

Violence in Schools: an overview and response to a changing agenda

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Presentation Summary

Contemporary schools are experiencing significant challenges regarding their responses to violent behaviour by students. The nature of violence has changed over the last decade or so, bringing with it new tensions and the need for school leaders to respond effectively to minimise their impact on school systems.

I. Contagion or Change

Long history of 'violence in schools'

Media reporting focuses upon extreme events & lurid headlines

Fuels public/political/professional concern

Leading to a 'moral panic'

Little *trustworthy* evidence of substantial rates of increase in school violence

Evidence of change in type of violent behaviour & its context

Rapid social/economic/demographic/technological change in last 25 years

Contemporary challenges

Radicalised behaviour

Social media & other forms of bullying

Gang' violence & weapon-use

Child abuse, self-harm and increase in mental health issues

Failure to recognise & understand change results in inappropriate responses

Leadership imperatives: 4K Insulation

The *affective* skills of the school leader are of signal importance

Violence resilient schools have a positive & inclusive culture & ethos

Knowledge application

Keystone principles

Kaleidoscope Interventions

Karmic Thinking

A School Model for Violence Reduction

The *ecosystemic* nature of schools is central

1. Awareness of the effects of violence on children amongst all stakeholders (children, staff, school leaders and families)
2. Regular school self-reviews of violent behaviour and the school's organisation for intervention
3. Effective whole school policies and strategies for creating a non-violent learning environment and addressing the causes of violence
4. School leadership for development

5. A 'taught and caught' Social Emotional and Behaviour Learning curriculum
6. Peer led initiatives
7. Making schools and the surrounding environment safe
8. Staff training
9. Involving families
10. Engagement with and in the local community