



Avoiding the First Week Blues

Being bullied at school was miserable for Jesse Greenslade, but launching his children's book at the Human Rights Commission's Auckland office was a great experience he says.

Chief Human Rights Commissioner David Rutherford was invited to write the foreword for *First Week Blues* the new anti-bullying fiction story for young children and their parents:

'Each of us has a human right to feel safe and to live a life free from bullying. Bullies are show-offs and like an audience, so the challenge to all of us is to be brave, to stand up to bullies and stand up for other people. By being brave and kind, anyone of us can ensure that those who are bullied or abused are supported, because they know they are not alone and what is happening is not okay.'



Illustrator Anna Evans and author Jesse Greenslade. Photo by Craig Moodie

In First Week Blues Jesse Greenslade tells a story of a time in our lives when we are most likely to be excluded because we go to a new place where we do not know anybody and feel different from others. The story reminds us that everyone has fears to overcome and sometimes need support to do so. I ask you to be brave like Blue, to keep on showing your talents, and to be kind like Pukeko.'

David Rutherford remains concerned the Ministry of Education is not collecting data about incidents of bullying in schools across New Zealand and questions how schools know if their work to stop bullying is actually working.

"There is no clear data that gives the people that need to change the situation a picture of what is going on in terms of bullying in schools," he said.

Mr Rutherford is a member of the [Bullying Prevention Advisory Group](#).

About thirty people attended the launch, including three Commissioners and the chief executives of [The Life Education Trust](#) and [Child Matters](#). The book was read out in character by the Auckland City Library purchaser Annette Piggan and colleague Beverley Buffett. The Life Education Trust is using the story in its curriculum this year and has bought 120 copies. *First Week Blues* can be bought online at (www.beyourownhero.co.nz).