

Preventing Bullying Behaviour Module Four

THE
STOP CAMPAIGN

PREVENTING AND TACKLING **BULLYING** IN DERBYSHIRE



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Introduction

Welcome to module 4 of your programme on preventing bullying behaviour. In the last module we looked at your personal responsibility to protect children from bullying. In this module we focus on what organisations should do to prevent bullying and deal with it when it happens.

Developing the right ethos

It's important that organisations should be realistic and acknowledge that bullying happens. At the same time, they should be clear that it is never acceptable and regularly convey strong anti-bullying messages.

In previous modules we have referred to the importance of creating an environment in which staff supervise young people appropriately, are someone to turn to and know what to do when bullying happens. These all contribute to an ethos in which bullying is less likely to happen and, if it does, will be noticed and responded to appropriately and effectively.

In schools and children's homes it is important that bullying is also addressed as part of the curriculum or key carer sessions.

Anti-bullying policy

All organisations that work with children and young people should have an anti-bullying policy. If your organisation does not have one, ask for one to be developed. Schools are required by law to have a policy.

Staff, parents and young people should actively participate in the development of the anti-bullying policy.

The policy should:

- state that children have a right to be safe and that the organisation does not accept bullying behaviour from anyone
- define bullying, with examples of the different types of bullying in the context of the organisation's work with children
- specifically refer to bullying that relates to ethnicity, religion, culture, homophobia and disability - there is strong evidence that naming these forms of bullying makes the most vulnerable children feel safer
- identify the responsibilities of children, their parents, and the adults working for the organisation - particularly their responsibility for reporting all bullying

- outline the strategies the organisation uses to prevent bullying, and its procedures for intervention and protection when bullying
- state how parents can raise concerns
- outline arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

Schools and children's homes should refer to their legal responsibilities for dealing with bullying, including their authority for taking action when the bullying takes place outside of school.

Making the policy live

- In induction and staff training, ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and what to do.
- Let everyone know the organisation's position on bullying, who children can talk to if they are being bullied (within the organisation and externally - eg, support agencies and helplines), and that telling an adult is the most effective way of stopping bullying.
- Use posters throughout the organisation, especially in areas where children feel vulnerable (eg, toilets and changing rooms) - these are particularly powerful when designed by children.
- Distribute anti-bullying booklets produced by voluntary organisations or local authorities and refer to your organisation's approach to bullying in newsletters and handbooks.
- Develop strategies to help children tell someone when they or someone they know is being bullied - eg, anonymous reporting via text messaging, an email hotline or bully box, peer support, ChildLine posters.
- Encourage parents to contact your organisation if they suspect their child or another child is being bullied, or if their child is bullying another.
- Mark Anti-Bullying Week and similar campaigns in other parts of the UK with events.
- Regularly carry out anonymous surveys to find out how safe children feel and identify areas or situations where they do not feel safe.
- Survey the views of staff and parents regularly.
- Have high expectations of children's behaviour with clear boundaries, so they know their responsibilities and understand the consequences if they act inappropriately. Wherever possible, involve children in developing these rules.
- Supervise children effectively, taking account of the times and places children feel most vulnerable in your setting.
- Plan support for new children so that fitting in is not left to chance. Be aware of the children who may be particularly vulnerable.

- Give children responsibility for caring for and supporting others - eg, peer support or befriender groups, circle of friends.

Responding to bullying incidents

Incidents must be taken seriously, looked into and dealt with.

The immediate priority is to support the child who has been bullied and help them feel safe - listen to them and let them know something will be done. Tell them who will be looking into the incident and whom they can talk to if they continue to be concerned.

Give them feedback about what is being done and let them know that people are looking out for them. Briefing other staff in the organisation can help with this, as can support from other children.

Recognise that the bully needs support to help them change their behaviour. They need to understand that it is their behaviour that is not acceptable, not them as individuals.

Organisations should consider whether it is necessary to impose sanctions, recognising that the sanctions need to be measured and appropriate to the incident. Sanctions alone will not change behaviour.

In module 3 we looked at assessing the seriousness of the bullying. Here, in more detail, we will consider appropriate responses.

Low level

This should be handled quickly and sensitively without making too much of the incident. An appropriate member of staff should:

- talk with the bullied to understand how they feel
- demonstrate to those who have been bullying the distress their behaviour has caused, help them understand that the behaviour is unacceptable, and encourage a response to the bullied in the form of an apology and an offer to improve the relationship
- attempt to discover whether there are underlying reasons for the behaviour.

It is important to feed back to all involved and informally keep a check on the situation. Usually, parents do not need to be informed.

Medium level

The priority is to protect and provide support for the bullied, and then to try to resolve the conflict. In most cases the parents should be informed.

Below are brief descriptions of two strategies that can be used. But bear in mind that they are not quick fixes; they require, at the very least, time, effort and commitment to be successful.

Whatever the strategy, it is essential to monitor and review the situation.

You should also consider whether additional support work is needed with both bullied and bully, to help them address issues such as self-esteem, resilience, assertiveness, and anger management.

Support groups

There are different types but the key feature is a peer group set up to befriend the bullied. The bullied has to agree to this and to the membership of the group. As well as the bullied, the group will include peers who are friendly with or supportive towards the bullied, some of those who acted as bystanders and may involve some of those responsible for the bullying. The group takes responsibility for finding a solution and for reviewing progress.

Restorative practices

Both parties come together to reach an agreed solution. In the context of bullying, the process is concerned with acknowledging the impact of the behaviour on everyone involved and identifying actions that will make amends. It's about moving on by repairing the harm that's been caused.

High level

In these circumstances, an organisation has to ensure the future safety of the bullied and other children/young people and to consider whether the organisation has the capacity to resolve the situation. This may mean sanctions, including temporary or permanent exclusion and, if viewed as possibly a criminal offence, involve the police or children's social services.

The organisation will also need to consider whether the bullying has implications that go beyond the individuals involved. This is likely if the bullying is driven by prejudice, where it may be necessary to address the issues throughout the organisation.

Other issues to consider

Supporting the bully

Many bullies are unhappy and have a low opinion of themselves. How can your organisation help them acknowledge the hurt they are causing? They may need:

- achievable goals and praise when they behave well
- to be involved in activities where they learn to work as a team member, rely on others and be relied on by others
- responsibilities that involve caring for others
- coping strategies, particularly in managing anger.

Your organisation may not have the resources to do all that is necessary but you can find out what support is available in your area and signpost this to children and parents/carers. You may also want to consider developing the skills of someone in the organisation to provide support to individuals and groups.

Sanctions

Sanctions may help a bully face up to and change their behaviour. They may also send a signal to others that bullying is unacceptable and deter them from bullying.

Sanctions usually temporarily take away the person's full involvement in some of the activities of the organisation, but may sometimes involve full exclusion either for a fixed period of time or, very occasionally, permanently. They should be appropriate to the severity of the behaviour.

It is important to recognise that alone they will not make the bullied safe or the bully change their behaviour.

Letting school know about out-at-school bullying

This can prevent the bullying continuing in school, which may also be able to support, or engage support, for those involved.

Working with parents

Parents are understandably upset if they believe their child is being bullied. As well as wanting the bullying to stop they may also be angry and want the bully to be punished. The parents of a child accused of bullying may also be angry and disbelieving. So it's important for organisations that work with children to develop open and trusting relationships with parents where concerns can be shared. Even where parents condone bullying behaviour, it is important to work with them but without compromising the values of the organisation.

In summary

In this module we have focused on what organisations must do to prevent bullying behaviour and suggested ways of assessing any incidents and dealing with them. Ensure your organisation creates an environment where bullying is wholly unacceptable. Train all staff and volunteers about bullying and what to do when it happens, as well as how to supervise children appropriately and be someone that children can turn to.

Module 4 Question Sheet

All the answers to the questions can be found in the corresponding module content (please note, exact wording may differ)

Question 1 **Where staff supervise children appropriately, are someone to turn to and know what to do when bullying happens, there is more likely to be an environment in which...**

- A Bullying does not happen
- B The opportunities for bullying to happen are reduced, but if it does, it will be noticed and responded to
- C Staff understand bullying and its implications for the organisation

Question 2 **Which of the following should be included in an anti-bullying policy?**

- A A statement that children have a right to be safe and that bullying behaviour is unacceptable; references to bullying that relates to ethnicity, religion, culture, homophobia and disability; strategies the organisation uses to prevent bullying
- B A statement that children have a right to be safe and that bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- C Strategies that the organisation uses to prevent bullying

Question 3 **When responding to a bullying incident, what is the immediate priority?**

- A Supporting the child who has been bullied and helping them feel safe
- B Punishing the bully immediately to set an example
- C Contacting the parents to advise them of the situation

Question 4 **Why should a bully receive support?**

- A Bullies should not receive support
- B To help them change their behaviour
- C So that other people can see that children are being treated equally

Question 5 **Do sanctions alone change behaviour?**

- A Yes
- B No
- C Sometimes

Question 6 Should parents be involved in a low-level bullying situation?

- A Yes, parents should always be informed
- B No, parents definitely do not need to be informed
- C Usually, parents do not need to be informed

Question 7 In a medium-level bullying situation, is it a good idea to involve parents?

- A In most cases, parents should be informed
- B Parents should only be informed if actual physical harm has occurred
- C Usually, parents do not need to be informed

Question 8 In a high-level incident, should the police or children's social services be informed?

- A Yes, they should be informed
- B No, it should be dealt with by the organisation concerned
- C Yes, if it is viewed as a criminal offence

Question 9 In responding to bullying incidents, sanctions such as excluding the bully from activities...

- A Are always appropriate
- B May help the bully and others understand that bullying behaviour is never acceptable
- C Should never be considered because they don't work

Question 10 Why is it important for organisations to develop good relations with parents?

- A So that parents are aware when a bullying incident occurs
- B So that the organisation can instruct parents on how to deal with their child if they have bullied someone
- C So that organisations can share concerns with parents and work with them

NAME:

ESTABLISHMENT:

