

Violence in schools simply a reflection of our times

ONE WOULD like to think that schools are havens of safety and learning. It is a matter of great concern that pupils in South African schools experience ongoing, damaging bullying, and most cases probably go unreported.

It is also disturbing to consider that pupils at a Joburg high school have engaged in activities that leave them facing criminal charges, and that the same might happen to boys in Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal. In both cases the allegations are that they violently bullied fellow pupils.

The sad reality is that the violence evident in many schools is an alarming reflection of the level of violence in our communities. It is also a reality that many educators want to leave

the profession due to stress associated with school violence.

Pupils have to be aware that bullying not only violates and damages others, but eradicates values such as generosity and respect for the rights and safety of others.

Private sector non-profit organisations such as Girls and Boys Town can help. We have pupil and teacher training programmes designed to deal with such occurrences.

These programmes and workshops are aimed to equip educators, parents, youth and care-givers with the necessary skills to manage and effectively respond to conflict-ridden and violent situations and behaviours.

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