (23%) said that they had been bullied at school weekly or more often in the past year, compared to 5% of cisgender students (Fenaughty et al., 2021).



In Aotearoa, 13% of students are frequently bullied, significantly higher than the OECD average of 9% (OECD, 2023).

**The effects of homophobic and biphobic bullying at school can be lifelong, and can include lower educational attainment, lower income and lower wellbeing (Henrickson, 2008).**



7.3% of same/both-sex attracted participants said that they had been bullied at school weekly or more often in the past year (Fenaughty et al., 2021).

In Aotearoa, 6% of students said they don't feel safe on their way to school, 6% said they don't feel safe in their classrooms, and 13% reported not feeling safe at other places at school (OECD, 2023).



One in five students from ethnic communities in Aotearoa reported experiencing racist bullying in the last month, and over half witnessed others being bullied because of their ethnicity (ERO, 2023).

