

Bullying Fact Sheet

What is Bullying?

What constitutes bullying is different from person to person. What may be considered completely reasonable behaviour for some groups or individuals may appear to others as aggressive, threatening and callous. What we can say for sure is that bullying is about relationships between people often where one person wishes to exert power over another. So for there to be bullying there needs to be an aggressor and a target and something at stake.

Why bully?

Research indicates that most people adopt bullying behaviour because they:

- lack communication skills
- desire power
- want to feel better about themselves
- desire self-aggrandisement
- are vindictive by nature
- over-value compliance, control and hierarchy
- distrust other people

Well-adjusted people gain a sense of personal satisfaction through their achievements and progress towards goals. For bullies however it is by bullying others that gives them their sense of self-esteem.

Who are the targets of bullying?

Why are some people bullied and others not?

What is it that marks someone out as a potential target?

There is no 'typical' target, just as there is no 'typical' bully. Targets are selected for varying reasons which may include emotional signs of weakness such as shyness, anxiety or insecurity. They may also be chosen because of their academic or sporting prowess resulting in jealousy on the part of the bully, or high achievement in other areas such as music or drama.

At the most basic level, a target may be selected because of a physical difference such as weight or size, race, disability or other 'differences'.

What to do?

Key points:

- never ignore suspected bullying
- don't make premature assumptions
- listen carefully to all accounts - several pupils saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth
- adopt a problem-solving approach, which moves pupils from justifying themselves
- follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed

Prevention:

- ask for a copy of your school's anti-bullying policy and know their procedures
- make sure all pupils in your class know what bullying is and why it is unacceptable behaviour
- have a clear range of sanctions on display and make sure you apply them consistently

- Encourage a whole school approach through assemblies
- anti-bullying in the curriculum, PSHE is an obvious starting point but there it could be worked into English (creative writing) or even Maths (surveys) - just make sure the message is consistent: Bullying is unacceptable and bystanders who don't help positively are as culpable as the bully

Intervention:

- find out if there is any background of bullying in either case (speak to colleagues, check school records etc.)
- keep your line-manager informed of all serious incidences of bullying
- if incidences of bullying come to your attention make sure you get all the facts from both sides
- provide the target of bullying with a safe, bully-free space (this might include keeping the bully in during break times or after school)
- enlist the help of trusted helpers - for example teaching assistants or senior students to work with both the bully and the victim

Stronger intervention:

- making assertive statements
- resisting manipulation and threats
- dealing with name calling
- escaping safely from physical restraint
- enlisting support from bystanders
- boosting self-esteem
- remaining calm in stressful situations

Sanctions against bullies:

- removal from the group (in class)
- withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- detention
- withholding participation in any school trip or sports event that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- fixed period exclusion
- permanent exclusion

Further information and help,
Protocol Education's charity of the year
Kidscape provide training and support for
victims of bullying and education professionals.
Visit their website www.kidscape.org.uk
for more information and to download
the booklet 'Advice for Teachers'

