

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Overview description

Bullying

Bullying is a term to describe behaviour that is intended to hurt someone, either physically or emotionally. It is often aimed at certain groups, for example, because of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation (UK GOV, 2021, NSPCC, 2021).

It's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- **Repeated**
- **Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally**
- **Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation**

Cyberbullying

The rapid explosion of new technologies has provided a new medium for bullying, in the form of cyberbullying (Long *et al*, 2020).

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming, and mobile phone (Long *et al*, 2020, NSPCC, 2021).

Key information

Any child can be bullied for any reason. The OECD TALIS survey (2018) reported that 29% of English school headteachers reported physical and non-physical forms of bullying (excluding cyberbullying) had occurred at least weekly in their school. Of this survey of 17 EU-member states, England saw the second highest proportion of school heads reporting bullying.

Bullying can take different forms including;

Physical bullying: hitting, slapping, or pushing someone.

Non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages.

Verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping, spreading rumours, revealing personal details without permission, or threatening someone.

Emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone, undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours, controlling or manipulating someone.

Exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone.

Making silent, hoax, or abusive calls.

Cyberbullying:

Posting, commenting on or liking nasty photos, videos or posts about you online.

Trolling, commenting on the individuals posts or pictures saying nasty things

Circulating images, videos, photographs of an individual with the intention to hurt, humiliate, or instigate/spread rumours.

Exclusion: defriended, removed from chat groups, ghosted.

Targeting an individual over and over in an online

The following types of bullying are also hate crime;

- Racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying.
- Bullying someone because they have a disability.

Information taken from NSPCC (2021), Childline (2021), YoungMinds (2021)

Warning signs

There is no single sign that will indicate that a child is being bullied but things to watch out for can include;

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged,
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises,
- Being afraid to go to school/college, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school, risk of emotionally based school refusal,
- Not doing as well at school/college,
- Asking for, or stealing money (to give to whoever's bullying them),
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn,
- Problems with eating or sleeping,
- Self-harming behaviour,
- Bullying others.

(Brown et al, 2011, Long et al, 2020, NSPCC, 2021)

Effects of bullying

The effects of bullying (including cyberbullying) can be long-lasting and can last into adulthood. At its worst, bullying has driven children and young people to self-harm and even suicide. Children and young people who are bullied;

- May develop mental health problems like depression and anxiety,
- Impact on their self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-image,
- Have fewer friendships,
- Aren't accepted by their peers,
- Are wary and suspicious of others,
- Have problems adjusting to school/college,
- Impact on academic achievement,
- Impact on health, wealth, and social-relationships in adulthood,
- Increase likelihood of engaging in self-harming behaviour and suicide.

(John *et al*, 2018, Moore *et al*, 2017, NSPCC, 2021, Long *et al*, 2020

Who's at risk

Any child can be bullied. All children who are affected by bullying can suffer harm – whether they are bullied, they bully others, or they witness bullying (NSPCC, 2021).

The Department for Education (DfE) used survey data from the Office for National Statistics to analyse trends over the period April 2013 – March 2018. They reported;

- An estimate that 17% of young people had been bullied during 2017-2018.
- Some groups were more likely to report being bullied, including: those with SEND, or a long-term illness, those living in the most deprived areas, those living in one-parent households, those who had truanted within the last 12 months.
- The proportion of young people reporting being bullied was higher in the younger age groups: 22% of 10-year-olds surveyed reported bullying in 2017-2018, whilst only 8% of 15-year-olds reported similar.

The DfE's 2018 analysis of data from the second longitudinal study of young people in England indicated that; - There is a gender disparity with 35% of female students reporting being bullied whilst on 26% of males reported being bullied.

Law

All schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils (The Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Proactive approaches to address bullying

Schools/colleges should not begin to combat bullying when an incident has taken place, but rather create an ethos of positive relationships, resilience, managing conflict, and restorative practice. All state-funded schools/colleges are required by law to have a behaviour policy with measures to tackle bullying among pupils. The Government does not set out a particular approach to bullying that schools should follow. The underlying principle is that schools are best placed to drive their own improvements.

A 'whole school approach', where the whole education community, including staff, governors and parents in addition to teachers and pupils, are involved in confronting bullying.

A practice of 'working with peers', where bystanders were encouraged to prevent, or respond accordingly to, bullying situations in their daily lives.

Focus on preventative practice

Research has shown that effective approaches to address bullying have;

'Hot spot supervision', where school leaders had identified locations where bullying occurs frequently, and increased teacher presence in these areas, keeping anti-bullying high profile

An ability to report privately and in non-classroom setting, because many victims felt uncomfortable about publicly disclosing their experiences, and much bullying has moved online.

A rapid response to bullying incidents.

(CooperGibson, 2018, Gaffney *et al*, 2019)

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

From September 2020 all schools (Independent school must meet the Independent School Standards) must teach relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health education.

In regards to bullying, by the end of **primary school pupils** should know;

- about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help.
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous.

In addition, by the end of secondary school, pupils should know;

- Their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online, including that the same expectations of behaviour apply in all contexts, including online.
- About online risks, including that any material someone provides to another has the potential to be shared online and the difficulty of removing potentially compromising material placed online.
- That sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is a criminal offence which carries severe penalties including jail.

What can be done when Bullying occurs?

Support children and young people who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the degree of need

At a **classroom level**;

- Immediate action, to reassure pupil of being believed as well as sending the message that bullying won't be tolerated;
- Avoid discussing the incident in front of other students, bullying involves a power imbalance and mediation will not work, it is also stressful for the victim;
- Adult presence in bullying hotspots,
- Buddies and fostering friendships, to build social support,
- Sign-posting to resources that may help the recovery process (websites, charities, even Child and Adolescent Mental Health services).
- Monitor the situation, don't assume that the bullying has stopped just because the school intervened.

Revisiting bullying at a **whole class**, and even **whole school** level, after an incident. Those that witness bullying are also affected by bullying. Bystanders may experience uncertainty, fear, anxiety, guilt, and avoidance. Reminding pupils of what they could and should do in a bullying situation can help empower bystanders and reinforce inclusion.

Support for the individual who is bullying needs. Those that bully are likely to have their own social difficulties or underlying reasons for why they are bullying others. Sanctions without exploration about the underlying reasons behind the behaviour are likely to be ineffective in preventing the behaviour from occurring again.

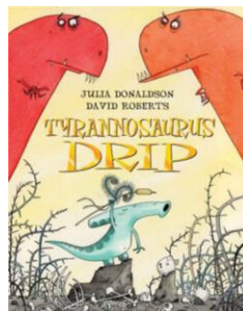
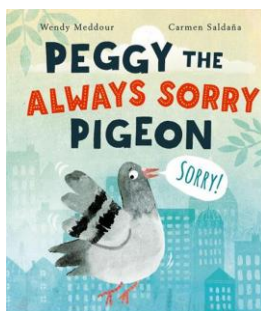
If online material is upsetting or inappropriate, the offending individual may take it down voluntarily, or the social media networking site may be contacted directly to request that the content be taken down, if it is in breach of their terms and conditions and can therefore be removed. In the case material is suspected to constitute an offence, the police should be contacted directly and a record made.

Top
Tips!

For Early
Years

- Support children's tolerance of others and empathy building through age-appropriate PSED activities that encourage teamwork and collaboration.
- Create an 'acts of kindness' jar for children to access and carry out with their peers.
- Take time to build mutual respect between children and an understanding of each other's unique skills. During circle times, go around the circle and ask children to tell you something the person next to them is great at – model this between staff

Books to spark discussion:



Anti-bullying organisations that could support schools/colleges

The UK government funded four anti-bullying organisations to work with schools/colleges to combat and prevent different forms of bullying; the Anti-bullying Alliance 'All together' programme: reducing bullying of SEND pupils; Anne Frank Trust's 'Free to be' programme: tackling prejudice, discrimination, and bullying; the Diana Award's 'Peer to Peer anti-bullying ambassadors' programme; and the Internet Matters project's 'Make a Noise' programme: supporting the reporting of bullying to schools via the 'tootoot' app.

Post-16

Top
Tips!

Unfortunately bullying and cyberbullying continues within post-16 settings with studies suggesting that over 23% of students reporting bullying within their college setting. Therefore, it is still important to consider universal and curriculum practices that raises awareness and supports students to understand what bullying is, how to have healthy relationships and how to seek support when needed.

It may be helpful to consider the following:

- October is the National Bullying Prevention Month – can students organise and be part of events across October to promote healthy relationships, raise awareness of the types of bullying, identify how to seek help and consider what helps in your post-16 setting.
- How do your tutor sessions or curriculum sessions support students to understand and deal with any type of bullying? How are you preparing them to manage and respond to situations within their future work place?
- How are you supporting students to be safe online or when using technology? How can you support students to use technology safely and appropriately for their future work setting?

Mental Healthy Schools have written a guidance on preventing and supporting bullying in post-16 settings: <https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/safe-from-bullying-in-further-education-colleges/>

Useful Resources

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/

www.kidscape.org.uk/

www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/

www.saferinternet.org.uk/

www.bullying.co.uk/bullying-at-school/

www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/bullying/#get-help-for-bullying

www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk

References

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Moore, S., Norman, R., Suetani, S., Thomas, H., Sly, P., & Scott, J. (2018). *Consequences of bullying victimization in childhood and adolescence: A systematic review and meta-analysis*. World Journal of Psychoatry. 7 (1) 60 – 76.

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The Education and Inspections Act 2006, available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

Manchester Directory –
Bullying:

<https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/advice.page?id=rQ1H7ViN11M>

Manchester Safeguarding
Partnership –

Online Safety:

<https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/resource/online-safety-advice-parents-carers/>