Preventing bullying behaviour

Taking steps to prevent bullying and challenging unacceptable behaviour when it does occur improves the confidence and wellbeing of all children and young people; it also provides guidelines and controls for those whose behaviour is a concern.

One of the key measures to prevent bullying behaviour is an anti-bullying policy that is understood and adhered to by staff, volunteers, parents and guardians (where applicable) and children and young people.

Your Anti-Bullying Policy

All organisations that provide a service to children and young people should have policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour which are clear to everyone so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly.

Schools must, by law, have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils because it:

- improves the safety, happiness, performance and attendance of pupils
- shows the school cares, and makes it clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

A school that does not have an effective anti-bullying policy that incorporates consequences for bullying behaviour may receive an 'inadequate' in their Ofsted inspection.

An effective anti-bullying policy acts on two levels:

1. Preventative.

2. Reactive (challenges and stops any incidents of bullying).

1. Preventative

- Raises awareness.
- Publicly acknowledges.
- Creates and supports a culture of care and consideration.

2. Reactive (challenges and stops any incidents of bullying)

- Sets out clear procedures.
- Ensures all members of the organisation and its communities are aware of the procedures involved.
- Has built-in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the policy is consistently applied.

EduCare®

Steps to help you develop a new policy or revise an existing one.

1. Assign the role to a senior member of staff

2. Assess your organisation's needs and goals

3. Develop the anti-bullying policy and get feedback

1. Assign the role

Ensure a named member of staff has responsibility for co-ordinating the work towards producing the policy. Ideally this should be a senior member of staff that has an ongoing role as the anti-bullying lead. You may also want to appoint a member of the board to lead on anti-bullying.

2. Assess your organisation's needs and goals

Consult regularly to measure levels of bullying behaviour, how safe people feel in your community, and whether there is further action you can take. You may want to develop different questionnaires for different stakeholders, hold focus groups or encourage anonymous feedback. Query potential trouble spots and times (eg at the beginning or end of the day or after your setting's activities), as well as the recipients' suggestions of what would work to prevent it occurring.

The completed questionnaires should provide a clear analysis of what needs to happen in your organisation. The issues highlighted and potential solutions should be used to inform the content and construction of the policy, as well as its overall goals.

3. Develop the anti-bullying policy and get feedback

The anti-bullying co-ordinator should put together a team of people that represent the interests of the whole organisation. In order to have the greatest chance of success, children and young people must play a leading role in developing the policy to ensure they feel ownership of it. Use the team to review the current policy or the one you have developed using the questionnaires and ensure the whole organisation has input and an opportunity to offer their perspective. Amend your existing policy or the draft of a new one taking all the feedback into account.

EduCare®

Practical suggestions

- Re-phrase negative instructions in positive terms (ie avoid using 'don't').
- Ensure current advice on cyberbullying is included
- Reference bullying outside of premises and hours
- Re-evaluate your record-keeping procedures and remember to choose a format that can be used by the whole organisation.
- Look at strategies that are currently in place to empower children; for example, peer group mentoring, buddy schemes etc.
- Make it easy for children to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Children should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside your setting, including cyber-bullying.
- Consider any training required.
- Identify potential problem areas around the building, eg changing rooms, toilets, bike sheds, stairwells and arrange close monitoring of these areas.
- Consider positive changes that can be made, eg staff training, more and better supervision, re-organisation of activities so that they are staggered.
- Set up a whole organisation project to launch the policy eg develop events and activities around the annual Anti-Bullying Week in November; create a *"kindness week".*
- Review your policy and procedures for dealing with complaints against staff.

Aims to achieve

- State the immediate and longer term aims and objectives of the policy, along with agreed review processes.
- Make sure there is a clear and agreed definition of bullying that is accessible to all regardless of development stage or age, giving examples that are relevant to your organisation.
- Make a clear statement that the policy applies to the whole organisation.
- Provide a clear and detailed guide on how bullying will be dealt with by your organisation. Ensure that rewards and sanctions are properly understood by everyone in the organisation and as part of this, state clearly that *"bystander apathy"* is totally unacceptable and will be sanctioned accordingly.
- Develop strategies to encourage children and young people (and other stakeholders) to report incidents of bullying.
- Develop and agree a consistent way of dealing with complaints without the necessity of making the vulnerable target confront the bullies.
- Find ways of disseminating information to relevant staff without breaching the trust/confidentiality of the person who has been bullied.
- Ensure that children are fully involved in the implementation, operation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

EduCare®

Provide training and support for all staff

An anti-bullying policy will only be effective if all staff and volunteers receive adequate training to enable them to apply it fairly, consistently and responsibly. This should be in the form of initial training when the policy is launched with top up training at regular intervals to take account of ongoing cycles of evaluation and review. When new members join the organisation, full training on the use of the policy must be a key feature of their induction.

Your individual responsibilities

As an individual there is a lot you can do to contribute to the development of a caring, respectful ethos in your organisation.

- Supervise carefully.
- Help children to become more assertive.
- Be an effective role model.

EduCare®

Supervise carefully

Whenever you are working with children and young people you are on duty and are fully responsible for supervising them. This means being aware, noticing children's behaviour and walking around – bullying is far more likely to occur in secluded places where staff don't generally go.

As you supervise, ask yourself if there are:

- children who are alone
- children who seem to be at the centre of a group of others
- children who seem upset or distressed.

Also listen to how the children interact with each other.

- Are they respectful to one another?
- Are they teasing in a way that may be hurtful?
- Are there physical games that children may have been coerced into joining?

If you do see or hear anything that causes you concern, intervene immediately and ask questions to satisfy yourself that it is not bullying. If you are still concerned, tell them why and that you will be taking further advice and may need to report it as a bullying incident. Speak privately to the child or children who may be being bullied and ask them about the situation.

If they reassure you they are not being bullied, maintain a watchful eye on them. If they disclose that they are being bullied, report the situation immediately according to the procedures in your organisation's policy.

Help children to be more assertive

Help children to acquire the confidence and assertiveness skills that will protect them from bullying behaviour. Confident children are less likely to tolerate bullying and more likely to have the courage and inner-strength to respond effectively. Children who are assertive know how to respond to a bully in effective, non-aggressive ways, they are less likely to be targeted by bullies in the first place, and they are also less likely to bully others to get their way.

EduCare®

Be an effective role model

Children learn how to behave by watching and emulating the adults in their lives. Reflect on how you solve problems, discipline, control your own anger and disappointment, and stand up for yourself and others without fighting. If children observe you acting or talking aggressively, they are more likely to show aggression towards others.

The following content will help **broaden and deepen** your knowledge of bullying and strategies that will help to prevent it.

EduCare®

Cyberbullying

Symantec have produced a very useful [Family Online Safety Guide](#)

Try [Childnet International](#) and get children to follow the SMART rules.

[thinkyouknow.co.uk](#) has some straight-talking advice on many aspects of online safety.

The [Internet Watch Foundation](#) will accept reports of abusive websites, particularly child pornography. They also discuss the pros and cons of a number of content filtering packages.

There is also the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre](#) (CEOP) which contains advice and tips to help you, as well as letting you report online abuse.

[Kidscape](#)

Research

Review reports of what works in preventing homophobic, [biphobic and transphobic bullying](#) among school-age children and young people.

EduCare®

Bullying in schools

The Department for Education has produced Preventing and tackling bullying - [advice for head teachers](#), staff and governing bodies (October 2014). It outlines the government's approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools have to tackle bullying, and the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools.

[Ofsted survey report identifying strategies that have helped schools prevent and tackle bullying](#)

[School support for children and young people who are bullied](#)

[Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools – cyberbullying guidance from Childnet](#)

[Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff](#)