

**A Helping Hand from Unique Voice  
Summary of the DfE Guidelines on  
'Preventing and Tackling Bullying'**

# Introduction

**This document is aimed at teachers and other professionals looking for support with bullying prevention, resolution and guidance.**

From our past and current experiences working with young people, we have gained an in-depth knowledge of bullying and the vast amount of challenging surrounding issues.

Our suggestions and advice are based on our own good practice, which has been tried and tested with positive results.

The Department of Education first published their 'Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' booklet in 2013 and it was updated in 2014.

All of the relevant information has been taken directly from the DfE's document, the correlating advice given by Unique Voice is drawn from working with over 20,000 young people to tackle bullying.

Key-

GREY BOX SECTIONS - Represents information that is directly taken from the 'Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, October 2014' document.

**PURPLE BOX SECTIONS - Tips, Advice and Suggestions from Unique Voice.**

# What is Bullying?

## SO WHAT IS BULLYING?

It may seem like an obvious question, but it is an important basis to return to time and time again, as inevitably the world is constantly changing and evolving. Importantly we specify that bullying is something that is repeated and is intentionally meant to cause hurt or upset.

**“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”**

There are of course the many different forms that bullying can take.

- Physical
- Emotional
- Verbal
- Cyber

Often someone will be targeted due to prejudice of some form;

“Race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.”

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school’s first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

There could be many different reasons someone shows bullying behaviour, and indeed many reasons someone would witness bullying and keep it to themselves. We believe it is incredibly important to:

- **EMPOWER** children to believe they can overcome any obstacle when it comes to bullying.
- **TALK** openly about recognising how bullying applies to the victim, the bystander and the person showing bullying behaviour themselves.
- **ENSURE** young people know that whichever ‘role’ they fall into, whether that be the bystander, the victim or the one showing bullying behaviour, they can change it. They do not need to be that person for any continuing amount of time and they do not need to be labeled as that person for the rest of their time at your school.

# The Law



This section highlights important links between bullying prevention guidance and the law. Within school policies and teacher training we highly recommend that the Law is clearly outlined and understood, it can have hugely positive implications on reporting and resolving bullying.

Additionally the below quotes on the law can eradicate confusion between what should and should not be communicated to the police.

We all have a duty of care to safeguard children, but bullying can often be overlooked as a case of child protection.

*(Information below extracted from the 'Department for Education 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' document.)*

## The Equality Act 2010

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## Child Protection

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'. - Children Act 1989

Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## Criminal Law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour - or communications - could be a criminal offence,

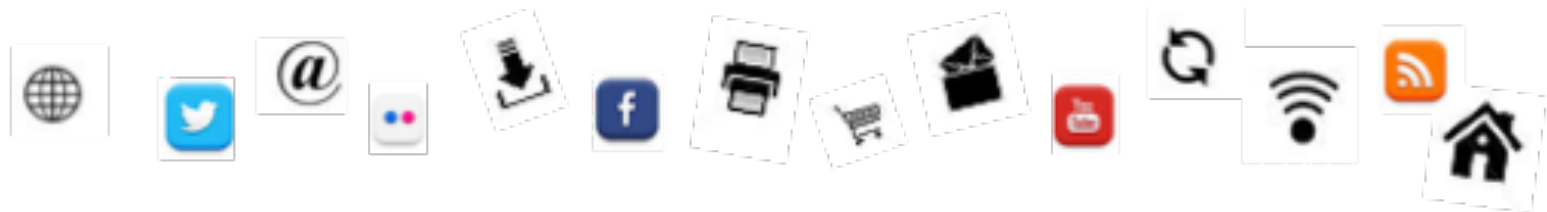
*e.g. under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.*

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

*e.g. under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.*

The above quote on the Children Act 1989 is extremely important to include in any staff training or policies.

# Cyber Bullying and E-Safety



**It is necessary to have an E-Safety policy AND a bullying policy, however we feel it is important to stress that these need to overlap and go hand in hand.**

Cyber bullying is rife in and out of school - technology is always evolving, and more often than not young people are leaps and bounds ahead of us with knowledge and understanding. It is not only a poignant issue for your E-Safety policy, but also MUST be addressed in anti-bullying.

Teachers are hugely important in the fight against cyber bullying and must be informed that since 2011 they were granted more power over young people's electronic device.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available - see below for a link to this document. For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International link under 'further resources'.

**TIP: HOST FOCUS GROUPS TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO TELL TEACHERS WHAT APPS ARE TRENDING AND WHAT SITES THEY ARE USING.**

Be cautious not to become too fixated on the websites. Last year there was a national call for 'ask.fm' to be closed and whilst devastating experiences would support this action, it's important to not become fixated on these actions as solving the cause. Websites of a similar nature will always be presented and reinvented to young people and energy could be better channeled in to improving resilience and confidence to behave responsibly online.

# Bullying Outside the School

Although we all work hard to prevent bullying within our settings, there are inevitably times when children need a extra protection out of the school grounds.



*(Information below extracted from the 'Department for Education 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' document.)*

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". 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.

The main point outlined within this section of the DfE Guidelines are,

- ✓ Schools are responsible to care for their students even when they are not on school property.
- ✓ If a child is being bullied within school it is highly likely that this is continuing elsewhere.
- ✓ Bullying is increasingly prevalent online, through phones and computers, tablets, games - which means location is no obstacle.
- ✓ Even though a bullying issue may be resolved within school, their emotional damage is likely to continue, so that child needs the support of whoever is at home.
- ✓ Parents may have an insight, or the missing pieces of a puzzle to an incident that has taken place.
- ✓ Siblings can play a huge part in preventing or reporting bullying, particularly if they are also at the school.
- ✓ Family issues within the community can provoke bullying, so ensuring a strong connection between school and family can ensure that any problems can be shared.

*Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head-teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.*

Two main points to remember are:

## **LOCATION**

We must recognise that whatever location bullying takes place, the adults in that children's life must continue to support them with a high level of care.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This is a perfect point to discuss the importance of the links between parents/ carers and your school. For a number of reasons it needs to be a priority for school policies to include communication with children's family.

# DfE Define How to Tackle Bullying

## Dealing with bullying

- Have policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour which are clear to parents, pupils and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly.
- If your school define bullying for the purposes of its own behaviour policy, it should be clearly communicated and understood by pupils, parents, and staff.
- Create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.
- School staff, headteachers and governors are best placed to decide how best to respond to the particular issues that affect their pupils.
- There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all schools.

## Prevention

- Response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied.
- Develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.
- Talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies.
- Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.
- Created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave.
- Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

## Intervention

- Apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.
- Develop your own approaches to different issues which might motivate bullying and conflict.

**TALK  
OPENLY &  
HONESTLY**

**LISTEN  
TO YOUNG  
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**CHANGE  
THE  
CULTURE**

# Student Input

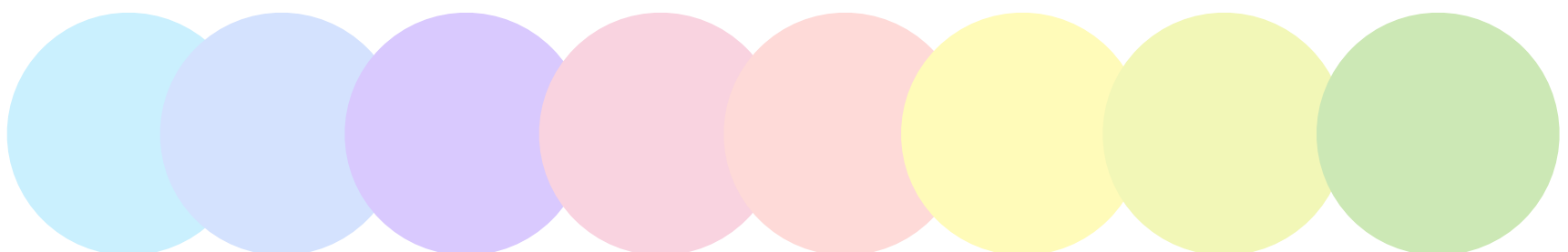
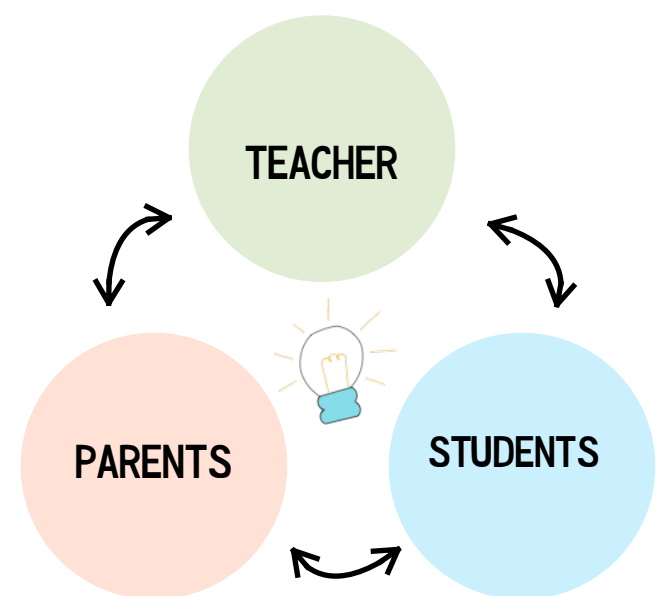


- Involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.

We believe that by having teachers, parents and the students working together to combat bullying can result in the most positive, and successful schools. When the students themselves are involved in solving problems it empowers them and helps them to stand by the school policies.

The children themselves are the only one who can truly tell us what the problems they are experiencing are. It is crucial that we listen to them as individuals, rather than presuming what the problem are that they are experiencing. We have found that by running engaging focus groups with a large variety of children, from many different social groups is a great way to find out the most prominent issues. Working out solutions with those same children is hugely important and highly interesting, as children can come up with really innovative ideas that wouldn't occur to an adult.

We have found that some of the most successful work has involved students who are at risk or demonstrating bullying behaviour. The 'act' of driving informative messages has been a proven method in enabling self reflection on previous actions.





# DfE Defining Successful Schools

In addition to providing information on what MUST be cover in regards to your schools legal responsibility, the DfE Guidelines also includes what measures successful school take.

Below are highlights taken from the successful school section.

- ★ Involve parents, students and teachers to help the whole school community feel empowered to eradicate bullying
- ★ Regularly update, refresh and revisit policies to ensure all intervention and preventions methods are appropriate and current.
- ★ Implement reprimands and sanctions to show the severity of bullying.
- ★ Have an open dialogue about peoples differences such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Reinforcing that prejudices in your school are unacceptable.
- ★ Provide staff with ongoing, thorough training.
- ★ Work with multiple agencies to enhance signposting and effective resolutions to bullying incidents.
- ★ Formulate effective and sensitive methods for reporting bullying.
- ★ Celebrate uniqueness, success and show pride for your school.

## School's accountability

Pupils will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. The revised Ofsted framework which came into force in January 2012 includes 'behaviour and safety' as one of its key criteria for inspections. **Schools should be able to demonstrate the impact of anti-bullying policies.**

Please feel free to contact us if you require more information on how Unique Voice can help your setting tackle bullying.

We follow these guidelines and school policy meticulously, aiming for your students to have the best possible school experience and for your school to receive a high Ofsted rating.