

Information Booklet for Schools



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Effects of Bullying on Individuals

<p>Physical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical ill health (Rigby 1999) • Physical injury (Olweus & Limber 2000) • Aggression/Violence (Olweus 1994) • Damage to personal belongings or loss of property
<p>Social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of confidence • Loneliness (Hawker & Boulton, 2000) • Low self esteem (Ross 1996) • Social isolation (Rigby 1996) • Social anxiety (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).
<p>Psychological</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear (Olweus 1993) • Generalized anxiety (Rigby 1996) • Anger (Rigby 1996)(Borg 1998) • Depression (strong predictor of peer victimisation (James, 2003) • Suicidal thoughts or behaviour (James 2003)

Indicators which may suggest a pupil is being bullied

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruising, cuts etc.
- Loss of/ damage to personal property
- Hunger or thirst
- Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy
- Bedwetting
- Loss of appetite
- Obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight
- Stammering
- Requests for extra money

Emotional/ Psychological Indicators

- Outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home
- Bullying brother and sisters, parents
- Well behaved child suddenly troublesome

Signs of depression

- Changes in: mood, appetite, sleep pattern
- Tiredness, neglect of appearance
- Expressions of sadness, worthlessness
- Nightmares, crying at night
- Restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour
- Cynicism, black mood
- Implied or overt threats of suicide

School Related Indicators

- Reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied
- Returning in bad form
- Changing route
- Avoiding certain days/lessons
- Nervousness in class
- Punctuality problems
- Poor concentration
- Deterioration in school work
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Fewer phone calls, friends calling, invitations
- Reluctance to take part in activities
- Abusive phone calls, texts, email

Types and frequency of Bullying

Types of bullying experienced by primary school pupils

Type of behaviour	Girls	Boys
I was called names	58%	58%
I was called names about my race, colour or background	7%	9%
I was physically hurt (i.e hit or kicked)	15%	32%
I was threatened	13%	23%
I had my belongings taken or stolen	10%	9%
I had rumours spread about me	25%	21%
No one would talk to me	22%	8%

O Moore et al (1997)

Percentages of children bullied in schools

O'Moore et al 1997

Frequency of bullying	Primary schools		Post-Primary schools	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Once or twice	15.8	21.0	8.4	14.7
Sometimes	6.8	9.9	2.1	4.3
Once a week or more	3.2	5.10	1.0	3.4
Total by gender	25.8	36.0	11.5	22.4
Total bullied	Primary 30%		Post-primary 16%	

SEXUAL ORIENTATION – ADVICE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

GENERAL POINTS

- Schools can foster a culture that is accepting of difference. This can be expressed where appropriate, rather than making the assumption that everyone understands it.
- An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is sexual orientation. The Acts oblige those who manage schools to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.
- If children are using the word ‘gay’ in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.
- Schools are advised to develop a strategy for responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This should be done in the context of the school’s ethos and RSE policy and with the awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word ‘gay’
- A school could decide on a response to this question, such as ‘The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.’
- To give factual information like this in an open and straightforward way may help to remove the secrecy which is necessary for any bullying to flourish.
- Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.
- Schools promote a culture of communication which actively discourages abusive name calling

**Table A: Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate
(DES Anti-Bullying Procedures 2013)**

Area of Focus	Y/N Comment
The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.	
The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.	
The school promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.	
The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.	
The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.	
The school has the capacity to change in response to pupil's needs.	
The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.	
The school takes particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.	
The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.	
The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.	
The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.	
The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities	
The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school	
Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community	

Sample Action Plan to promote a positive school culture and climate

Target: To develop practices to ensure a positive school culture and climate is prioritised across the school

Appendix 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures has been referenced to develop our Action Plan

Tasks: What steps do we need to take	Who will do it?	When will it be done by?	Complete Ongoing Deferred
As a staff we will model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times	All staff		Ongoing
We will explicitly teach pupils at all class levels what respectful language and behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school	All staff		Ongoing
We will engage in CPD events in relation to Anti-Bullying and also set aside planning time as a staff for this area	All staff	June 2014 and ongoing	
We will agree key respect messages and display them in classrooms, assembly areas and around the school, The pupils will be involved in the development of these messages and they will be cross referenced with the Code of Behaviour	Staff representatives per class level		Ongoing
We will consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school- this includes homophobic and racist language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN	All Staff		Ongoing

Advice in relation to Record Keeping

- The school should keep records.
- Records of bullying behaviour may be more secure if filed separately from a student's general file

Retention of Records

- litigation in relation to a school's duty of care may be initiated some years after a student has left the school
- In the case of very serious incidents schools might be best advised not to put an end date on the storage of data.

(Dublin Cool School Pilot Project 2009)

List of references to research on Bullying

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