

Anti-Bullying Week 2014

17th – 21st November 2014



Information for parents and carers

Anti-Bullying Week provides an opportunity for us to talk openly about the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people and take action to stop it.

Despite significant improvements to how schools tackle bullying of pupils, some groups of children and young people are still more likely to be bullied than others. This Anti-Bullying Week, the Anti-Bullying Alliance are calling on the school community to take action to stop the bullying of ALL children and young people – including disabled children and those with special educational needs – those research show are significantly more likely to experience bullying in schools and the wider community.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) has been co-ordinating Anti-Bullying Week for over ten years and thanks to the enthusiasm of children and young people, and school staff, the week is now firmly established in the school calendar.

What is bullying?

ABA defines bullying as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological and includes behaviour such as:

- name calling
- spreading hurtful stories
- excluding someone from groups and breaking up friendships
- making demeaning comments about appearance, gender, culture, religion or sexuality
- making demeaning comments about a disability or illness
- taking possessions or money



- hitting, pushing or kicking

Cyberbullying typically involves sending hurtful texts; spreading rumours through social networking sites; uploading private or distorted images or film; sending abusive comments through gaming sites; and assuming a false identity to cause deliberate harm. Like all forms of bullying it is incredibly harmful – and can be even more difficult to handle as the perpetrator is often anonymous.

The aims for Anti-Bullying Week 2014 are:



- **To stop the bullying of disabled children and those with special educational needs** by equipping schools, colleges and youth services leaders with resources to encourage youth led anti-bullying initiatives that encourages inclusive attitudes amongst children and young people
- **To educate** those who support and work with children to recognise those who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying - encouraging an inclusive approach to all anti-bullying education.
- To ensure the school and wider community understand that the use of any discriminatory language is wrong and will not be tolerated **and that this includes challenging disablist language**

The definition of disability

A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

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There are approximately 800,000 disabled children in the UK, which is 6% of all children.

How much do disabled children and young people experience bullying?

Research tells us that disabled children and children with special educational needs are significantly more likely to experience bullying than those who are not disabled and don't have a special education need.

Research from 2014 has indicated that **disabled primary school pupils are twice as likely as other pupils to suffer from persistent bullying.**

Reports suggest that bullying may have been experienced by:

- Roughly 8 out of 10 young people with learning difficulties
- 82% of young people who are disfluent (those with a stammer),
- 39% of children with speech and language difficulties
- 30% of children with reading difficulties
- Over 90% of parents of children with Asperger Syndrome reported that their child had been bullied in the previous 12 months alone

What might be the signs that my child is being bullied?

You may see one or more signs, for example your child could:

- show signs of stress – being moody, silent or crying, or bullying a younger sibling or friend
- make excuses to miss school, such as stomach complaints or headaches
- seem upset after using the internet or mobile behaviour – be



secretive and unwilling to talk about their online activities and phone use

- have unexplained injuries
- change their eating habits
- have torn clothes, things that are broken or missing, or have 'lost' money
- disturbed sleep
- wet the bed.

How can I help?

- If you think your child is being bullied, don't panic – try to keep an open mind. Your key role is listening, calming and providing reassurance that the situation can get better when action is taken.
- Listen and reassure them that coming to you was the right thing to do. It may not be easy for a child to talk about being bullied so it is important to try to find out how they are feeling, what has happened, when and where.
- Assure them that the bullying is not their fault. Remind them that they can also have the support of family and friends.
- Find out what your child or young person wants to happen. Help them to identify the choices available to them and the potential next steps to take; and the skills they may have to help solve the problems.
- Discuss the situation with your child's school. **The law requires all schools to prevent bullying.** Parents can get advice and support from the Parentline helpline on 0808 800 2222 or visit www.familylives.org.uk



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What's not so helpful?

Young people tell us:

- Don't let your anger or fear get in the way of an open discussion.
- Don't disbelieve or mistrust what you are hearing.
- Don't make the young person think it is their fault.
- Don't say that bullying has to be lived through as it is 'part of growing up' and they just have to put up with it.
- Don't give a sense that nothing can be done to make things improve.
- Don't take action before you really know what is going on.
- Don't pressurise or threaten anyone.



How can I make sure my child doesn't get involved in bullying behaviour?

- Set a good example – show your child tolerance, respect and kindness – and be kind and respectful in how you treat other people. Remember your children are always watching you.
- Explain in language they can understand why it is not kind to say and do things that hurt other people.
- Encourage your child to talk about things they may have heard or seen that don't seem kind, or may have upset them or another child. Show them what it means to be a good friend and encourage them to care for other children that seem sad or scared.
- Gently challenge family and friends if they say things that are racist, homophobic, sexist or disablist in front of your child. Explain that you don't want your child to grow up bullying other people.

- Encourage your child to get involved in anti-bullying activities and clubs in their school and community.

Where can a young person get more information and help?

ChildLine:

ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. Trained volunteers are on hand to provide advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Call Childline on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk

Where can parents and carers get help to support a young person?

Anti-Bullying Alliance:

The ABA website has a specific advice page for parents and carers that have concerns about bullying behaviour. Visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/parents-and-carers.aspx

Family Lives:

Family Lives is a national charity that works for, and with, parents. You can get support and advice from the Parentline helpline on 0808 800 2222 or visit www.familylives.org.uk

Kidscape:

Kidscape works UK-wide to provide individuals and organisations with the practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm. It runs assertiveness training courses for children and young people under the age of 16, their parents or carers, and those who work with them. Visit www.kidscape.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre:

The Child Law Advice Line provides free legal advice and information covering all aspects of English law and policy affecting children. Call 08088 020 008 or visit www.childrenslegalcentre.com



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Are you a parent/carer of a disabled child and worried about bullying?

Contact a Family have developed a guide, as part of a programme of training and support with the Anti-Bullying Alliance, for parents and carers of disabled children which gives information about dealing with bullying. You can

find it here:

http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/721109/caf_bullying_guide_9_may_2014_web.pdf

If you are a parent of a disabled child and worried about bullying we encourage you to speak to:

- your child's teacher and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)

- Contact a Family. They can give you free information and advice about bullying over the phone. Contact their helpline. You can call them on: 0808 808 3555
- your local Parent Partnership Service. Parent Partnership Services offer impartial information, advice and support to parents of children with special educational needs. There's one in every local authority and you can find your local service contact details by calling 02078436058 or visiting the National Parent Partnership Network website: www.parentpartnership.org.uk.

Support the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

- **Get active online!** Share our videos or your own pictures and experiences. Like us on facebook by searching Anti-Bullying Alliance, or follow us on twitter @abaonline.
- **Become a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance:** ABA membership is open to all individuals and organisations that support the vision of the Anti-Bullying Alliance to stop bullying and create safe environments where children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. Apply today: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- **Donate to the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance:** We are delighted when individuals support our work either by raising funds or making donations: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/donate

The Anti-Bullying Alliance would like to offer our particular thanks to the following organisations that have supported Anti-Bullying Week 2014:



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