

## **Challenges of Learners in Schools**

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Schools are supposed to be facilities where people can gain knowledge, but it seems as if this vision has been disrupted by the issues that have plagued these places.

The majority of these issues such as substance abuse and teenage pregnancy have been problems that teens have been told about time and time again. For instance, in my school, we have had to witness people being bullied for their sexuality and how they display their individuality. From senior boys forcefully shaving off the hair of younger boys to the countless incidents of sexual harassment that go on but are not taken as seriously as they should.

This year my school has more than two students who have committed suicide. Fortunately, it has introduced therapy sessions that happen every Tuesday to help curb the damage done by these issues and give learners the appropriate guidance that they need. In South African schools, both public and private, it is estimated that most school learners have either experienced or have seen bullying.

Although bullying seems to take the cup in my school, substance abuse has also been on the rise. An example is the incident that resulted in two Grade 11 boys being suspended after being caught with a bottle of alcohol and marijuana during a school day.

I feel like my school attempts to tackle these issues by bringing in people to educate us on such issues, but the sessions are always considered a way to escape classes and what is said is never actually taken seriously. If we consider all the issues that teens face that are kept under the rug, the government does need to step up to better the experience of youth in schools.

***The articles on this page were written by learners based at the schools and Orphan and Vulnerable Children Centres that Khanya College works with in Gauteng, through the Jozi Book Fair Project. FAJ Kids is a programme the Karibu! & FAJ Project runs in conjunction with the JBF Project, to train school learners to write news stories about their community and the issues affecting them.***