Safeguarding Training Centre from The Key

Bullying, including cyberbullying: information for staff

⊘ Issue

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

It can include cyberbullying (via text messages, social media or gaming) and can be motivated by prejudice against particular groups. Bullying can severely impact pupils and have serious consequences for their mental health. It can also create barriers to learning.

☑ What to do

- If you think a pupil is suffering or at risk of significant harm, you should treat bullying incidents as child protection concerns. You should discuss any concerns with your designated safeguarding lead, who will report these to your local authority's children's social care team where appropriate
- If it is not a child protection issue, you should still consider whether the pupils involved in the incident need any extra support
- Make sure you understand you school's policies on bullying, including cyberbullying. These policies should cover the acceptable use of technologies
- Robustly tackle all poor behaviour, including low-level disruption and use of offensive language. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable, and can stop negative behaviour from escalating
- Teach pupils about how to stay safe online and what to do if they are being bullied

🗏 Context and prevalence

A 2017 survey of over 10,000 young people aged 12-20 found that 54% has been bullied at some point, with 27% experiencing bullying at least once a month.

Of those bullied in the last year, 50% thought it was due to attitudes towards their appearance, while 40% attributed it to attitudes towards their interests or hobbies.

Verbal abuse was the most common forms of bullying.

37% didn't tell anyone about the bullying.

[Insert local procedures here]

🔍 What to look for

Pupils may:
- Start truanting or seem reluctant to attend school or go home
- Show signs of distress, for example, being withdrawn, aggressive, or lacking in confidence
- Change their friendship groups
- Perform poorly in school without a reason
- Make changes to try and fit in; for example, by changing their appearance
- Self-harm
- Display nervous or secretive behaviour when using their mobile phone or a computer

Due to the attitudes young people may have towards those who are different to themselves, pupils are more likely to experience bullying if they:
- Have special educational needs or disabilities
- Are adopted or in care
- Suffer from a health problem
- Have caring responsibilities

⇨ Where to go next

- [For schools and teachers, Anti-bullying Alliance](https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/schools-and-teachers)
  https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/schools-and-teachers

- [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff, GOV.UK – DfE (Adobe pdf file)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf)
  https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

Questions for staff

- When would you refer a concern about bullying to your DSL?
- Which children are particularly vulnerable to bullying? How can we proactively support these pupils?
- What does our school policy say about bullying and cyberbullying?
- How could we improve our response to bullying as a school?
- In what ways do you teach pupils about bullying through curricular and non-curricular activities?

Sources

- [Preventing and tackling bullying, GOV.UK – DfE (Adobe pdf file)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)
  https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

- [Bullying: evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2, wave 2, GOV.UK – DfE (Adobe pdf file)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570241/Bullying_evidence_from_the_longitudinal_study_of_young_people_in_England_2__wave_2_brief.pdf)
  https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570241/Bullying_evidence_from_the_longitudinal_study_of_young_people_in_England_2__wave_2_brief.pdf

- [The annual bullying survey 2017, Ditch The Label (Adobe pdf)](https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf)
  https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf