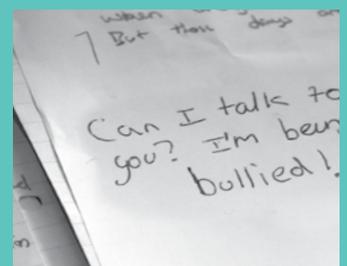




# Safe to Learn



**Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools**

department for  
children, schools and families

# **SAFE TO LEARN: EMBEDDING ANTI-BULLYING WORK IN SCHOOLS**

## **MINISTERIAL FOREWORD**

Every child should be able to learn in a school environment free from bullying of any kind and in which they feel safe and supported. There is no place for bullying in our schools and communities and each of us involved in education has a role in creating a culture in schools where bullying is not tolerated. No child deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. We recognise the negative impact it has on the educational experiences and wider development of so many of our children and young people. Bullying has no place anywhere in the school community, and this applies both to the bullying of pupils and teachers.

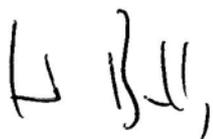
Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

Schools need to take an active approach to promoting good behaviour, respect for others and to tackling all forms of bullying – including prejudice-driven bullying and cyberbullying. Schools, with the support of parents, the wider community, the local authority and young people themselves, need to take effective action to prevent bullying happening in the first place. A preventative approach helps schools to safeguard the well-being of their pupils and staff as well as playing their part in creating a society in which we all treat each other with dignity and respect. When bullying does occur schools need to respond promptly and firmly. They need to apply disciplinary sanctions. They need to work with bullies so that they are held to account for their actions and accept responsibility for the harm they have caused. They need to, as well, support those being bullied.

This guidance sets out what the law says Children's Services Authorities and schools should do about bullying, in order to promote the well-being of young people and ensure they stay safe. It describes how schools should use the principles of the Anti-Bullying Charter, and the steps they need to go through to create and implement a whole-school anti-bullying policy. It flags up the importance of recording and reporting incidents of bullying. It also provides advice on how to address staff training and development needs, so that they can deal with bullying confidently and effectively.

This guidance covers both how schools should tackle bullying in general and how schools can respond to the different kinds of bullying, such as cyberbullying, homophobic bullying and racist bullying. We intend to develop further specific guidance on how to tackle the bullying of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Together they will form a comprehensive suite of guidance on how to tackle all forms of bullying, and to promote diversity and respect for others within our schools.

With this guidance, we are sending a strong message to all that bullying is not acceptable in our schools. We have, for many years, encouraged children not to "*suffer in silence*". We have had some successes but we need to build on what has gone before. I am calling now for a step change in our anti-bullying activities so that all school staff and pupils have the tools and confidence they need to prevent and tackle bullying whenever and wherever it occurs and confidence in the readiness of local authorities, the community and parents to support them in this. I call on each of you to take up this challenge and ensure that your own schools become safer places to learn.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Balls'.

**The Rt Hon Ed Balls MP**  
*Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families*

# SAFE TO LEARN: EMBEDDING ANTI-BULLYING WORK IN SCHOOLS

## Executive Summary

[The full guidance can be accessed at:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/)]

1. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide.
2. The Government has therefore made tackling bullying in schools a key priority and is clear that all forms of bullying must not be tolerated and should always incur a disciplinary sanction. No-one should suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause.
3. We do not have hard information about the scale of bullying in our schools and in communities. We know, however, from opinion surveys that bullying is a top concern for parents and children and young people, and that the misuse of new technology has provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. There is also evidence that a substantial amount of bullying is fuelled by prejudice – racial, religious, homophobic – and against children with special educational needs or disabilities or who are perceived as different in some way. We all have a shared responsibility to support schools in preventing and tackling bullying of all kinds and whatever its driver in order to protect the well-being of some of the most vulnerable young people and to promote stronger communities in which diversity is valued and the weak protected.
4. Bullying may be defined as “Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. However, schools will wish to involve the whole school community in agreeing the definition of bullying that will be used in their own anti-bullying or behaviour policy. By involving pupils, parents and staff in agreeing the definition, the school will secure greater buy-in for its overall policy and its strategies to tackle bullying. It is important that in primary schools the definition is suitably child-friendly and accessible.
5. Pupils are bullied for a variety of reasons – and for no reason. Specific types of bullying include: bullying related to race, religion or culture; bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities; bullying related to

appearance or health conditions; bullying related to sexual orientation; bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances; sexist or sexual bullying.

6. Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods. This guidance provides an overall framework for schools in managing all types of bullying behaviour. It also includes advice on more specific types of bullying.

### **The Law**

7. There are various legal requirements on and powers for schools that relate to bullying. These are detailed in section 2 of the guidance. In particular, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that head teachers must determine measures on behaviour and discipline that form the school's behaviour policy, acting in accordance with the governing body's statement of principles in so doing. Measures, in this context, include rules, rewards, sanctions and behaviour management strategies. The policy determined by the head teacher must include measures to be taken with a view to "encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils".

8. The law empowers head teachers, to such extent as is reasonable, to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying) and empowers members of school staff to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour.

### **How to create and implement a whole school anti-bullying policy**

9. The Department recommends that schools use the principles in the *Bullying – A Charter for Action* document to develop their anti-bullying policies. The Charter provides a framework for self-evaluation.

10. In considering what arrangements to establish for developing or reviewing the anti-bullying policy, schools may find it helpful to explore what support is available for the development of anti-bullying work from their local authority, through anti-bullying teams or the Behaviour and Attendance Consultant. They may also want to review arrangements with relevant partner agencies for sharing information about bullying and thresholds and triggers for multi-agency interventions.

11. The Department recommends that specific responsibility for anti-bullying work is allocated by the head teacher to a member of staff within the school's leadership structure. This could be a specialist leadership role such as the Lead Behaviour Professional (LBP) or one combined with a range of pupil support and pupil achievement responsibilities.

12. It is advised that schools conduct an audit of the school's current practices to prevent and deal with bullying and prioritise necessary changes to their policies and anti-bullying strategies.

13. The Department recommends that anti-bullying policies are developed as part of the process of developing the school's wider behaviour policy. As part of this process, the governing body must make, and from time to time review, a written statement of general principles to guide the head teacher in determining measures to promote good behaviour. Some of these measures (for example, those to be taken with a view to encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils; preventing all forms of bullying among pupils; and securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable) directly relate to combating bullying. The governing body must consult widely in drawing up its statement of principles. Schools may decide on the appropriate timescale for reviewing the principles and updating the resulting policy. Good practice suggests this should be done on average every two years. More information about consultation and on determining the school behaviour policy in general is available in the *School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies* guidance.

14. Schools may choose to consult similarly upon other aspects of their anti-bullying policy, for example multi-agency working or staff training needs as they relate to anti-bullying work. The Department recommends that wide consultation with the whole school community on all aspects of the anti-bullying policy and regular review (on average every two years) is good practice.

15. The Department strongly recommends that the school anti-bullying policy covers all the forms of bullying described in paragraph 3 above; and that it covers the bullying of school staff, whether by pupils, parents or other staff, as well as the bullying of pupils.

16. The Department recommends that summaries of school behaviour and anti-bullying policies are incorporated within the staff and governor handbooks, and included within induction programmes for staff (including temporary and supply staff). The Anti-Bullying Charter can also be used to communicate and celebrate the anti-bullying stance of the school with staff, pupils, parents and partner agencies.

17. It is helpful for schools to follow up the launch of their policy with regular reminders, using opportunities throughout the school calendar for refreshing minds. A low-profile policy can be easily forgotten.

### **Anti-bullying strategies**

18. The aims of school anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.

- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

19. Preventative strategies include:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities (in particular, PSHE and Citizenship classes can be used to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti-bullying messages). The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, a whole-school and whole-curriculum approach to developing social and emotional skills in areas such as empathy and the management of feelings, is also highly relevant to reducing bullying.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year; and whole-school assemblies).
- Engaging pupils in the process of developing the school anti-bullying policy and promoting open and honest reporting.
- Improving the school environment, looking in particular at staff supervision patterns; the physical design of the building(s); and joint work with partners such as transport service providers. The Department recommends that schools target their attention on key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent; and that they work with pupils to establish when and where those times and locations are.

20. The most obvious reactive strategy is the use of disciplinary sanctions and learning programmes to deal with those pupils who are found to be bullying. The Department advises that sanctions be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities that pupils may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children.

21. Disciplinary penalties have three main purposes, namely to:

- impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
- deter him/her from repeating that behaviour; and
- signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

22. Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused.

23. Pupils must not be excluded from school for being bullied, even if the school believes they are doing so for the child's benefit. The legislation on exclusion in the Education Act 2002 makes clear that "exclude means exclude on disciplinary grounds".

24. Some pupils who have been subjected to bullying are provoked into violent behaviour. A pupil can be excluded for violent behaviour; it is a matter for the head teacher's judgement, taking account of the evidence available, all the circumstances of the case and the need to balance the interests of the pupil concerned against those of the whole school community. However, before deciding to exclude a pupil, the Department recommends that the head teacher always allows him or her to state their case, and checks whether the incident may have been provoked by, for example, racial or sexual harassment or a child's SEN or disability. Where a pupil has retaliated after months of persistent bullying, we advise that this be considered differently from an unprovoked attack.

25. In conjunction with disciplinary sanctions, there are a range of other strategies that schools can use to combat bullying. These include:

- Engaging with parents promptly when issues of bullying come to light, whether their child is the one being bullied or the one doing the bullying. Schools are legally required to have a complaints procedure and to make parents aware of this procedure.
- Development of the roles that pupils can play (e.g. as trained peer mentors).
- Adult mediation services that may be offered by the local authority or by commercial organisations that schools can engage. Mediators work with pupils to try put an end to the bullying and mend relationships.
- Establishing Safer School Partnerships with local police.
- Restorative justice approaches which hold pupils to account for their behaviour and engage with them to agree the actions to be taken to repair the harm caused.

26. It is recommended that, as well as immediate short-term monitoring, schools review, over two or three months, whether the action has prevented recurrence of the bullying and ensured that the pupil being bullied feels safe again.

### **Reporting and recording incidents of bullying**

27. Schools are advised to encourage pupils to report bullying in confidence using a variety of methods. There should also be clear and simple reporting arrangements for parents.

28. The Department recommends that schools should record all incidents of bullying, including by type, and report the statistics to their local authority. The purpose of reporting incidents to the local authority is to enable the gathering of information on the number and nature of bullying incidents and to

identify any developing trends. The local authority can analyse the information gathered from schools to identify any issues of particular concern. This will enable the authority to be better informed in the development of appropriate strategies to tackle bullying across their area. The data will also enable local authorities to support and challenge schools in their duties to promote the welfare of pupils.

29. Keeping records of bullying incidents will enable the school to:

- manage individual cases effectively;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies;
- celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school;
- demonstrate defensible decision making in the event of complaints being made;
- engage and inform multi-agency teams as necessary.

### **Staff professional development**

30. The Department recommends that schools review general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development (CPD) and identify how to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school. Where specific training needs have been identified for particular members of staff, the head teacher must ensure that those members of staff have access to the advice, training and development opportunities appropriate to their needs.

31. The Department is working through the National Strategies Regional Advisers to spread good practice and work with identified schools to support and challenge them in improving their anti-bullying policies and strategies. As part of this, Regional Advisers and local authority Behaviour and Attendance Consultants will help those schools to identify any specific training needs.

# SAFE TO LEARN: CYBERBULLYING

[The full guidance can be accessed at:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying/)]

## Understanding cyberbullying

1. Cyberbullying can be defined as *the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else*. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.
2. Research into the extent of cyberbullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. It also affects members of school staff and other adults; there are examples of staff being ridiculed, threatened and otherwise abused online by pupils.
3. Cyberbullying, like all bullying, should be taken very seriously. It is never acceptable, and a range of Education Acts and government guidance outline schools' duties and powers in relation to bullying. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) includes legal powers that relate more directly to cyberbullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off-site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items.
4. Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment and threatening and menacing communications. Schools should contact the police if they feel that the law has been broken.
5. Cyberbullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation; harassment or "cyber-stalking" (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages); vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images (including what are sometimes misleadingly referred to as 'happy slapping' images); and manipulation.
6. Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke, may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity

for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.

7. In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is recommended that anti-bullying policies refer to those ‘bystanders’ – better termed ‘accessories’ in this context – who actively support cyberbullying and set out sanctions for this behaviour. It is important that pupils are aware that their actions have severe and distressing consequences and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.

### **Preventing cyberbullying**

8. It is important to decide on the roles and responsibilities for cyberbullying prevention work. This will typically involve a named lead from the senior management team (usually the person with overall responsibility for anti-bullying work), as well as IT staff, pastoral care staff, and school council members.

9. Essential elements of prevention are awareness-raising and promoting understanding about cyberbullying. Awareness can be raised and understanding promoted through discussion and activity around what cyberbullying is and how it differs from other forms of bullying. The activities could include staff development activities; home-school events such as special assemblies with parents; and addressing cyberbullying within curriculum delivery and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme.

10. It is important to review and update existing anti-bullying, behaviour and pastoral care policies to include cyberbullying. Ensure that learners, parents and staff are all aware of the procedures and sanctions for dealing with cyberbullying, including bullying that takes place out of school.

11. It is advised that schools establish, or review existing, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs), referencing responsible use of school IT networks and equipment, Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and mobile phones. It is also recommended that schools review how the school network is monitored and check whether existing procedures are adequate.

12. It is recommended that schools record and monitor incidents of cyberbullying in the same way as all other forms of bullying. Schools can use this information to develop their policies and practices.

13. Publicising reporting routes is an important element of prevention, raising awareness of the issue but also ensuring that any incidents can be stopped before they become too serious or upsetting. Make sure that learners, parents and staff are all aware of the different ways available to report cyberbullying incidents. In addition, schools can signpost information

about external reporting routes, providing information about contacting service providers directly.

14. Education and discussion around the responsible use of technologies and e-safety are key to preventing cyberbullying and helping children and young people deal confidently with any problems that might arise, whether in or out of school. Technology can have a positive role in learning and teaching practice, and there is a need for staff to be confident about ICT in order to model the responsible and positive use of technologies and to respond to incidents of cyberbullying appropriately.

15. Stay up to date – prevention and responding strategies require continuous review and refinement as new technologies and services become popular. This guidance, similarly, will be updated periodically as technologies develop.

16. It is useful to publicise progress and cyberbullying prevention activities to the whole-school community. Keep cyberbullying a live issue and celebrate your successes.

### **Responding to cyberbullying**

17. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying, and as such schools should already be equipped to deal with the majority of cyberbullying cases through their existing anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures. However, schools should recognise the ways in which cyberbullying differs from other forms of bullying and reflect that in how they respond to it. In addition to considerations about the invasiveness of cyberbullying, the size of the audience, and other such factors, cyberbullying yields evidence in a way that other forms of bullying do not.

18. The person being bullied will usually have examples of texts or emails received, and should be encouraged to keep these to aid in any investigation. There are also additional reporting routes available, through mobile phone companies, internet service providers and social networking sites. Detailed information on retaining evidence, containing incidents, and contacting the relevant organisations is provided in this guidance.

19. Some forms of cyberbullying involve the distribution of content or links to content, which can exacerbate, extend and prolong the bullying. There are advantages in trying to contain the spread of these, and options here include contacting the service provider, confiscating phones, and contacting the police (in relation to illegal content).

20. Advise those experiencing cyberbullying on steps they can take to avoid recurrence – for example, advise those targeted not to retaliate or reply; provide advice on ‘blocking’ or removing people from ‘buddy lists’; and ask them to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

21. Take steps to identify the person responsible for the bullying. Steps can include looking at the school system and computer logs; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; and, with police involvement, obtaining user information from the service provider.

22. Once the person responsible for the cyberbullying has been identified, it is important that, as in other cases of bullying, sanctions are applied. Steps should be taken to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any help that they may need. Schools will have existing sanctions in place for bullying behaviour, and these should apply equally to cyberbullying. In addition, it is important to refer to any Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) for internet and mobile use, and apply sanctions where applicable and practical. Technology-specific sanctions for pupils engaged in cyberbullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to use a mobile phone on the school site, for example.

# SAFE TO LEARN: HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

[The full guidance can be found at:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/homophobicbullying/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/homophobicbullying/)]

1. Every child in every school has the right to learn free from the fear of bullying, whatever form that bullying may take. Everyone involved in a child's education needs to work together to ensure that this is the case. Preventing and responding to homophobic bullying should be part of schools' general strategies for tackling bullying. This guidance helps with the specifics around homophobic bullying.

## What is homophobic bullying?

2. Homophobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

3. Who experiences homophobic bullying?

- Young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB).
- Young people who are thought to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- Young people who are different in some way - they may not act like the other boys or girls.
- Young people who have gay friends, or family, or their parents/carers are gay.
- Teachers, who may or may not be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

4. Who does the bullying?

- Anyone. Especially if they have not been told it's wrong.
- They think that lesbian and gay people should be bullied, because they believe gay people are "wrong".
- People who might be gay themselves, and are angry about that.
- People who think "boys should act like boys" and "girls should act like girls".
- People who think gay people shouldn't have the same rights as heterosexual people and use this as justification for bullying.
- People who think gay parenting is wrong and pupils should be treated differently because of it.

## Why should schools do anything about it?

5. Schools have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with

in schools. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, head teachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, must identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others, and self discipline amongst pupils, and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying.

6. Homophobic bullying can have a negative impact on young people:

- Bullying can also be linked to poor attendance with studies showing a high degree of absenteeism.
- Seven out of ten young lesbian and gay people say homophobic bullying affects their work.
- Low self-esteem, including the increased likelihood of self-harm and the contemplation of suicide.
- Young people who experience homophobic bullying are unlikely to fulfil the objectives of Every Child Matters and Youth Matters.

### **How to recognise homophobic bullying**

7. Homophobic bullying can be hard to identify because it may be going on in secret. Sometimes, pupils may not want to tell anyone about it in case teachers/staff or other adults assume they are gay. A recent study found that three in five gay pupils never tell anyone (either at home or school) when they are being bullied. The fact that young people are particularly reluctant to tell is a distinctive aspect of homophobic bullying.

8. Generally, homophobic bullying looks like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse – including spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are “gay” – for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so gay!”
- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. Can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

9. Can it happen in Primary schools?

- Yes. Pupils may not know what the words mean, but can use homophobic language against others as a form of bullying.
- Or, they may bully a pupil who has gay parents/carers or family members.

### **How to respond to homophobic bullying**

10. School staff interact with pupils on a daily basis and are more likely to

see, and be told about, incidents of homophobic bullying. It is important that staff responses are, in line with Ofsted guidelines, 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective'. Staff should feel able to respond effectively to incidents of homophobic bullying, and instil confidence in pupils and parents/carers that issues will be dealt with.

### **Responding to homophobic language:**

11. Casual homophobic language is common in schools but, if it is not challenged, pupils may think that homophobic bullying is acceptable. It is therefore important to challenge homophobic language when it occurs:

- Ensure that pupils know that homophobic language will not be tolerated in schools. Make sure it is included in policies and procedures.
- When an incident occurs, pupils should be informed that homophobic language is offensive, and will not be tolerated.
- If a pupil continues to make homophobic remarks, explain in detail the effects that homophobic bullying has on people.
- If a pupil makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the classroom and teachers and staff should talk to him or her in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, involve senior managers. The pupil should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use homophobic language.
- Consider inviting the parents/carers to school to discuss the attitudes of the pupil.

### **Responding to physical bullying in secondary schools:**

12. Like verbal abuse, pupils may be reluctant to report incidents of homophobic bullying because they fear that staff will assume they are gay, even if they are not. Physical abuse can indicate a young person is at risk, and the overarching strategies that are implemented to safeguard pupils might be appropriate in this context, for example working with other agencies, including, if necessary, the police. Schools know how to respond to incidents of physical abuse, and the same strategies should apply when motivated by homophobic bullying. Homophobic violence can be a crime. Anti-bullying policies should be rigorously enforced in order to keep pupils safe from physical abuse.

13. Teachers should refer to the anti-bullying policy and the 'hierarchy of sanctions' when responding to homophobic bullying. In particularly severe circumstances the school should consider permanent exclusion.

### **Prevention**

14. Heads, governors and staff can take a number of steps to help prevent homophobic bullying. Prevention should be a central focus of a school's work

to tackle homophobic bullying since taking steps to prevent bullying makes it easier to respond to incidents when they occur. It also enables a school to create an ethos in which pupils are clear that bullying is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- Ensure relevant **policies** exist, for example, checking that homophobic bullying is included in anti-bullying policies and related policies and procedures.
- **Assess and monitor** the extent of homophobic bullying through anonymous staff and pupil surveys, and existing methods like bullying boxes. Evaluate the responses received and ensure consistent recording and reporting.
- **Raise awareness** of what homophobic bullying is and how the school will respond. Ensure effective reporting systems are in place to enable pupils to report incidents.
- Evaluate and make use of **curriculum opportunities** in order to instil respect for others.
- Develop effective **intervention strategies**.
- Know how to provide sensitive **support** to lesbian and gay pupils to help them feel safe, and able to tell teachers about incidents of homophobic bullying.

# SAFE TO LEARN: BULLYING AROUND RACE, RELIGION AND CULTURE

[The full guidance can be accessed at:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/racistbullying/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/racistbullying/)]

1. Our schools need to be at the heart of tolerant and diverse communities. Racism and bullying should have no place. Every child deserves respect and a safe learning environment whatever their racial or religious background and every child needs to learn that modern British society values diversity and mutual respect.

2. We also know that racist bullying is an aspect of bullying that schools find particularly challenging. The law recognises the seriousness of abuse and attacks that are motivated by racism. Schools, like all public bodies, have a duty at law to promote race equality. Creating an ethos where racist bullying rarely happens, and is dealt with convincingly when it does, is one way in which schools fulfil that duty, and one aspect of the school's race equality policy.

## Key principles

3. This guidance offers the following key principles which should guide the way schools tackle bullying in this area:

- Acknowledge that racism exists in wider society and that it can lead to racist bullying in schools
- Let the pupils know where you stand
- Listen to children and young people
- Involve children and young people in solutions
- Implement strategies for both prevention and intervention.

## What is racist bullying?

4. We offer the following definition of racist bullying:

*“The term racist bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status”.*

5. While all occurrences of racist bullying are racist incidents, not all of the latter necessarily amount to bullying.

## **Preventing racist bullying**

6. We advocate two main strands to prevention work in schools in relation to racist bullying: self-evaluation of the extent to which pupils feel safe in the school from bullying and racist incidents; and curriculum work designed to create (or perpetuate) an ethos which reduces the likelihood that racist bullying will happen.

7. On self-evaluation, this guidance offers a range of prompts for the school to consider, in areas such as documentation; discussion, monitoring and review; the perceptions and involvement of children and young people; ethos and curriculum; working with parents; and partnership working.

8. On the curriculum, we suggest six themes which could inform every curriculum subject at every key stage and provides a range of specific ideas on how they could be incorporated. The six themes are:

- Shared humanity: similarity, sameness and universality
- Difference and diversity: contrasting stories and interpretations
- Interdependence: borrowing, mingling and mutual influence
- Excellence everywhere
- Identity and belonging
- Race, ethnicity and justice.

## **Responding to incidents of racist bullying**

9. In providing support, schools are advised to accept the pupil's account of the incident and confirm that it was right for the pupil to approach and inform school staff. Schools should avoid making light of the incident. They should ask what action the pupil would like to take place: whether the pupil would like other pupils to help solve the situation that has arisen and whether they would like their parents to be informed and involved. And they should stress that the pupil was not himself the cause of the bullying.

10. We advocate a rounded approach to challenging those responsible for racist bullying, which does not rely solely on rebuke and disciplinary sanctions (on the one hand) and reasoning and explanation (on the other). Those responsible need to be clear that what they have done is wrong, within the framework of the school's behaviour policy and the sanctions for bullying that are part of that policy. But they also need to be helped to understand their own behaviour and to change it.

# **SAFE TO LEARN: BULLYING RELATED TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY**

[This guidance will be published by April 2008].

# Bullying – A Charter for Action

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Local Authority \_\_\_\_\_

We are working with staff, pupils and parents to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated.

## Our school community

- ✓ Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying **policy** on a regular basis. Good practice suggests the policy should be reviewed on average every two years.
- ✓ Supports **staff** to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- ✓ Ensures that **pupils** are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- ✓ Reports back quickly to **parents/carers** regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- ✓ Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilises the support of the **LA and relevant organisations** when appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Representative of pupils

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

**NASUWT**  
www.teachersunion.org.uk



n|g|l|a National Governors' Association



**ASCL** Association of School and College Leaders

**NAHT** National Association of Head Teachers

department for  
**children, schools and families**

**ADCS**  
Leading Children's Services



**PAT**  
Professional Association of Teachers

**UNISON**  
the public service union

**PGR**  
Network  
www.pgrnet.org.uk

# Ideas for schools to consider

To assist schools in drawing up their anti-bullying policy, the Department has issued revised guidance to schools entitled 'Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools', as well as advice and materials on prejudice-driven bullying and cyberbullying. In addition, we recommend schools use the following prompts when determining and evaluating their policy.

## ✓ Discuss, monitor and review

- Do we hold discussions on bullying and its definition, involving staff, children and young people, governors and parents?
- Do we keep a record of the incidence of bullying, according to our agreed definition, and analyse it for patterns – people, places, groups?
- Do we ask ourselves what makes an anti-bullying school?
- What is our school doing to ensure that our children and young people do not feel vulnerable and are safe to learn?
- Do we celebrate our successes and draw these to the attention of parents/carers?

## ✓ Support everyone in the school community to identify and respond

- Do we work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying (including all those listed in the 'Safe to Learn' guidance), as well as different methods of bullying, such as cyberbullying.
- Do we actively provide systematic opportunities for developing pupils' social and emotional skills to reduce bullying?
- Have we considered all the opportunities where the different sorts of bullying can be addressed – through the curriculum; through corridor displays; through the School Council; through peer support; and through teaching about online safety?
- Do we create 'special safe spaces' targeted at vulnerable children and young people? Do we train lunchtime staff, learning mentors, LSU staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on anti-bullying?

## ✓ Ensure that children and young people are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively

- Do we regularly canvass children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying? Do we ensure that young people know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying?
- Do we ensure that all children and young people are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying?
- Do we involve children and young people in anti-bullying campaigns in school?

- Do we demonstrate that we are aware of the power of peer support? Have we created and publicised schemes of peer mentoring or counselling; buddying or mediation, for example?
- Do we include the phone numbers of helplines in the school's student planners? Do we have an anti-bullying notice board? How else do we bring anti-bullying measures to children and young people's attention?
- What role does our School Council already play in our anti-bullying policy? How might that involvement be enhanced?
- Do we offer sufficient support to children and young people who have been bullied?
- Do we work with children and young people who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have?

## ✓ Ensure that parents/carers expressing bullying concerns have them taken seriously

- Do parents know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying?
- Do parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively?
- Do we work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying?
- ✓ **Learn from effective anti-bullying work elsewhere**
- Have we invited colleagues from a school with effective anti-bullying policies to talk to our staff?
- Have we involved local experts or the voluntary sector in any way?