Bullying is a socially and culturally complex phenomenon that until now has largely been understood in the context of the individual. This book challenges the dominance of this approach, examining the processes of extreme exclusion that are enacted in bullying – whether at school, through face-to-face meetings or virtual encounters – in the context of group dynamics. Contributors draw upon qualitative empirical studies, mixed methods and statistics to analyse the elements that allow bullying to emerge – the processes that produce exclusion and contempt, and the relations between children, teachers and parents. Introducing a new definition of bullying, the book goes on to discuss directions for future research and action, including more informed intervention strategies and re-thinking methods of prevention. Exploring bullying in the light of the latest research from a wide variety of disciplines, this book paves the way for a new paradigm through which to understand the field.

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School Bullying

New Theories in Context

Edited by
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Note on the chapters

Most of the authors who have contributed chapters to this anthology live and work in the Nordic countries (primarily Denmark and Norway), and others are from Australia, Canada and the United States. This geographical breadth means that the contributors have conducted their empirical research in a variety of countries and, as such, there are both similarities and differences amongst national school systems. To avoid confusing readers – who may come from yet other systems in other countries – the co-editors have decided to standardise certain terminology. This is not to suggest that these school systems are interchangeable or equivalent in any way, but rather, to simplify the text without distracting from the main content and analytical presentation of the chapters.

**Grade** – the different classes where lessons are taught are universally called ‘grades’ (i.e. fourth grade), and this is meant to be equivalent to Year 4, 4th class, etc. in other international school systems. In Denmark, for example, students attend the same school from 0.klasse until 9.klasse (some until 10. klasse). After that, they may choose to attend upper secondary school (gymnasium) or enrol in some other kind of youth education (ungdomsuddannelse).

Where possible, the authors have specified children’s ages instead of the level of their class/grade/year, and we hope these distinctions are clear.

**Primary school** – this refers to the school attended by younger children (generally between the ages of 6 and 12); there is no use of ‘elementary school’ or similar. Kindergartens, nursery schools and preschools are referred to as such, and typically refer to formalised, preparatory classes with children under the age of 5 or 6.

**Principal** – this refers to the senior administrator of a primary or secondary school (equivalent to headmaster, head teacher or rector); he/she is the director of the school and holds responsibility for budgets, staff, cooperation with the state/municipality,
parents and pedagogical staff. He/she is also responsible for students’ well-being, the curriculum, hiring/supervising teachers and other school staff, etc.

Secondary school – this refers to the school attended by older children (generally between the ages of 12 and 18) before they might attend university; the term comprises both lower and upper secondary school. There is no use of ‘middle school’, ‘high school’, ‘college’ or similar.

Student – preferred by the authors to ‘pupil’, the term ‘student’ refers to any child enrolled in a primary or secondary school; a distinction is made only for older students who are attending university.

Teacher – this term is used universally to designate a specially educated adult who leads children in their regular classroom lessons and activities (equivalent to a form tutor, professor, etc.).

In addition, the identities of all the informants referred to in this anthology have been made anonymous. Their names have also been anglicised, except in cases where there is a specific reason; for example, for a name to retain its ethnic character.