



BULLYING

Reviewed January 2011

1.1 Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical (for example, hitting, kicking, theft);
- verbal (for example, racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling); and
- emotional (for example, isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

1.2 The damage inflicted by bullying (including bullying via the internet) can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies.

1.3 Since 1999 schools have been under a legal duty to put measures in place to promote good behaviour, respect for others and to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. In practice schools need to draw up an anti-bullying policy linked to the behaviour policy.

1.4 In cases of sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying schools must always consider whether safeguarding processes need to be followed. This is because of the potential seriousness of violence (including sexual violence) that these forms of bullying characterise through inappropriate sexual behaviour. It is important for schools to consider whether to apply safeguarding procedures both to young people being bullied and to perpetrators. Young people being bullied may need to be protected from the child or young person engaging in bullying behaviour using safeguarding processes. If a young person is engaging in these behaviours this may be an indication that they are acting out the prejudices they see, to fit in. It could also be an indication that the young person could be experiencing abuse at home and therefore require some form of safeguarding intervention²⁴⁹.

1.5 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has produced a comprehensive suite of guidance for schools under the title *Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools*. This includes overarching guidance and specialist materials on cyberbullying, homophobic bullying (launched in 2007) which links to existing guidance on bullying around race, religion and culture (2006)²⁵⁰. Materials on bullying, preventing and tackling the cyberbullying of teachers, and bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities were launched in April and May 2008 respectively.

1.6 In addition the *Safe from Bullying* suite of guidance documents on tackling bullying outside of schools was published in April 2009. This includes guidance for practitioners in several target settings, such as children's homes and journeys to and from schools; it also includes a guide for local authorities and a set of training resources for staff.

1.7 New *Guidance for schools on preventing and tackling sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying*²⁵¹ was published in December 2009, following the DVD resource pack on bullying related to SEN and disabilities²⁵² launched in September 2009.

1.8 The DCSF provides support and challenge to local authorities and schools on bullying issues through a universal programme of support provided by the National Strategies and a more targeted programme provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance provides support also to local areas to tackle bullying in their communities. Ofsted has a challenge role with schools in looking at how children and young people are being kept safe from bullying as part of their inspections and canvass views direct from parents and children and young people as part of this process. If weaknesses are identified these will be flagged up in the Ofsted report.

1.9 The LSCB, Children's Trust partners and all organisations involved with providing services to children are required to share information and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who should also be consulted on issues that affect them as individuals and collectively. Children's Trust partners should consider tackling bullying as part of their wider role in safeguarding children and young people. The role of Government Offices is to support and challenge on how local authorities and their partners are delivering improved outcomes in respect of keeping children and young people safe from bullying.

249 For more detailed guidance please see Chapter 2 of the document, 'The law, policy and guidance for schools' and the tackling school bullying guidance at:
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00668-2007>

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