

Effective * responses to bullying behaviour



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Northern Ireland
Anti-Bullying Forum

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Introduction

When children and young people are involved in incidents of bullying, adults need to intervene. In practice there is a wide range of possible interventions available and there are significant differences in these in terms of the purpose of the intervention and the needs being addressed. This resource aims to promote an anti-bullying culture in schools and to help staff provide support to pupils who have experienced bullying and pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour. It provides examples of anti-bullying strategies within four levels of intervention and provides schools with practical suggestions on how bullying behaviour can be addressed.

This resource has been updated in line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 requirements. This Act:

- * Provides a single, legal definition for use in all schools
- * Requires Boards of Governors to:
 - o Ensure that policies and measures to prevent bullying are in place, implemented fully and kept under review at intervals of no more than 4 years
 - o Ensure a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying. The record must include the motivation, methods used and information on how each incident was addressed, together with the outcomes of interventions

The interventions detailed in this resource aim to support schools in effectively responding to bullying behaviour in a restorative manner, keeping in mind responsibilities to all pupils. [*Pastoral Care in Schools; Promoting Positive Behaviour guidance \(DE, 2001\)*](#) states that:

“As well as ensuring that pupils who are bullying are dealt with in accordance with accepted school policy and procedures, it will be necessary to work with these pupils to try to help them change their unacceptable behaviour.”

The Education Authority has developed further support materials for schools which are available at [Search | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

Acknowledgments

The resource is influenced by the work of Professor ME Bernard, M N Milne and Ken Rigby as detailed below:

1. Bernard, Professor M.E, Milne, M.L. School Procedures and Practices for Responding to Students who Bully.
 2. Rigby, Dr K. Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools;
 3. Rigby, Dr K Bullying in Schools And what to do about it
 4. Rigby, Dr K Bullying in Schools, Six Methods of Intervention DVD
-

Safeguarding and the Preventative Curriculum

Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of the school life through the pastoral care system, child protection, pupil behaviour, health and wellbeing, physical safety and security. The school's **Anti-Bullying Policy** forms part of the safeguarding suite of policies, which also includes the Promoting Positive Behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies. These policies need to work together to promote an inclusive learning environment where all learners have access to high quality provision within a safe, supportive and restorative environment. [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools guide](#)

Schools have a responsibility to protect children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (Article 19, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The statutory curriculum requires schools to give specific attention to pupils’ emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of a moral thinking and values system. The curriculum also offers a medium to explore sensitive issues with children and young people in an age-appropriate way, which helps them to develop appropriate protective behaviours.

By embedding ‘keeping safe messages’ in the wider curriculum, schools create a ‘preventative curriculum’ which proactively promotes the positive emotional health and wellbeing of pupils. (See Section 8 in Safeguarding and Child Protection A Guide for Schools, updated Aug.2020) This is achieved by raising awareness of social, emotional and health issues, developing the confidence, resilience and coping skills of pupils, and in offering early intervention when pupils are experiencing certain difficulties.

The publication in February 2021 of the “Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework” recognises, “our collective responsibility in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our children and young people and those supporting them.” It advocates a Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community approach and acknowledges the importance of establishing and maintaining an ethos “that promotes a sense of caring, belonging and respect for all,” within an “emotionally secure and safe environment.”

[Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Schools Framework](#)

Defining Bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 [Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) provides schools with a single, legal, non-exhaustive definition of bullying behaviour which applies to pupil-to-pupil bullying for use in all grant-aided schools.

Definition of “bullying”

1.—(1) In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of—

- (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
- (b) any other act, or
- (c) any combination of those,

by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.

NIABF has developed the following policy statement, which schools may find helpful:

“Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others.”

Labels

Bullying is an emotive issue therefore, it is essential that we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters.

For that reason, we never refer to a child/young person as ‘a bully’ or a ‘perpetrator’, nor do we refer to a child/young person as ‘a victim’. Instead, we will refer to the child/young person by describing the situation, for example:

- * *A child/young person displaying bullying behaviour*
- * *A child/young person experiencing bullying behaviour*

We encourage everyone to use this language within their Anti-Bullying Policy and when discussing or recording bullying incidents.

Effective responses to bullying behaviour...



Keep Children and Young People Safe

Access full resource at www.niabf.org.uk

Responding to a bullying concern

To respond restoratively to a bullying concern, staff should adopt a positive approach, focused on supporting resolution of the situation.

Staff should be prepared with options for how to respond to incidents of bullying in a planned, deliberate and positive way. Responding to bullying behaviour requires a high amount of self-control as well as preparation to know what to say and do. The following are important factors when managing a bullying situation.

- * **Be calm.** It is important to be clear thinking and emotionally in control.
- * **Be positive.** Remember the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with all the pupils involved. Pupils are much more likely to modify their behaviour if they perceive that the teacher cares and if their behaviour meets the approval of their peers.
- * **Be assertive.** Staff should clearly and honestly express their thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning the need for the pupil to not only stop displaying the bullying behaviour, but also make amends with the child who has been experiencing bullying.
- * **Be confident.** It is important to trust that you will be successful in implementing interventions that can have an impact on the pupil's future behaviour. It is always helpful to focus on the behaviour, not the pupil.
- * **Involve both** the pupil experiencing and the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour in seeking an agreed way forward
- * **Assess the situation and its severity level.** Determine the appropriate level of response required to manage the situation effectively.

Once the Incident Level has been determined, select one or more responses from the Levels 1-4 Responses set out on pages 22-24.

In determining the level of severity, it is helpful to take account of the following:

- * The **nature** of the bullying behaviour for example deliberate teasing, excluding or hitting. There is a tendency among those who have a duty of care to rate some forms of bullying behaviour, particularly violence, as more serious than other subtle forms. This can be a dangerous mistake, leaving us vulnerable to ignoring 'teasing' or 'exclusion'.
- * The **frequency** of the bullying behaviour: daily, weekly or less often.
- * The **duration** of the bullying behaviour: whether over a short or prolonged period of time
- * The **perceptions of the target** – The seriousness of bullying can only be measured by the degree of distress suffered by the target.

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers

Bullying concerns are reported to schools often by parents/carers. Such reports should be met openly and sympathetically. When a parent/carer contacts the school to report a bullying concern, staff should consider the following:

- * Effective communication between school and home is essential to ensure that any bullying concerns are resolved as quickly and effectively as possible.
- * Remember that this can be an upsetting and stressful experience for the parent/carers of all the pupils involved.
- * Remain understanding if the parent/carer expresses anger directed at the school.
- * Try to get clear facts from the parent/carer but do not cross-examine or emphasise inconsistencies in their version of events.
- * Ensure that you have already gathered as much reliable information as possible and apply the full criteria to be clear whether the behaviour does or does not meet the legal definition and the school's user-friendly policy statement.
- * Ensure that the parents/carers understand how their child's behaviour does or does not conform to the legal definition of bullying.
- * Share your concern about what has been happening to the child experiencing bullying.
- * Avoid suggesting character of their child is at fault. Emphasise that it is aspects of their child's behaviour that must change. Refer to their child's positive qualities.
- * Make it clear that you care and will do what you can and will act in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- * Tell the parent/carer that you will need time (be specific) to gather information and that you will keep them informed.
- * Remind parents/carers that the only information that can be shared with them is information regarding their own child. No information regarding action taken in relation to another child can be shared with any other parent/carer (refer parents to the NIABF website for supportive materials).

It is important to ensure that **ACTION** will be taken under the school's Positive Behaviour Policy if socially unacceptable behaviour has occurred or alternatively under the school's Anti-Bullying Policy if the legal criteria has been fully met and bullying behaviour has occurred.

Using this Resource

This resource provides a range of interventions, which schools may implement in response to a bullying concern.

The updated **Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF)** within this resource (pg.13-20) will structure your approach and ensure you are meeting the recording requirements set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

When an alleged bullying concern has occurred, staff should:

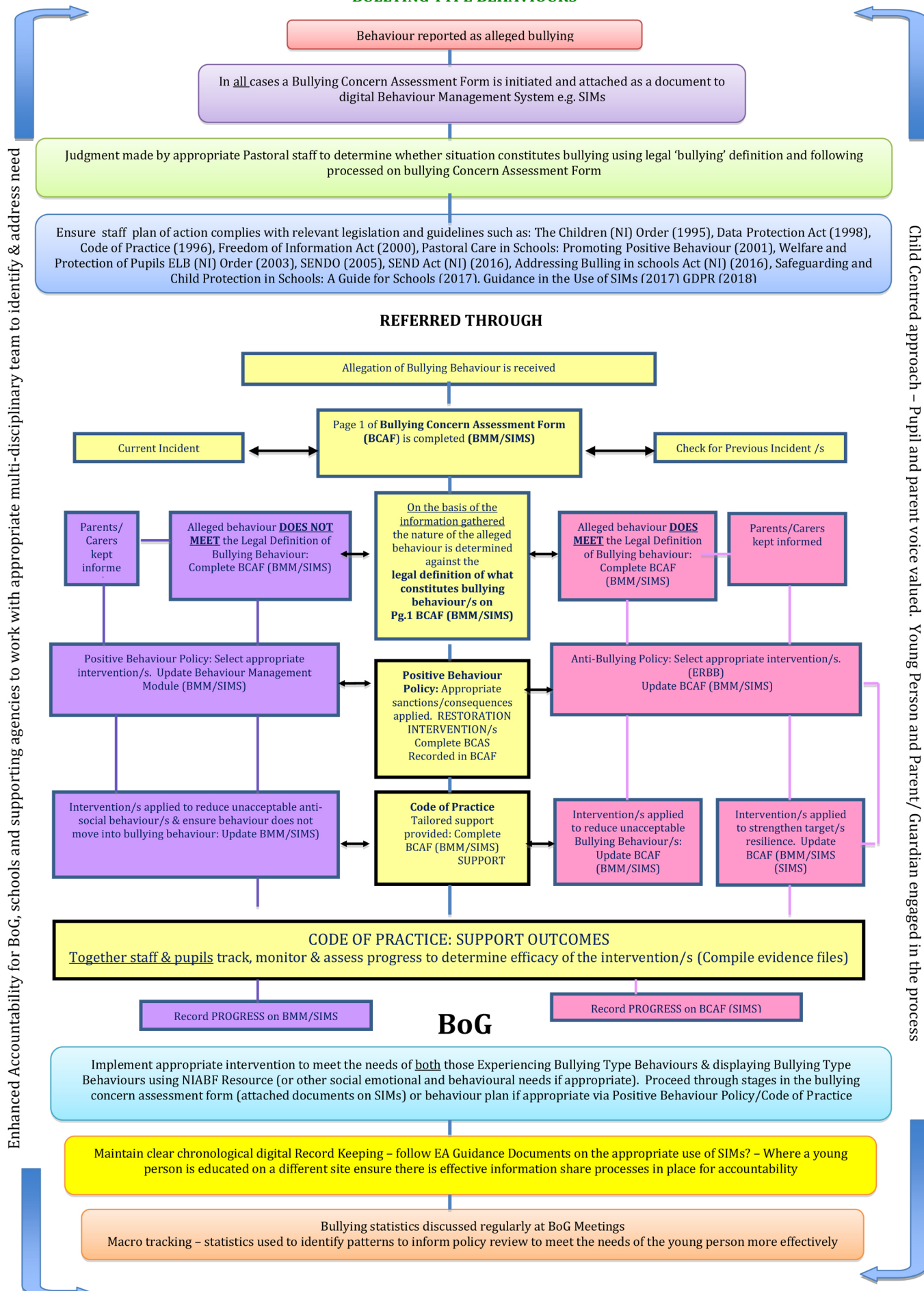
1. Clarify facts and perceptions. This should not be framed as an investigation; the focus is not on gathering evidence or building a case to prove guilt. Rather, we must seek to understand the situation, to allow us to implement effectively appropriate interventions to stop any further reoccurrences.
2. Assess if the behaviour meets the legal definition of bullying. Where the behaviour is assessed not to be bullying behaviour, the situation still must be addressed. Interventions in this resource may also be useful in responding to situations.
3. Check records e.g. on SIMS for history of relationships and information on any previous incidents.
4. Assess the situation, the severity of the incidents and the impact on those involved.
5. Identify any themes or motivating factors for example Disablist Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Bullying involving Children Looked After (CLA), Bullying involving LGBTQI+ Children and Young People, etc. (www.endbullying.org.uk).
6. Identify the method of bullying behaviour being displayed.
7. Complete the relevant sections of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF), which may be used in conjunction with the SIMS Behaviour Management Module.
8. Consider the possible need for involvement of others, e.g. parental involvement, Learning Support Coordinator (LSCO) involvement, external agency support e.g. Behaviour Support & Provisions (BS&P), Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS), the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSS) [Child Protection Support Service \(CPSS\) | Education Authority Northern Ireland](#).
9. Consider the need for a Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP) [link RRAP 18.2.19.pdf \(eani.org.uk\)](#)

10. Determine the appropriate level of response required to manage the situation effectively.
11. Select one or more interventions from the appropriate tables (see pgs. 28-38) Discuss and agree these with both pupils first, then implement them fully
12. Track and monitor the effectiveness of the interventions agreed for both the target and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour in Parts 3a and 3b of the BCAF through e.g. the Behaviour Management Module in SIMS.
13. Review and record intervention outcomes in Part 4 of the BCAF.
14. Select and implement further interventions as necessary and continue to keep outcomes under review until a satisfactory result has been achieved for both parties.
15. Keep and retain an evidence file as a record of the support provided and outcomes achieved for both the targeted and pupil displaying bullying behaviour.
16. Advise parents and carers of the school's stepped Complaints Procedure should either party feel the school has failed to follow their Anti-Bullying Policy and wishes to take the matter further.

Implementing the above process with both sets of parents/carers /pupils will provide opportunities for self-reflection, development and learning for all parties concerned, resulting in the effective management of bullying incidents. This reflection should inform and guide the ongoing review and development of the school's anti-bullying policy, procedures and practice.

Dealing with a Bullying Concern Flowchart: An Overview of the Processes Involved

PROCESS TO FOLLOW WHEN SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR DISPLAYING BULLYING TYPE BEHAVIOURS



Enhanced Accountability for BoG, schools and supporting agencies to work with appropriate multi-disciplinary team to identify & address need

Child Centred approach – Pupil and parent voice valued. Young Person and Parent/ Guardian engaged in the process

This diagram illustrates the actions to be taken following receipt of a bullying allegation.

Once the behaviour has met the legal definition of what constitutes bullying, schools can record the details in the NIABF's Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF), which has been structured to ensure recordings meet the requirements set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

A copy of the BCAF is available on C2k's SIMS Behaviour Management Module.

The Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF)

Incident Date:

Pupils Involved	Role	Incident Date	Gender	DOB	Year & Reg.

Incident	Comments
Bullying Concern	

PART 1 - Assessment of Concern Date: _____

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines bullying as follows:

“bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of —

- (a) *any verbal, written or electronic communication*
- (b) *any other act, or*
- (c) *any combination of those,*

by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

	Name(s)	Gender	DOB/Year Group
Person(s) reporting concern			
Name of pupil(s) experiencing alleged bullying behaviour			
Name of Pupil(s) demonstrating alleged bullying behaviour			

Check records for previously recorded incidents

Outline of incident(s): Attach all written accounts/drawings of incident(s) completed by targeted pupil, witnesses (i.e. other pupils, staff) including date(s) of events, if known, SIMS record.

Date	Information gathered	Location (stored)

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying behaviour when, on the basis of the information gathered, the criteria listed below have been met: The school will treat any incident, which meets these criteria as bullying behaviours.	
Is the behaviour intentional?	YES / NO
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?	YES / NO
Is the behaviour repeated?	YES / NO
Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?	YES / NO
Does the behaviour involve omission? (*may not always be present)	YES / NO

The criteria used above is fully compliant with the legal definition provided within the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Schools concerned that the traditional imbalance of power has not been included within the Act's definition may choose to add the imbalance of power to the above criteria if they have clearly stated within their Anti-Bullying Policy that it will be used in addition to the legal criteria. Schools must then ensure it is included in the BCAF and applied with all of the above criteria consistently to every bullying incident or alleged bullying incident when determining whether or not bullying behaviour has occurred.

One-off Incident

When determining whether a one-off incident may be classified as bullying, the school shall take into consideration the following criteria and use the information gathered to inform and guide the decision making process:	
Criteria:	Information gathered:
Severity and significance of the incident	
Evidence of pre-meditation	
Significant level of physical/emotional impact on individual/s	
Significant level of impact on wider school community	
Status/nature of previous relationships between those involved	
Records exist of previous incidents involving the individuals	
YES the above criteria have been fully met and bullying behaviour has occurred.	NO the above criteria have not been met and bullying behaviour has not occurred.
The criteria having been met, proceed to complete Part 2 of this Bullying Concern Assessment Form	The criteria having not been met, proceed to record the details in the Behaviour Incident section of the SIMS Behaviour Management Module. Refer to the

	Positive Behaviour Policy of your school, continue to track and monitor to ensure the behaviour does not escalate.
Agreed by _____ Status _____ On ____/____/____	

PART 2

2:1 Who was targeted by or experienced this behaviour?

Select one or more of the following:

Individual to individual 1:1
 Individual to group
 Group to individual
 Group to group

2.2 In what way did the bullying behaviour present?

Select one or more of the following:

Physical (includes for example, jostling, physical intimidation, interfering with personal property, punching/kicking)
 Any other physical contact (which may include the use of weapons)
 Verbal (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, hurtful comments, spreading rumours)
 Social (includes group manipulation , individual manipulation, controlling behaviour)
 Indirect (includes omission, isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others)
 Electronic (through technology such as mobile phones and internet)
 Written
 Other acts

Please specify: _____

2.3 Motivation (underlying themes): this is not a definitive list

Select one or more of the following:

- Ability
- Age
- Appearance
- Community background
- Cultural
- Disability (related to perceived or actual disability)
- Family circumstance (pregnancy, marital status, young carer status)
- Gender identity
- Child Looked After (CLA)
- Not known
- Other _____
- Peer Relationship breakdown
- Political affiliation
- Pregnancy
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Part 3a RECORD OF SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PUPIL EXPERIENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:

Pupil Name: _____ **Year Group/Class:** _____

REFER TO SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND TO LEVEL 1-4 INTERVENTIONS IN EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Parent/ carer informed: _____ **Date:** _____ **By whom:** _____

Staff Involved: _____

Date	Stage on Code of Practice	Types of Intervention	Success Criteria	Action taken by whom and when	Outcomes of Intervention	Review

Record of participation in planning for interventions

Pupil: _____

Parent/carers: _____

Other Agencies: _____

Continue to track interventions until an **agreed** satisfactory outcome has been achieved

Part 3b RECORD OF SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PUPIL DISPLAYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:

Pupil Name: _____ Year Group/Class: _____

REFER TO SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND TO LEVEL 1-4 INTERVENTIONS IN EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Parent/ carer informed: _____ Date: _____ By whom: _____

Staff Involved: _____

Date	Stage on Code of Practice	Type of Intervention	Success Criteria	Action taken by whom and when	Outcome of Intervention	Review

Record of participation in planning for interventions

Pupil: _____

Parent/carer: _____

Other Agencies: _____

Continue to track interventions until an **agreed** satisfactory outcome has been achieved

**PART 4 - REVIEW OF BULLYING CONCERN AND ACTIONS TO DATE
(TO BE COMPLETED FOR EACH PUPIL INVOLVED)**

Date of Review Meeting:

4a- Following the Review Meeting, to what extent have the success criteria been met?

- 1 – Fully
- 2 – Partially
- 3 – Further intervention/support required

Give details:

Part 4b- If the success criteria have not been met, continue to:

- Re-assess Level of Interventions and implement other strategies from an appropriate level
- Track, monitor and review the outcomes of further intervention
- Keep under review the stage of Code of Practice each pupil is on
- Follow Safeguarding Policy
- Seek multi-agency input (EA, Health and Social Services etc.)
- Engage with Board of Governors

Agreed by:

School	Signed:
	Date:
Parent	Signed:
	Date:
Pupil	Signed:
	Date:

Choosing an Appropriate Intervention

Schools should ensure that their Anti-Bullying Policy contains a description of the range of restorative interventions, which will be used to respond to a bullying situation. There is no “best method” in the sense that one is always preferable. It depends on the nature of the bullying behaviour, the availability of resources, the skills level of staff and the readiness of the school community to support the chosen approach. Remember, the main aim of any intervention is to RESPOND to the bullying behaviour that is taking place, RESOLVE the concern and RESTORE the well-being of all those involved.

In selecting an intervention, schools should take account of:

- * The level of severity.
- * The age and ability of those involved.
- * Whether an individual pupil or a group is involved.
- * The level of staff confidence and competence in adopting a restorative, behaviour-changing approach.
- * The support of the parents/carers in adopting a restorative, behaviour-changing approach.
- * Whether the pupil displaying bullying behaviour acknowledges the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the pupil experiencing bullying, and act appropriately.
- * The willingness to engage in a group intervention such as the Support Group Method.
- * The extent to which the young person experiencing bullying can be supported to develop resilience and coping skills, with or without external support.
- * The legal status of the act e.g. assault.
- * The need to ensure all interventions selected are recorded and outcomes tracked and monitored to assess efficacy of the interventions.

To determine level of severity, staff should take account of the following:

- * The nature (method) of the bullying behaviour- for example deliberate: teasing, excluding or hitting.
- * The frequency of the bullying behaviour: daily, weekly or less often.
- * The duration of the bullying behaviour: whether over a short or prolonged period of time.
- * The perceptions of the child experiencing bullying. It is important to understand the impact of the bullying behaviour to help identify the interventions required.

Understanding the Levels of Intervention

The levels suggested in this document are for guidance only. Schools should consider a range of interventions from across all of the levels when responding to a bullying concern. It is important to remember that every bullying incident should be considered individually and an intervention chosen which best meets the needs of the pupil/s involved.

Socially Unacceptable Behaviour

Incidents where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful, but which fail to meet the legal definition on the basis of the information gathered, can often be addressed through the use of interventions suggested at Level 1. For example, where a member of staff observes, in a moment of tension, hurtful language being directed towards another pupil, the 'Rights Respecting Script' can be used to challenge this behaviour.

When responding to an incident, while it is important to understand if the incident does or does not constitute bullying behaviour, it is essential to ensure that all incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with through the appropriate policy (see Dealing with a Bullying Concern Flowchart: An Overview of the Processes Involved on page 11).

Level 1 - Individual Interventions

Interventions at Level 1 are designed to help pupils displaying socially unacceptable behaviours or bullying-type behaviours to recognise and reflect on their behaviour and to "get them back on track". These interventions should be taken forward while listening to, supporting and strengthening the pupils involved. It is essential that schools NEVER ignore either low-level socially unacceptable behaviour or bullying-type behaviour.

The interventions at this level support staff to:

- * Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values (refer to your school's Positive Behaviour Policy).
- * Identify possible consequences if the socially unacceptable behaviour or bullying behaviour continues.
- * Point out the level of distress felt by the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour.
- * Enable pupils to adapt their behaviour with targeted interventions.

- * Talk with the pupil(s) involved to explore coping strategies and to build resilience by helping the pupil(s) to identify ways in which they may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- * Promote appropriate reparation to be undertaken.
- * Monitor the efficacy of the outcomes/impact on the situation carefully.
- * Review the situation with the pupils involved to determine further intervention if required.
- * Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the behaviour is resistant to change.

Level 2 – Group focused Interventions

While interventions at Level 2 may involve continuing with the above, there may be a shift from individual support to larger group or whole-class interventions.

To be effective group work needs:

- * The consent and involvement of the pupils whether experiencing or displaying bullying behaviour.
- * To be planned and timetabled, with the length of the session dependent on age and ability of those involved.
- * Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
- * Careful and balanced selection of membership for group support.
- * To take place in a suitable, sensitive and comfortable environment.
- * To be uninterrupted.
- * To be facilitated in a positive manner for all - ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
- * Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion amongst participants.
- * Decisions taken and outcomes agreed and recorded.
- * To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- * A solution focused approach to the situation.
- * To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their actions in a safe and supported environment.
- * To ensure regular feedback on agreed actions is given to all parties (staff, pupils and parents/carers).

Level 3 – Complex Group Dynamics and/or Multi-Agency Interventions

Interventions at this level, address situations of more complex bullying behaviour. These situations may have been ongoing over a longer period of time, or as a result of previous interventions being ineffective in resolving the situation. Responses to bullying behaviour at this level may involve the Pastoral Coordinator, Learning Support Coordinator, Designated Teacher for Child Protection and other senior managers, working in partnership with the pupils, and their parents/carers, to determine the way forward in affecting change.

It is important that all interventions at this level are planned in advance. Schools should also use their risk assessment and planning procedures to assess and manage any risks of further bullying concerns. All those involved with the pupil must contribute to both the risk assessment process and the Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP) and be clear about their individual ongoing role in the implementation, evaluation and review of the plan. Planning may require multi-agency discussion, with involvement of Education Authority services and other external support agencies, in line with the Code of Practice procedures.

Bullying at this level can involve complex group dynamics where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying behaviour. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement, along with individual support and strength building programmes.

Level 4 - High Risk Interventions

Bullying behaviours assessed as requiring intervention at Level 4 are complex and severe, involving a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to ongoing interventions and therefore assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures must be invoked, including the involvement of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and the Safeguarding Team. Advice and support is available to schools through the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

Responses to incidents at this level will require a multi-disciplinary approach, involving a range of partner agencies including the Education Authority, Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other relevant support agencies contributing to a multi-agency RAMP and/or UNOCINI.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices, including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should also continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

Where an incident has been high profile, the impact may be experienced beyond those immediately involved. In such cases, it is important that support is provided to help restore the wellbeing of all pupils in the school and within the community. In such instances the school should refer to its Critical Incident Policy and if appropriate contact EA's Critical Incident Response Team. Link <https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/in-an-emergency-school-information/managing-a-critical-incident>

Dealing with Relationship Issues

Staff deal with concerns relating to fallouts and friendship issues on a regular basis. Such incidents are often temporary and, when challenged in a timely manner, are relatively straightforward to resolve. Many of the interventions discussed in Level 1 can be used in such instances.

Establishing and maintaining positive teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships creates a safe and secure nurturing environment in which staff and pupils feel valued and supported. By effectively supporting young people to understand the need for respectful behaviour towards their peers, school staff continually promote a restorative, anti-bullying culture within the school and the wider community. It is important to foster the development of strong, supportive mutually respectful peer relationships and friendships within the school, however we must be clear that pupils will not be friends with everyone they meet. The focus must be on displaying respectful 'friendly behaviour' as opposed to 'being friends'.

Effective Facilitation Skills

It is important that an adult who has the required skills to support their effectiveness implements interventions suggested within this resource. Good facilitators have developed solid skills in verbal communication, knowing how to ask questions, pose prompts, summarise and reframe, as well as when to be silent and let silence sit within a space. Doing this well requires facilitators to be able to listen actively, with full attention, while also demonstrating compassion and understanding and having genuine regard for the young people involved.

Closure of a bullying situation

It is difficult to identify when it is appropriate to close the case on a bullying situation. This is usually where everyone involved is satisfied that the situation has been appropriately resolved. The final section of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 4: Review of Bullying Concern and Actions to Date) provides space to reflect on the incident(s), the interventions, the effectiveness of those interventions and the current relationship between the young people involved.

Those leading on the bullying situation should make sure their judgement to close the case is based on all evidence available. This decision should be reached in conjunction with the young people involved, their parents/carers and any other relevant agencies involved.

Once resolved the record of the incidents(s), interventions and effectiveness of those interventions should be maintained and attached to SIMS. Should any further incidents occur at any point in the future, a check of records would show the history of the relationship between the pupils involved, providing valuable information for the planning and implementation of any future intervention.

Where a case is deemed ongoing, further interventions should be considered and implemented, in line with BCAF Part 4.

Following closure it is good practice to retain an evidence file of the support provided and outcomes achieved should a complaint be raised with regard to a school's failure to follow its Anti-Bullying Policy when dealing with a bullying concern

Learning and Staff/Institutional Development

Following the resolution of a bullying situation, it is essential that school staff identify and address any specific Professional Learning needs arising e.g. staff training, including both targeted development for individual staff and whole school training provision for all members of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Reflections on a bullying situation, and on the response to that situation, may indicate the need for institutional and cultural development within the school. For example, an incident may highlight a disconnect between the stated ethos of the school and the practice of members of the school community, including staff, pupils and parents/carers. In such cases, senior management should explore activities to build and strengthen the anti-bullying culture of the school, through the School Development Plan.

The use of curriculum resources and staff development opportunities can help within a prevention framework or if a particular issue has been highlighted by repeated incidents. It may be appropriate for the school community as a whole to reflect on how the school's ethos tackles bias, discrimination and prejudice around specific issues such as sectarianism, racism, social class and so on.

A full and planned review of the school's current Anti-Bullying Policy implemented through the School Development Plan may be required to strengthen for example, the restorative, nurturing elements of the school's ethos, the statutory preventative measures currently in place or; as appropriate, to address a new situation or to implement new legislative requirements.

Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour: Holistic Approaches

Whole school preventative measures should already be established and reviewed. The following should be considered across all levels of intervention:

Whole School Interventions

Improve School Ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assess how safe, happy and welcomed pupils feel in school through e.g. use of PASS (Pupil Attitudes to Self and School), whole school questionnaires, DE iMatter audits, comments box etc. * Give consideration to the quality of pupil-pupil relationships and teacher-pupil relationships; expectations for the behaviour of pupils, school staff, parents/carers and the wider school community. * Consider possible training opportunities accessible within EA and other support agencies.
Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ensure the school's policies are up to date with current legislation and guidance including Pastoral care in schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour and are reviewed within the expected timescales, or as necessary, to ensure the effectiveness of the policies and the interventions.
PDMU / LLW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Integrate anti-bullying messages across the preventative curriculum with a focus on building the skills of pupils and providing opportunities to challenge attitudes, in an age appropriate way. * Useful resources can be found at www.endbullying.org.uk; www.ccea.org.uk or www.eani.org.uk
Thematic Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Where an incident(s) has highlighted issues relating to particular form(s) of prejudice-based bullying (e.g. racist, sectarian, homophobic, transphobic, etc.), the need for wider preventative measures and interventions across the whole school should be considered.

Targeted Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Themed assemblies for targeted groups, which could involve guest speakers, Anti-Bullying Week resources can be used effectively to promote key anti-bullying messages or address any arising themes relating to bullying within the school. Resources - End Bullying
Inclusion Noticeboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A way for schools to show inclusion of different groups and minorities.
E-safety Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consider use of awareness raising programmes within the curriculum that provide training/advice on safe internet use www.safeguardingni.org
Supervision Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * An incident(s) may highlight the need for supervision to be re-arranged or increased during unstructured times (e.g. break, lunchtime, moving from class to class). * Map playground hot spots and plan supervision in line with identified areas of concern.
School Council Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Through the School Council promote engagement with pupils regarding how safe and happy they feel in school and provide opportunities for active participation to identify positive strategies to promote and enhance pupil well-being across the school e.g. safe zones, buddy systems etc.
Parent/Carer Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Engage with parents/carers on the definition of bullying behaviour to ensure there is an understanding of the difference between socially unacceptable behaviour and bullying behaviour. Inform them of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, its implementation and how they can best support this. * A workshop may also be required in response to a bullying concern, particularly if there has been discussion in the school community.

Class/Group Interventions

Circle Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use circle time to provide a safe space for pupils to share and explore concerns, issues, emotions and aspirations related to anti-bullying.
Social Skills Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Plan to meet the needs of individual/groups of pupils by providing support in emotional literacy and empathy in order to promote social skills and coping mechanisms.
Designated Supportive Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * In response to a bullying concern being raised, identify a named member of staff that the pupil or group of pupils can go to at any time in school. * Involve the pupil(s) in deciding who this member of staff could be. It is important to ensure that it is someone the pupil(s) trusts and is comfortable with. * Having a named point of contact can prove comforting to the pupil(s) and their parents/carers.
Peer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consider the most appropriate form of peer support. This may involve a range of methods, including befriending, peer ambassador, peer mentoring, peer mediation etc.
Bystander Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support pupils to identify appropriate ways to help/support/defend pupils who are experiencing bullying behaviour, rather than ignoring or offering passive support. www.endbullying.org.uk/

It is important for the Senior Leadership Team to track and monitor how effectively the preventative and whole school approaches are consistently delivering agreed outcomes to reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour and promote restoration.

Level 1: Early Interventions:

Individual / Small Group Interventions

A Rights Respecting Script: Link Page 39	* This script can be used to remind the pupil displaying bullying behaviour of everyone's right to be safe.
Rule Reminder Script: Link page 39	* This script can be used to remind the pupil displaying bullying behaviour of the rule, which has been broken.
Expectation Discussion: Link page 39	* This non-confrontational script requires the pupil displaying bullying behaviour to commit to behaving appropriately and take responsibility for subsequent behaviour.
Shared Control Discussion: Link page 40	* This five-step intervention requires the pupil displaying bullying behaviour to choose how they will respond to requests to change behaviour, through being made aware of the consequences of their unacceptable behaviour.
Restorative Questions: Link page 41	* These SEVEN sequential, self-reflective, restorative questions enable the pupil displaying bullying behaviour to understand and take responsibility for their behaviour and to identify appropriate actions they could take to promote resolution.
The Debrief: Link pages 41-42	* Debriefing is a post-incident process which helps a young person reflect on and understand how their thoughts and feelings lead them to choose certain actions; how changing how they think and feel may help them to make different choices; how different choices have different outcomes.
Worth a Rethink: Link page 43	* This process helps pupils to consider responses that are more appropriate by reflecting upon what happened, their thoughts/feelings/actions and the consequences.
Think Time Discussion Link pages 44-45	* The discussion questions support the pupil(s) to reflect on their behaviour, identify how the situation could be rectified and to take action accordingly.

Circle of Friends:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * This approach works by mobilising the peer group to provide support and engage them in problem solving/solution focused activities. The circle acts as a resource for the pupil to help them set targets, devise, and implement strategies to deal with difficulties identified and discussed. It is about motivating pupils to build relationships around those who require support Inclusive Solutions - Circle of Friends article. See also "Promoting Positive Behaviour", DE 2001, Pg 74 Pastoral care in schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour
Seeking Help Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Agree with the pupil(s) how they will seek help from an adult to let them know if there has been an incident or if they need to talk.
Briefing to Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Establish an agreed plan to communicate the necessary information to the relevant staff in order to increase vigilance and support for the pupil(s) involved.
Alternative Arrangements (Unstructured Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Incidents may be happening at break and lunchtime, therefore alternative break/lunchtime arrangements e.g. clubs or structured activities could be used to introduce some additional structure/supervision.
Alternative Arrangements (Travelling to & from school)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * This may include agreeing an earlier or later exit from school, a review of transport arrangements, liaising with EA Transport or other private transport providers.
Pupil Strength Building – Link page 60-61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Bullying is based on an imbalance of power; therefore, it is useful to support pupil(s) with strategies to promote assertiveness. Actively teach pupils assertiveness skills e.g. fogging, using powerful words such as thank you, please, sorry, stop etc.

Level 2: Interventions

Continue to use Level 1 interventions, as appropriate.

Individual / Small Group Interventions

<p>Quality Circles: Link pages 48-49</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pupils volunteer and agree to meet regularly with a member of staff to focus on a specific topic related to bullying (e.g. racist bullying, homophobic bullying, name-calling, bullying on the way to and from school, etc.), they develop proposals and ideas for how to tackle the issues.
<p>Support Group Method: Link pages 50-51</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * This is a seven-step, participative, long-term approach, designed to engage peers in supporting the resolution of the bullying concern. It involves the peers of the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour as well as the peers of the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour. The focus is on changing the group dynamic to take a problem solving approach.
<p>Solution Focused Approach: Link pages 52-55</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encourages pupils to explore existing strengths and personal qualities in order to develop solutions to resolve issues and help the pupils within the group to meet their needs without compromising the rights of others.
<p>SEND Code of Practice (COP) and Personal Learning Plan (PLP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Code of Practice (COP) is statutory guidance regarding the identification, assessment and provision to be made for pupils who may have special educational needs, including social, behavioural, emotional and well-being needs (SBEW). * Staff should consider how a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) could be used to support pupil(s) in the resolution of a bullying concern.
<p>Access to Independent Schools Counselling Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All post-primary aged pupils have access to the Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS). Support from this service may be helpful for both the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour. * Alternatively, parents/carers can request a referral for counselling through their GP for additional support.

Mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mediation involves engaging directly and separately with the pupils involved, to understand the difficulties that have arisen and to agree a way forward, which allows all pupils to access education in a supported way. This may include the development of a tailored pupil Code of Conduct behaviour plan, agreed by all pupils involved.
Conflict Resolution: Link pages 57-58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conflict resolution is the process by which two or more young people are supported to reach a peaceful resolution to a dispute/disagreement.
Team around the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Create an identified group of school staff who will work together to formulate and agree a plan of support for a pupil experiencing or displaying bullying behaviour. This group of staff will continue to monitor and review support on a regular basis.

Level 3: Interventions

Continue to use Level 1 & 2 interventions, as appropriate.

Individual / Small Group Interventions

Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ When a risk has been identified through the risk assessment process, implement a risk reduction action plan to identify preventative and reactive strategies for the pupil, school staff and parents to implement with a view to reducing the risk. DE Circular 13 of 2021 - Interim Guidance Restraint and Seclusion
PIKAS Method of Shared Concern: Link pages 62-66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ A non-punitive multi-stage strategy used with groups of pupils who may be displaying bullying behaviour. It facilitates the emergence of a solution to a bullying concern through a series of interviews and discussions with the pupils involved.
Code of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Implement a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) and consider the need for a referral to EA Support Services/outside agencies e.g. Behaviour Support and Provisions (BSP&P), Education Welfare Service (EWS), Autism Advisory Intervention Service (AAIS).
Referral to appropriate External Agencies / Support Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Give consideration to making appropriate onward referrals for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and/or the pupil displaying bullying behaviour with parental permission. These may include CAMHS, GP, the Family Support Hub, (a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary agencies that signpost and provide support as required) or other Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) services. ✦ Where there are safeguarding concerns school should consider the need for submitting a UNOCINI form through the Gateway Service.

Social and Emotional Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide an adult mentor in school who will support the pupil to review positive and negative experiences using a restorative framework e.g. using restorative questions – What happened? What did you do? How did that make you /others feel? What would help next time something similar happens?
Multi-Disciplinary Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School arranges for outside agencies such as. EA Support Services/Social Services/CAMHS etc. to come together and plan/review support for the pupil(s)/school.
Class / Timetable Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Where relationships have broken down significantly, it may be necessary to consider rearranging classes/timetable to reduce contact time between pupil(s). It is important to ensure this step is taken in consultation with the pupil(s) involved/affected and their parents/carers. Care must be taken to ensure that this is a supportive strategy, which should be reviewed and not seen as a punishment or as ‘moving the problem’.

Level 4: Interventions

Whole School / Group Interventions

Critical Incident Response	<p>* If a sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events happens, which causes trauma and overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school then contact should be made with EA's Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) and the school's Critical Incident Policy should be followed Education Authority NI - Critical Incident Response</p>
Provision of support to a number of pupils (e.g. counselling)	<p>* If a number of pupils require a more intensive level of support the school should contact the appropriate EA Service e.g. Education Psychology Service, The Emotional Health & Well-Being Service, Behaviour Support and Provisions, Youth Service, Special Education etc. to seek advice and guidance to enable appropriate onward referrals to be made.</p>

Individual Pupil Intervention

EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS)	<p>* The CPSS has an advice and support helpline for school staff and can provide support, guidance and training in relation to safeguarding and child protection, making referrals to Social Services etc. Education Authority NI - CPSS</p>
Referral to relevant investigative agencies	<p>* Schools should follow their Positive Behaviour Policy and other relevant policies in relation to involving appropriate investigative agencies, e.g. PSNI, Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Team.</p>

Positive Behaviour Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Schools should refer to the DE/EA Guidelines for Suspension and Expulsion to ensure their Positive Behaviour Policy & procedures comply with current legal requirements. Circular 2021/04 - Suspensions and Expulsions Arrangements for pupils in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland
Code of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Progress through the Code of Practice (COP) as appropriate e.g. early Annual Review, move to the next stage.
Referral to external agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Give consideration to making/suggesting appropriate onward referrals e.g. GP, CAMHS, Family Support Hub etc.

Level 1 Interventions – Low Level Bullying Behaviour

Scripts Exemplars: adapt according to age and ability of pupil.

Rights Respecting Script:

'Name-calling (or whatever the hurtful behaviour is) must stop now, thank you. In this school, we all have a right to be safe and a responsibility to keep others safe. I expect you to be thoughtful in how you speak to others.'

Rule Reminder Script:

Teacher: Hitting is unkind. It must stop now. Tell me the rule about how we play with others?

Pupil: We are kind to each other

Teacher: That's right. Good, you've remembered our rule. Now off you go and play nicely thank you.

Expectation Discussion

This strategy requires the pupil to commit verbally to behaving appropriately thus taking greater responsibility for their subsequent behaviour. By referring to specific expectations, it is less likely that the pupil will perceive the correction as a personal attack and therefore be more inclined to accept responsibility for their behaviour.

Step 1: Gain attention	T	Jessica come over here thank you.
	P	Yes Miss
Step 2: Prompt expectation	T	What is the school's expectation about the way we speak to other people? (Prompt for verbal commitment.)
	P	We talk to them with respect.
Step 3: Request the pupil identifies expected future behaviour	T	That's right. What are you going to do now?
	P	Try to be more respectful.
Step 4: Praise their cooperation	T	Well done. Thank you Jessica for choosing to behave respectfully.

Shared Control Discussion

This structured intervention requires the pupil to choose how they will respond to requests to change behaviour while being made aware of the consequences their choice of behaviour will have.

SCENARIO 1-Compliant pupil

Teacher notices that Jessica is verbally abusing another pupil.

Step 1: Bring attention to the behaviour	T	Jessica you are being disrespectful, what should you be doing?
	P	Being respectful to that cow?
Step 2: Give choice and consequences for continuing and alternative	T	Being disrespectful is not acceptable in this school. You can continue to be disrespectful and I'll make a note in your diary or you can choose to be more respectful and you can get on with what you are doing.
	T	I know you will make the right choice.
Step 4: Give time to choose	P	(Thinking)
	T	(Waiting briefly) What did you decide?
	P	I'll try to be more respectful.
Step 5: Praise	T	Excellent, thank you Jessica for being respectful to others.

SCENARIO 2- Non-compliant pupil

Teacher notices that Jessica is verbally abusing another pupil.

Step 1: Bring attention to the behaviour	T	Jessica you are being disrespectful, what should you be doing?
	P	Being respectful to that cow?
Step 2: Give choice and consequences for continuing and alternative	T	Being disrespectful is not acceptable in this school. You can continue to be disrespectful and I'll make a note in your diary or you can choose to be more respectful and you can get on with what you are doing.
	T	I know you will make the right choice.
Step 4: Give time to choose	P	(Thinking)
	T	(Waiting briefly) What did you decide?
	P	You can't make me be nice to everyone.
Step 5: Follow through	T	I see <u>you've decided Jessica</u> that I should write in your diary about your behaviour for your parents to comment.

Restorative Questions

Use the five self-reflective, restorative questions in the sequence listed below. This approach should enable the pupil who displays bullying behaviour to take responsibility for their hurtful actions and act to promote reparation by making things better, putting it right.

Use Open Restorative Questions

- * What happened?
- * How did you feel about...?
- * What were you thinking at the time?
- * How do you think your actions made others feel?
- * What did you choose to do/say then?
- * What different choice could you make next time this happens?

The Debrief: A Skilled Restorative Intervention. Helping Young people take the Learning out of the Experience

Debriefing is a post-incident process designed to help a young person reflect on and understand how:

- * Our thoughts and feelings lead us to choose certain actions.
- * Changing how we think & feel helps us make different choices.
- * Different choices have different outcomes.

Interventions such as 'Worth a Rethink', 'Think Time Discussion Sheet', 'Look, Link and Learn' provide effective low-level reflective debriefing strategies with both the pupil experiencing and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour.

All Behaviour is Communication

Helping a young person to understand their behaviour develops an increased self-awareness enabling self-regulation. To engage the young person in this process, it is important to establish a mutually respectful relationship based on unconditional regard, trust and openness. Such a relationship is best promoted by engaging in a restorative dialogue, which is facilitated by the skills of active listening, paraphrasing, summarising, acknowledging feelings, affirming and when appropriate with silence. The table below provides an overview of the debriefing process.

The Debriefing Process

Use Open Restorative Questions	Possible Prompts:	Give permission to talk by using non-verbal reinforcements such as:
What happened?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who ..., Where ..., When ...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tone
How did you feel about...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss emotional impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pace
How do you think your actions made others feel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empathise – “That must have been very difficult”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Nods
What were you thinking?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Smiles
What did you choose to do/say then?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss how this contributed to what happened – what impact did this choice have on you/others? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Echoing the last word
What different choice could you make next time this happens?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestions of positive actions – “Could you perhaps have...?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mm’s of agreement ✓ Lean slightly forward
What do you think we need to do now to make this better/right?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to avoid offering your solutions. Try – “Have you thought about...?” or “Would you consider...?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relaxed eye contact ✓ Silence ✓ Paraphrase/ summarise
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affirm ✓ Empathise

Using this restorative approach enables young people to realise that by changing how we feel and think, we change the choices we make and consequently the outcomes, which follow. Consistent use of interventions such as Worth a Rethink, and Think Time Discussion Sheet aids understanding, which enables young people to make better choices.

Worth a Re-Think [For Pupil Displaying Bullying Behaviour]

A process for helping pupils, either individually or in small groups, to develop more appropriate responses to a range of situations through reflecting on:

Happenings → thoughts → feelings → behaviour → consequences

What happened?	What did you think?	How did you feel?	What did you do?	Consequences
I keep going on & on at Billy. He then called me a name.	I can't let him away with this. Others will think must be a real loser.	Very angry. Determined to get him. Need to feel in control.	I punched Billy really hard. That took the smile off his face.	I was told off/suspended for my bullying behaviour.

Next time Billy turns on you & calls you names what could you do differently so that the consequences changed and you don't get into trouble?

What happened?	What did you think?	How did you feel?	What did you do?	Consequences
I'd started to go on again but suddenly realised I needed to stop.	It's not fair to wind Billy up. He's not able to take it.	OK. Cool as I stayed in control.	Apologised to Billy for winding him up & getting him into trouble.	Billy stopped calling me names. We're getting on better now.

Worth a Re-Think [For Pupil Experiencing Bullying Behaviour]

What happened?	What did you think?	How did you feel?	What did you do?	Consequences
Sue called me stupid, fat, ginger again.	Everybody hates me. I hate my hair. She's always doing this.	Terrible. I hate this school. Everybody hates me.	I ran off and cried. Everybody laughed. I felt very upset.	I felt embarrassed, stupid and alone.

Next time Sue calls you names what could you do differently so that the consequences change and you are not upset or feel stupid?

What happened?	What did you think?	How did you feel?	What did you do?	Consequences
Sue called me stupid, fat, ginger again.	Sue is just trying to wind me up. She's not very nice.	School's ok, but maybe she has a problem.	Ignored her. Avoided her. Made a joke of it. Told the teacher.	Still feel a little embarrassed. Much better because I stood up for myself.

Think Time Discussion and Review Meetings

In a one-to-one meeting, the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour may be asked to work through a 'Think Time' Discussion and subsequent Review Sheet to promote reparation. In some circumstances, such questions may also be appropriate to use with the pupil experiencing bullying, for example if they could change something about their own behaviour, which may reduce the likelihood of them being bullied. For obvious reasons this would have to be handled very sensitively. Please note - this should NOT be treated as a sanction.

Page 1: Think Time Discussion Sheet

- * A pupil may be asked to complete Page 1 independently prior to meeting with a member of staff; alternatively, the pupil may be asked to complete it together with a member of staff during a one-to-one meeting.
- * The information generated can be used to inform the development of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) / [Social Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing \(SBEW\) Plan](#).
- * Depending on age and ability, individual pupils may need greater support in completing this document.
- * Works best when it is used as a non-punitive intervention giving the pupil an opportunity to self-reflect on their behaviour in a positive way. When associated with detention it may be seen as a punishment and therefore result in negative outcomes.
- * While it is unnecessary to share the specific details of the agreed actions with the target, it is important to reassure the target that action has been taken, that the situation will be monitored and that there is an expectation that things will improve.
- * In a group bullying situation it is advisable that each pupil completes and discusses the form on an individual basis.
- * While space has been left for up to three restorative actions, less may suffice.
- * If a pupil is not able to suggest an appropriate action to make things better, staff will need to offer some suggestions and ask pupils to prioritise these.
- * It is at the discretion of the school whether a parent's signature is required.

Page 2: Review Meeting Discussion Sheet

After an appropriate period of time, e.g. one week, staff and pupil meet again to review and discuss agreed action(s) and their effectiveness in resolving the situation. The current situation should be reviewed and recorded on this sheet. Future actions will depend on the outcome of the initial review.

- * The monitoring process works best when assessments are based on a range of relevant perspectives, which will include feedback from the pupil displaying bullying behaviour, the pupil who has been bullied, and where relevant, peers, staff, parents/carers.
- * To assess the success of the actions agreed on page 1 it is useful to meet with the target beforehand to establish what if any improvement has taken place.
- * To monitor the effectiveness of the agreed actions with the target use open questions such as:
 - o *How did things go for you today in the playground?*
 - o *In what ways have things got better for you?*

Review of outcomes: comments could include one or more of the examples below:

- * No further action is required at this stage.
- * Ongoing monitoring of the situation is necessary e.g. weekly review with all pupils involved is required.
- * The pupil has agreed to participate in The Support Group Method – level 2/3 intervention.
- * A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) (Code of Practice) will be devised and implemented.
- * Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with appropriate member of staff/Head of Year/Senior Leadership Team.

PAGE 1

Think Time Discussion Sheet

Name _____ Class _____ Date ___/___/___

This is what happened.

This is what I was thinking/feeling at the time.

This is what I chose to do.

Who was affected by what I did?

How were they affected by my actions?

What action(s) do I need to take now to make things better/right?

1

2

3

Signatures

Staff _____

Pupil _____

Date _____

Parents/Carers Informed. YES / NO?

PAGE 2

Review Meeting Discussion Sheet**Date:** _____

The actions I decided to take to make things better were:	Done	Not Done	Results/consequences of my actions
1.			
2.			
3.			

Comments:**REVIEW OF OUTCOMES****Signatures:**

Staff _____

Pupil _____

Date _____

Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

Group Support

Quality Circles

This problem-solving approach, advocated by Cowie and Sharp*, provides pupils with a forum in which issues surrounding bullying can be addressed.

Application

The group comprising 6-8 pupils meets weekly for approximately 45 minutes. To deal with a specific problem the Quality Circle works through the following five steps:

Step 1: Determining the problem

- * Pupils take turns to mind shower issues/problems arising from specific bullying behaviour. A 'pass' rule operates if a pupil does not have a contribution to make.
- * A scribe lists the ideas on a flip chart.
- * There is no discussion at this stage.
- * On completion, the pupils vote to prioritise the listed items.

Step 2: Mind showering possible causes

- * Pupils look for possible causes of the problem, using a series of *WHY* questions
- * In the interim before the next meeting, pupils may choose to collect data by:
 - o Interviewing a sample of pupils.
 - o Making observations during an agreed time slot.
 - o Conducting a survey.

Step 3: Developing a solution

- * Pupils having identified causes, explore possible solutions using a series of *HOW* questions to formulate an action plan.
- * Members of the group take on three defined roles:
 - o *The Inquirer* whose role is to ask *HOW* questions until all possibilities are exhausted.
 - o *The Respondent* whose role is to answer the questions.
 - o *The Observer* whose role is to record the answers given.
- * Once the entire *HOW* questions have been answered pupils discuss the pros and cons of each proposal and evaluate how costly and realistic each proposal is.

Students Themselves Tackle the Problem of Bullying. Pastoral Care December 1992, Cowie, H. and Sharp, S (1992)

Step 4: Offering solutions to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for feedback

- * The group prepares a professional presentation outlining their agreed suggestions.
- * The presentation is given to members of the SLT/Principal using a variety of techniques.
- * Group members answer SLT questions and present arguments to justify their decisions.

Step 5: Reviewing and evaluating the solution(s) offered

- * Following the presentation, the SLT and/or Principal decide on the suitability of the proposed solution/s.
- * If adopted, the SLT implements the solution/s and following evaluation meets with the group to give feedback. If the SLT chooses not to adopt the solution/s, they meet with the group to discuss the matter and explain their decision.

The Support Group Method

This approach, originated by Maines and Robinson*, typically addresses cases of bullying in which there is some group involvement. It is important to recognise that although no one is being blamed for the bullying, this approach challenges pupils to accept joint responsibility to improve the situation for the pupil experiencing bullying. This approach works best when:

- * It is used to manage incidents of 'low' severity i.e. levels 1-2 incidents.
- * Positive peer pressure is constructively channelled.
- * Staff have undertaken training and are skilled facilitators in using this intervention.

Application

There are seven steps in the approach, beginning with a meeting with the target. This is followed by holding a meeting with the group of pupils who have engaged in the bullying and a number of other pupils who can be expected to be supportive of the target. The target is not included in the group meetings.

Step 1: Meet with the pupil experiencing bullying

- * Establish the impact that the bullying has had.
- * Invite them to provide an account of the distress experienced. This may be verbalised, written or drawn.
- * Ask them to identify those involved in bullying behaviour towards them and suggest the names of people to form a group who could help solve the problem.
- * Assure them that no one will be blamed.

Step 2: Convene a group meeting comprising 6-8 pupils

- * Include those who have been identified as being involved in the bullying and those who are expected to support the pupil experiencing bullying.
- * Ensure that all have consented to join the group, understand what is involved and will commit to attending required meetings.

Step 3: Explain the problem

- * Explain the problem to the group and especially the distress that the target is feeling using evidence provided by them.
- * Neither outline specific incidents nor make accusations.

Step 4: Promote shared responsibility

- * Emphasise that no one is going to be blamed.
- * Everyone is here to work collaboratively to solve the problem.
- * Everyone has a responsibility to improve the situation.

The Support Group Method, Barbara Maines & George Robinson, 2010, Sage Publishing

Step 5: Ask for ideas

- * Ask for suggestions as to how things may be made better for the pupil being bullied.
- * Invite each member to state specifically, what action they will take to help the pupil being bullied.

Step 6: Leave it up to them

- * Give responsibility to the group expressing expectation that each will act according to their commitment.
- * Thank each member for their support.
- * Tell pupils that there will be further individual meetings with group members to see how things are going.

Step 7: Final meetings

- * Meet with members individually to ascertain progress.
- * Meet with pupil experiencing bullying as part of the monitoring process.
- * Assess and record the intervention's level of success.
- * Review situation. If unsuccessful, refer to the table of interventions to select another approach. It is not recommended that you repeat this intervention.

Solution Focussed Approach

Traditional approaches to bringing about change in bullying situations are often based on a problem-solving model. The Solution Focussed Approach is substantially different and takes the focus away from exploring the problem or gathering detailed accounts and facts / information to analyse the concern. The focus of attention and action is on bringing about the preferred state of affairs, by exploring existing strengths and personal qualities that will further develop a solution. This allows for a quicker resolution that helps pupils to fulfil their needs without compromising the rights of others.

Problem Solving Solution Focussed

Identify and define the problem
Analyse/discuss causes
Propose remedies
Plan interventions
Review

Vision – preferred future without problem
Identify and value existing strengths
Suggest next steps
Innovate
Celebrate

Note that during a solution-focussed intervention with small groups or individuals, the focus involved is not on the bullying, but on those times when it is not happening.

Application

Quick Summary

- * Interview the pupil being bullied to get the names of those involved in bullying behaviour towards them, the names of bystanders and their friends.
- * Convene a support group:
 - * Raise empathy.
 - * Ask for suggestions.
 - * Pass over responsibility and arrange to review.
- * Review with target (2 review meetings are normally sufficient).

For script see pages 53 - 55

Meet with the Pupil Being Bullied

Begin with non-problem talk and ask 'easy' preliminary questions, which set the pupil at ease writing down these details as you, go so it will not seem alarming when it comes to your recording the names of others involved.

Teacher: Sam, sorry to call you out of Maths class! Which teacher were you with?
Pupil: Mr Smith.
Teacher: (Write it down) ...and how do you spell your last name...
Pupil: Replies.
Teacher: (Write it down)

It is more comfortable for someone experiencing bullying to admit others are worried. Note that the words 'at present' imply that the problem is transitory and that the word bullying is not used!

Teacher: I've been talking with your mum because she's worried that things are not so happy for you at school at present...
Pupil: Nods head.

The teacher speaks with quiet confidence about the expected positive outcome. There is no need to ask about details of what has happened, when, where, how they feel etc. In this solution-focussed model, this would be counter-productive.

Teacher: I believe I will be able to help you. Would you like some help with this?
Pupil: Mmmm.
Teacher: I need to ask you some questions if that's OK?
Pupil: Mmmm.
Teacher: I do need to know who is involved but don't worry – I'm not going to get anyone into trouble, OK?

The membership of the support group is based on names given by the targeted pupil. There are three constituents of the support group-pupils displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and friends. Start by asking for the names of pupils perceived by this pupil as threatening, writing down their names. If more than four names are mentioned, ask, "Who are the main ones?"

Teacher: Who are you finding difficult at the moment? Who is making you worried or unhappy in school?
Pupil: It's Darren and Craig - they call me names.
Teacher: Right Darren and Craig (*write down these pupils names only*).

An essential ingredient is the presence of bystanders.

Teacher: Who else is around when this happens? Who sees it happening?
Pupil: Carl and Alastair.
Teacher: OK (*write down these names only*).

Now find out about this pupil's friends. If bullying has been going on for some time this pupil may believe they have no friends. It is not unusual for a pupil to name someone as a friend who has also been named earlier, as either a bystander or someone who is bullying. Try to get the names of two or three friends and again convey optimism about how they can and will help.

Teacher:	If you could choose one other person to be your friend, who would that be?
Pupil:	Darren. (<i>Teacher records that name.</i>)
Teacher:	Right, I am going to ask these friends to help make things better for you in school. I will need to see you again to hear how things are going and see how things are improving for you. Is that OK?
Pupil:	Yes.
Teacher:	I am sure that things will begin to improve really quite quickly so I will send for you again on Wednesday morning and you can tell me then how you are getting on.

Make this arrangement to see the pupil to check how they are getting on. Where a pupil is more distressed, have a quick check at intervals during the day. End the conversation with reassurance that things will improve. Invite the pupil to tell you next time you meet about what they have noticed is improving! This creates an expectation of improvement and this expectation has a powerful influence on what this pupil notices.

Teacher:	Meanwhile I want you to notice what is better so you can tell me about it when we meet tomorrow/Wednesday. I hope you haven't missed too much class. I'll see you on Wednesday.
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Convene the Support Group

Implement the Support Group Meeting by convening the group made up from names mentioned as causing the pupil difficulties and friends or potential friends. Explain to them that you are concerned about Sam, that they have been selected because you know they can help and that the aim for this group is to help make Sam happier in school. Do not go into detail about the bullying Sam has been experiencing and do not suggest any blame for this.

Gain their commitment and raise their empathy for this pupil by having them talk about occasions when they were unhappy in school. Ask for suggestions complementing all these and writing them down showing you accept and value these while gently guiding their actions. The essential point is that the pupils in the group make the suggestions and choose to do them rather than the teacher making suggestions about what these pupils could or should do in the future. Check that they think they can do it rather than asking them to be friends with the targeted pupil and then compliment them for their kindness.

Pass over responsibility to the group and arrange to review.

Review with the Pupil Being Bullied

This can be a very short meeting in which the teacher discusses any improvements, congratulates them and acknowledges their role in the solution.

Teacher:	How are things going?
Pupil:	Fine.
Teacher:	Have you noticed what's been better?
Pupil:	Yes. Carl's been talking to me at dinnertime.
Teacher:	Oh, so you've been talking with Carl.
Pupil:	Yes, and with Wayne.
Teacher:	So you're managing to talk more with others, that's good, well done! I think everything will be OK now but I'm going to continue to check back with you so you can tell me how things are getting better and what you have been noticing and doing differently.

The Fogging Exercise

This script is intended to illustrate how the fogging technique can work and to guide teachers and pupils in how to respond to bullying-type behaviour such as name calling, criticising and belittling another. If used successfully, it can support pupils who are the target of bullying behaviour and strengthen them to respond to this behaviour where they begin to feel more in control and to have increased confidence.

It is important for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour to feel comfortable with the language and phrases used so it is acceptable to replace those used here.

In this example, **A** denotes a pupil displaying bullying behaviour, and **B** the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour.

- A:** You have a big nose.
B: That's true; I do have a big nose.
A: It's so large I think I'll call you Pinocchio.
B: OK I like that name, Pinocchio it is.
A: You are the dumbest person in the whole school.
B: That might be true.
A: You should be in the Special Needs Unit.
B: I can see why you might think that.
A: You must be really stupid to keep agreeing with me.
B: That's true.
A: You keep saying that's true.
B: That's true.

The target changes tack and begins now to answer a question with a question. The idea is to confuse the pupil with this response and they have to explain.

- A:** Why are you so dumb?
B: Why do you think I'm dumb?
A: Nobody likes you.
B: That's your opinion. Why do you think that?
A: You're always on your own at lunch.
B: That's true. Why does that bother you?
A: Only losers spend lunchtime on their own.
B: That's your opinion.
A: You are thick.
B: It may seem like that to you.

Practice is important to become confident in using this technique.

Conflict Resolution

The definition of conflict resolution is to resolve an issue or problem between two or more people. The potential for conflict exists because people have different needs, views and values. The challenge for schools, as for the wider community, is to find ways of managing conflict constructively so that those involved can learn and grow from the experience.

Conflict Resolution is a structured, goal-directed process that follows clear steps, and resolves disputes confidentially. An independent third party, the mediator, helps the pupils to talk with one another, and to listen to one another's grievances. Through this exchange of information pupils, gain insight into how the other is feeling about the situation, and they achieve understanding and respect. The mediator focuses discussion between the pupils on problem solving rather than blame and punishment.

1. Creating the context and explaining the process– a comfortable and private space and sufficient uninterrupted time are provided. Time needs to be spent explaining the process and the expectations/ground rules.
2. Listening to what has happened and gathering information: it is essential that both sides are enabled to tell their story in turn and without interruption. The more information you have about the cause of the problem, the more easily you can help to resolve it. To get the information you need, use a series of questions to identify the cause. Ask open-ended questions of each pupil in turn to get the details. Don't ask why they did something. Don't ask for interpretation. Stick to facts. Give time to explain – try to develop language.
3. Defining the problems and concerns - Use the pupil's words to restate the problem, clarifying issues, and reframing hurtful language. Check that everyone agrees with your account.
4. Focusing on the future and finding solutions – solutions that suit both parties are sought from the parties themselves. After getting each pupil's viewpoint, the next step is to get him or her to identify how the situation could be changed. Again, question the pupils to gather their ideas: "How can you make things better between you?" Respect all ideas, while leading pupils to think through cause and effect to make them workable. Make sure they are specific (not "share" but who and when). **DO NOT IMPOSE YOUR SOLUTION.**
5. Concluding – a shared agreement is confirmed and sometimes written down. Pupils may need help implementing the solution, or more discussion may be needed if one pupil is still upset. Check to see that each pupil is content with the solution. Praise the pupils for solving the problem.

A mediator uses the following skills:

- * A non-judgemental tone of voice and impartial body language.
- * Questions that will lead the discussion forward.
- * Active listening.
- * Acknowledgement of feelings.
- * Positive reframing of information.

Teach pupils to use the conflict resolution, problem-solving stars* and solution focused steps set out below.

The 6 Point Star Plan for Resolving Conflict:

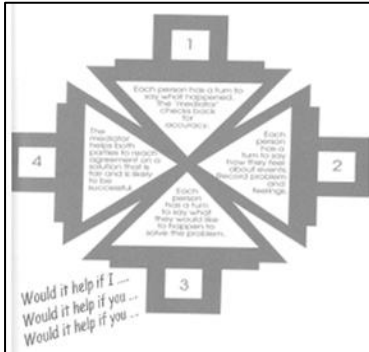


TEACH & PRACTICE THE STEPS WITH PUPILS

1. Each person states the problem as he/she sees it.
2. Each person then says “I need” and states what their need is
3. Brainstorm possible solutions.
4. Record the suggestions and agree on one.
5. Agree on areas of actions & who is to be responsible.
6. Agree date/time /place to meet to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and amend as necessary.

The key to success is for all parties to listen actively to one another ensuring everyone’s needs are met.

The 4 Point Star Plan for Problem Solving

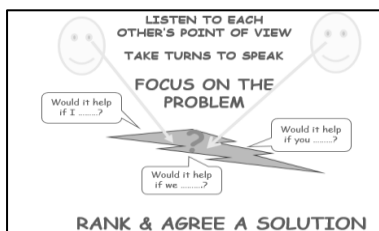


TEACH & PRACTICE THE STEPS WITH PUPILS

1. Each person has a turn to say what happened. The ‘mediator’ checks back for accuracy.
2. Each person has a turn to say how he/she feels about events. Record problem & feelings.
3. Each person has a turn to say what he/she would like to happen to solve the problem.
4. The ‘Mediator’ helps both parties to reach an agreement on a solution that is fair & likely to be successful. Record the suggestions and agree on one.

By using a third person, young people can be helped to look at the difficulties and resolve them. At first, the teacher will need to model the process but with practice, young people can use the plan on their own.

Solution Focus



TEACH PUPILS TO:

1. Focus on the issue rather than on the personalities involved.
2. Take turns to speak.
3. Listen to each other’s points of view.
4. Use the “Would it help...” scripts.
5. Rank & agree solutions.

Personal and Social Education for Primary Schools. NASEN, Bromfield, C. and Curry, M.

Level 3 Interventions – Complex Bullying Behaviour

It is clear that more complex bullying situations, which may be resistant to change, require the school to collaborate and network with parents/carers and other agencies, in addition to working with individual pupils.

Consequently, at this level, concerns regarding a pupil's bullying behaviour require a formal referral to the Pastoral Coordinator or other identified individual, who will assume over-arching responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of school-based interventions. In addition, they will have a lead role when liaising with external agencies. This referral would be accompanied by the updated, Bullying Concern Assessment Form.

The Pastoral Coordinator will refer to the school's Positive Behaviour/Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policies to ensure that the response is consistent with the provisions in these policies.

These pupils will be at Stage 3 of The SEN Code of Practice requiring that the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSCO), in partnership with the Pastoral Coordinator determine appropriate interventions. The inappropriate pupil behaviour should be identified within A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) with the intervention detailed in the Behaviour Support Plan. It is imperative that other school staff implementing discrete interventions have been assigned responsibility accordingly.

At this level, the Pastoral Coordinator should use all available information to inform a Risk Assessment and Action Plan. This assessment should involve an analysis of the presenting Risk Factors and Protective Factors. This risk analysis will determine the level of risk and needs and appropriate intervention from the framework. We consider these in terms of the following:

- * School Environment
- * Family Environment
- * Peer Environment
- * Psycho-social characteristics of the individual pupil

Behaviour Support and Provisions within the EA have individual Risk Assessment Forms, which determine a plan of intervention, and risk management that would be communicated to the pupil, teacher(s) and parents/carers. Copies can be downloaded from the EA website under School Management [Behaviour Support and Provisions - RRAP](#)

This planning may also occur through a multi-agency discussion. For vulnerable pupils at higher risk the Pastoral Coordinator should further liaise with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and consider whether a UNOCINI assessment for Family Support by The Health and Social Care Trust is required. UNOCINI assessment forms can be downloaded from <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/understanding-needs-children-northern-ireland-unocini-guidance>

Strength Building

It is clear that pupils who engage in repetitive and/or severe bullying behaviour require additional measures in order for their behaviour to be influenced. This is especially the case for pupils who present with many risk factors and few protective factors.

Research shows that such pupils often have delays in one or more of their social and emotional capabilities, as well as being disconnected from positive relationships, programmes and opportunities in their school, home and community. Such pupils require strength building interventions. Individual action plans for ‘strengthening’ such pupils should focus on developing their social emotional skills and values.

Responsibility for strengthening the skills can be assumed by class or form teachers, LSCO or senior teacher with pastoral responsibility and may involve support from other professionals, such as the school counsellor or Education Welfare Officer and, as appropriate, other external agencies.

Parents/carers will be informed of the programme, their consent obtained and wherever possible they will be involved in and will contribute to this intervention, reinforcing the pupil’s skills beyond the school setting.

Pupils who are functioning at a high level of wellbeing

Such pupils have higher levels of achievement and come from generally supportive school, home and community backgrounds. The plan could involve promoting their connections to positive peer role models and opportunities to collaborate with these peers in improving the wellbeing of the pupil who was targeted. This could be achieved by using Small Group Interventions such as The Support Group Method, the PIKAS Method of Shared Concern, restorative meetings and restorative conferencing.

An intervention should be restorative in orientation. The use of a behavioural contract linked to an IEP and/or the School’s Risk Assessment Action Plan should also include social and emotional mentoring to strengthen this pupil resilience, teach conflict resolution skills and develop empathy. Intensive work with this pupil’s parents will also be required at this level.

Pupils who are functioning at lower levels of wellbeing

“Pupils who bully and feel disengaged from the school community (Eisenberg, et al, 2003), feel unsupported at home (Perren and Hornung, 2005) and possess ineffective coping strategies (Smith, 2004)”

Such pupils have few protective factors and many risk factors and consequently experience additional emotional and behavioural difficulties. They are likely to under-achieve, have poorer resilience, social skills and values, learning capabilities and have weaker connections with positive adults and programmes in their school, home, and community. Individualised, strength-

building plans and strengthening connections should be developed and implemented.

It is often the case that in addition to the Pastoral Coordinator, other professionals from community agencies can assist in providing suggestions for connecting the pupil to the community.

For more resources, see pages 81, 90-95 and 97-99 of “Safe Schools Are Effective Schools”, School Procedures and Practices for Responding to Students Who Bully: Professor Michael E Bernard, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne <http://tinyurl.com/niabf11>

PIKAS - Method of Shared Concern

(Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University)

The Method of Shared Concern aims to change the behaviour of pupils involved in bullying incidents and improve the situation of the pupil being bullied. The method employs a non-punitive, non-blaming and non-aggressive approach to individual and group discussion of the incidents. Each pupil involved in the bullying incident participates in a series of individual discussions with a staff member, beginning with the pupil who engaged in the bullying behaviour. Clearly defined steps are used to reach a point where the pupil displaying bullying behaviour agrees that the pupil being bullied is having a difficult time. The pupil is then encouraged to suggest and try out ways of helping to improve the situation for pupil being bullied. The pupil being bullied is also provided with the opportunity to discuss the incident and encouraged to consider ways in which they can improve their own situation.

This method of managing bullying incidents is based on the following principles:

- * Bullying occurs in a group context.
- * Changing the social dynamics that maintain bullying will prevent further bullying incidents.
- * Promoting a shift in behaviour by encouraging empathy and concern for others.
- * Punitive measures model and reinforce the use of power to meet needs and wants and put students at risk of revenge.

The Method of Shared Concern was evaluated through a series of interviews with thirty pupils and six teachers participating in the Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project.

Three quarters of the pupils interviewed perceived the situation as improving in the short-term, that is, bullying decreased. They attributed this success to being provided the opportunity to express their feelings and perspectives on the situation individually and being encouraged to propose their own solutions rather than having one imposed by an adult. All but one of the teachers interviewed perceived the method to have reduced the frequency and severity of bullying behaviour. Both teachers and students saw the group meeting, at which the pupils all come together, as important in providing a forum for long-term maintenance of behaviour change.

Some teachers may face difficulty putting this method into practice. The Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project found that senior management needed to be committed to providing support structures that enabled staff to spend the time necessary to 'chat' with individual pupils. Where schools had integrated the method into their anti-bullying policy as one of a range of strategies to deal with bullying incidents it was implemented more frequently and followed up more effectively. While the Method of Shared Concern appears useful as an immediate action, to be successful in the longer term it is important that it is embedded within a whole school approach to bullying prevention.

Application of PIKAS Method of Shared Concern

Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviours are assisted through individual and group meetings. The PIKAS Method of Shared concern is more complex than the Support Group Method, and involves a number of stages.

1. The pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviours are interviewed individually

Pupils who have been identified as being involved in the bullying of a fellow pupil are interviewed individually, starting with the person who is thought to fill most closely, the role of 'ringleader'. The member of staff explains that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the distressing situation of the pupil who has been harmed or upset in some way. It is important that no accusations are made, simply that there is an acknowledgement that the target is experiencing distress. When there is this acknowledgement from the pupil being interviewed, the staff member invites the pupil to suggest how the situation can be improved. Suggestions are reinforced and arrangements are made to meet again to ascertain progress. This process is repeated with each pupil involved. See page 64 for a sample script.

2. Meeting with the pupil being bullied

Only after each pupil involved has been interviewed does the member of staff arrange to meet with the young person experiencing bullying behaviour. In talking with him or her, the member of staff discovers more about the situation and explores the dynamics involved. This may, to some extent, include exploring the possibility that they may have acted to provoke the bullying behaviour. Importantly, this is not viewed as an excuse for the bullying behaviour, and they are never blamed for provoking the behaviour. The member of staff explains that in conversation with the individual pupils there was a readiness on their part to help resolve the problem. See page 65 for a sample script.

3. Follow up individual meeting with pupils involved in bullying behaviour

In individual meetings with these pupils, the member of staff asks about actions that have been undertaken to improve the situation.

4. Meeting with pupils displaying bullying behaviours as a group

As soon as there is evidence of progress a meeting is convened with the identified group. They are congratulated on the positive things they have done and asked what could be done next. The member of staff leads the group to a point where it is appropriate to consider inviting the target to join them, to reach a solution. Pupils must be carefully prepared for this meeting. They are required to indicate what they are prepared to say and agree to as part of this. If they believe that concessions are needed from the target (if they believe they have acted to provoke the bullying behaviour), a plan is drawn up by the group members to handle the situation.

5. The target is invited to join the group

The pupil being bullied is duly invited to join the group and – if necessary – prepared for the meeting. This could include discussing how they might respond to what the pupils in the group might have to say.

6. Final meeting with the all pupils involved

This meeting provides an opportunity for the identified pupils to resolve their differences. In some cases, a mediated solution may be brought forward. To reduce the chances of any recurrence of the problem, the participants may be asked to draw up an agreement or contract stating what they have undertaken to do.

The assumptions underlying the PIKAS – Method of Shared Concern are:

- * In cases of group, bullying it is better to begin with meetings with pupils individually rather than as a group. In part, this is because working with a group tends to be difficult in bullying situations. It is often possible to connect with pupils as individuals and gain their acknowledgement that the pupil being bullied is distressed and needs to be helped.
- * As individuals, pupils who have bullied someone are much more likely to feel empathy for the target and to offer to help if they are not in a group. Some, at least, may come to want to see the problem solved, so that they no longer feel any responsibility for an enduring distressing situation.
- * Some pupils that experience bullying are provocative (a minority) and this needs to be explored. However, it is important that this is never seen as an acceptable excuse for bullying behaviour, and that these pupils are never blamed for the bullying behaviour. This may require mediation before any solution is possible.
- * Enduring solutions to bullying behaviours are much more likely when the pupils displaying bullying behaviours as a group have agreed to a course of action that will result in all pupils being safe.

(Adapted from *Bullying in Schools; Six Methods of Intervention*, Ken Rigby)

Steps for ‘Method of Shared Concern’

MODEL A –Meeting with a child who has been displaying bullying behaviour

Step 1

“I have asked you to come and speak with me because I have heard that some bad things have been happening to ‘x’ that are making them very unhappy at school.”

- * Wait for the child to respond.
- * If the student does not respond ask, “Do you know anything about this that might help me?”
- * Do not try to force the child to ‘own up’ or admit to their involvement, simply to acknowledge that there is a situation, which is making x unhappy.
- * If the child complains about x, do not question; just let the child explain their situation.

Step 2

“So it sounds like x is having a bit of a tough time.”

- * Wait for the child to respond.
- * As soon as the child agrees and acknowledges that x is having a bad time and is unhappy move to Step 3.
- * If the child says that x is to blame, accept the point but suggest that x is still having a bad time and is unhappy.

Step 3

“Well I was wondering what you could do to help to improve the situation for x to help them to become happier at school.”

- * Accept any suggestions with positive feedback.
- * Do not question their suggestions if they are positive.
- * If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether they think this would help x to feel happier.
- * If the student cannot think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea ask them to take some time to think about something they could do to help make x feel happier then move to Step 4.

Step 4

“OK. I’ll see you next week to find out how you are getting on.”

- * If the child had an idea then you will say you will see them to “discuss how their idea went when they tried it.”
- * If they did not have an idea then say, you will see them to “discuss the idea they have come up with.”

Steps for 'Method of Shared Concern'

MODEL B - Meeting with the child who has been experiencing bullying behaviour

Step 1

"I have asked you to come and speak with me because I have heard that some bad things have been happening to you that are making you very unhappy at school."

- * Wait for the child to respond.
- * Let the child explain their situation. Then simply acknowledge that there is a situation, which is making them unhappy.

Step 2

"So it sounds like you are having a bit of a tough time."

- * Wait for the child to respond.
- * As soon as the child agrees and acknowledges go to Step 3.

Step 3 (a)

"I have spoken to a few students about your situation and they have made a few good suggestions to help you to feel happier and safer at school."

- * If the pupil is concerned about this, reassure them that you will be keeping a close eye on what is happening.
- * Let the pupil know that there may be a few changes in the behaviour of some other pupils towards them.
- * If you feel the child could help the situation by changing some of their behaviour go to Step 3(b).

Step 3 (b)

"I was wondering what you could do to help to improve the situation for yourself to help you to become happier at school."

- * Accept any suggestions with positive feedback.
- * Do not question their suggestions if they are positive.
- * If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether they think this would help them to feel happier.
- * If the student cannot think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea, ask them to take some time to think about something they could do to help to feel happier then move to Step 4.

Step 4

"OK. I'll see you next week to find out how you are getting on."

- * If the child had an idea then you will say you will see them to "discuss how their idea went when they tried it."
- * If they did not have an idea then say, you will see them to "discuss the idea they have come up with."

Level 4 Interventions – High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Child Safeguarding Procedures will need to be invoked.

School's Pastoral Co-ordinators will need to liaise with the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and members of schools leadership team, pupils, their parents/carers and work together in partnership with a range of external professionals and agencies to develop an inter-agency risk management and/or safeguarding plan. This may incorporate intensive support services to the pupils involved and their families.

Appropriate staff with specific responsibility, such as LSCO and Designated Teacher for Child Protection, should be involved where concerns are of this level. Schools should respond to pupils' needs and presenting risk, consistent with the SEN Code of Practice (Social, Emotional and Behavioural) Stages 3/4 and with reference to the Department of Education's (DE's) most current Safeguarding and Child Protection guidance.

[Safeguarding and Child Protection in School: A Guide for Schools.](#)

The Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy should be instigated, in line with Chapter 5 of these Procedures, in the following circumstances:

- anti-bullying procedures have failed to be effective
- bullying is persistent and severe, resulting in the victim suffering/likely to suffer significant harm
- there are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the bully suffering/likely to suffer significant harm
- where concerns exist in relation to the parent's/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child.



Effective responses to bullying behaviour



Revised January 2022

Acting Together To End Bullying

www.niabf.org.uk



Northern Ireland
Anti-Bullying Forum



ea Education
Authority



Department of
Education
www.education-ni.gov.uk