

## Viral spread of bullying video may encourage more acts, says expert

Georgina Robinson Paul Bibby and Ben Grubb  
Published: March 16, 2011 - 12:08AM

- **Bullied? Call [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 55 1800**
- **[What you can do](#) if you see bullying**
- **Police [advice for families](#)**
- **Chifley College advice on [cyber bullying](#)**

Advertisement

THE virus-like spread of a video showing a bullying attack and retaliation in a western Sydney middle school may be glorifying and even encouraging violence in the schoolyard, a leading bullying expert has warned.

The video, watched by thousands of people on Facebook and YouTube, shows a slightly built 12-year-old student antagonising a larger 16-year-old, punching him in the face as a friend records it on his mobile phone and at least four other students watch.

Suddenly the 16-year-old grabs the other boy and throws him head-first on to the concrete. There is a cracking sound as the 12-year-old's ankle connects with a timber bench.

The school, Chifley College's Dunheved campus at St Marys North, has suspended both students and called police after seeing footage of the fight, which took place on school grounds about 10.30am on Monday.

The video became an almost instant hit on Facebook and YouTube before eventually being taken down. It is still accessible on nearly a dozen other sites.

It attracted hundreds of comments, most of which supported the bullying victim on his courage in striking back.

But an expert on bullying, Professor Kenneth Rigby of the University of South Australia, said there was a risk that, rather than acting as a warning about the dangers of bullying, the video was "allowing people to revel in a violent spectacle".

"In so far as people are gloating over what has happened it is having a bad effect," Professor Rigby said. "There's a strong case that it should be taken down. I'm also worried about the possible effect of this in terms of thinking that the only way to deal with bullying is to come down very heavily on everybody involved."

He said suspending the youth who had reacted to the bullying was the wrong course of action because it risked punishing the victim and feeding the unwillingness of victims to come forward.

"He should have gone for help - told a teacher. The problem is that about half of those who do that end up feeling that the situation has been made worse, not better. People don't tell because they're not confident that the school will do something."

It is understood the year 10 student is a victim of repeated bullying at the school.

Just one bystander steps in to stop the situation escalating. A girl stops a friend of the younger boy from going after the older boy.

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/viral-spread-of-bullying-video-may-encourage-more-acts-says-expert-20110315-1bvx1.html>*