



The Anti-Bullying Alliance is a unique collaboration of over 60 organisations who work together to influence national and local policy and practice with the aim of ensuring children and young people experience safe and positive environments free from bullying and harm.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance website provides a gateway to a range of resources and links to useful websites including those of member organisations.

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



DfEE (2000) Bullying - Don't suffer in silence: An anti-bullying pack for schools. Ref: DfEE 0064/2000 London: Department for Education and Employment.

Available from 0845 6022260

This pack from the Department for Education and Skills provides advice and guidance for schools about their responsibilities in relation to bullying prevention and management.

[www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

OFFICE OF THE  
Children's  
COMMISSIONER

Office of the Children's Commissioner  
[www.childrenscommissioner.org](http://www.childrenscommissioner.org)  
1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG.

☎ 0844 800 9113 ☎ 020 7357 8239 ✉ [info.request@childrenscommissioner.org](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.org)

2006

# JOURNEYS -

## Teacher Briefing

Children's views and experiences of anti-bullying strategies



OFFICE OF THE  
Children's  
COMMISSIONER

## Aim of this briefing

To support 'Journeys' and 'Journeys in Primary Schools' - anti-bullying resources developed by the Office of the Children's Commissioner with the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

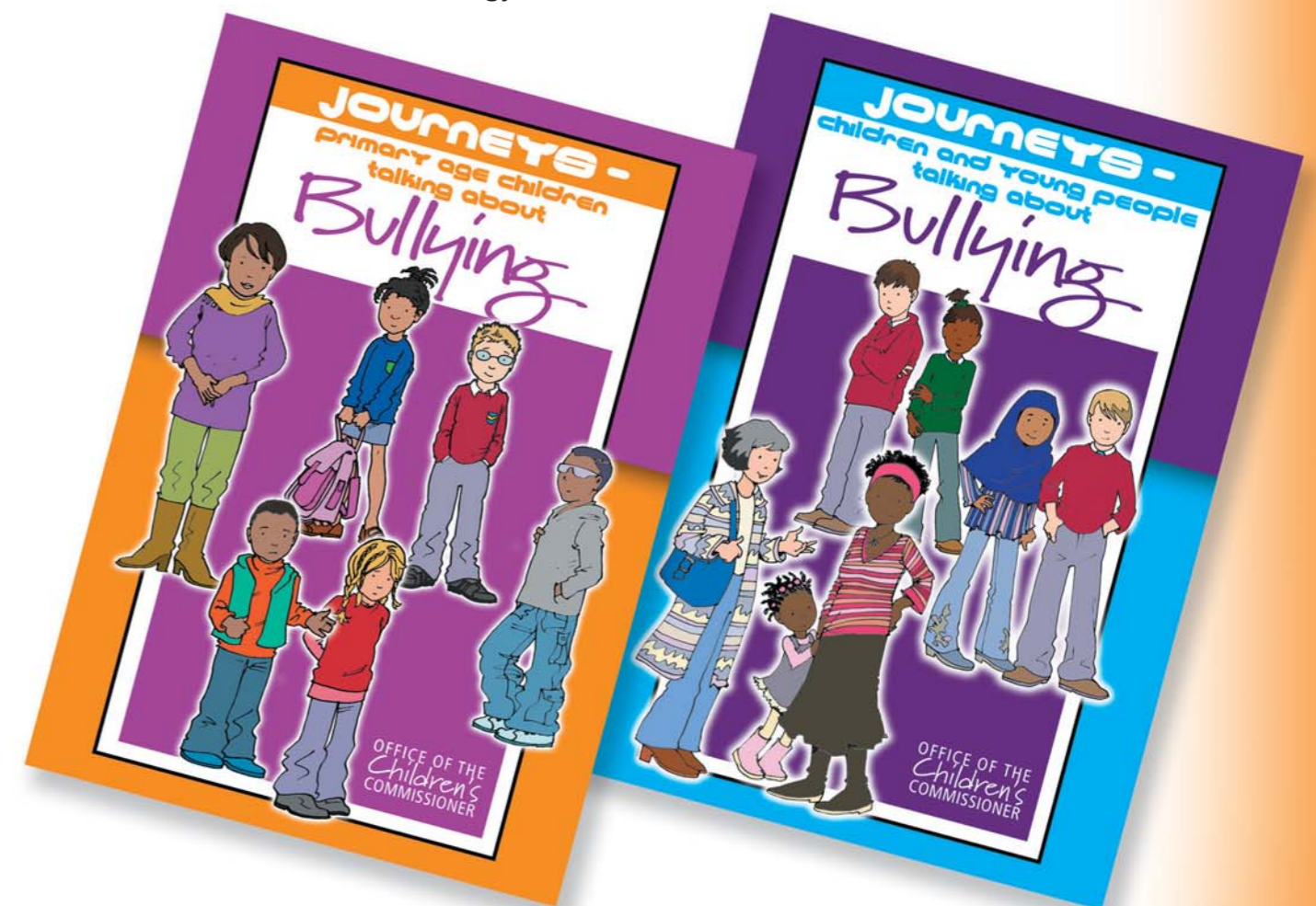
To offer wider guidance for effective school practice, based on the views of children and young people about what works.

## Listening to children and young people to improve practice

In the past six years<sup>1</sup> the range of anti-bullying resources has increased substantially and dissemination of best practice has improved greatly.<sup>2</sup> In 2005 the Office of the Children's Commissioner and the Anti-Bullying Alliance produced '**Journeys: Children and Young People Talking About Bullying**'; in 2006, we have followed this with '**Journeys: Primary Age Children Talking About Bullying**'. Both were developed by talking directly to children and young people. How do children and young people think the 'Journeys' resources should be used? What is their experience of other anti-bullying approaches? And what are their ideas to improve anti-bullying work?<sup>3</sup>

Children and young people's views on anti-bullying work can enhance teaching and learning in any of the following strategies and curriculum areas:

- Excellence and Enjoyment (Primary).
- The Primary and Secondary Strategies for Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL).
- Personal Social and Health Education (emotional health and well-being theme of Healthy Schools).
- Religious Education especially linked to Golden Rules and what religions teach about loving thy neighbour.
- Citizenship at KS3 and KS4.
- English, Drama, Art and Music.
- The outcomes of Every Child Matters.
- Behaviour and Attendance Strategy.



## Children's ideas for using 'Journeys in Primary School' booklet

- We could have a booklet each to read and compare to our problems. They could use it to help us do hot seat activities like we do for other things and we could talk about how we feel and what we could do if we were in that situation.
- Every time someone physically hurts you or verbally or silently bullies you, teachers could use it to discuss why bullying is wrong and how to help you deal with it.
- Teachers could give you one story each from the booklet to turn into a drama in class and then you could perform them to the rest of the class.
- You could do assemblies on it by looking at how bullying works and what you should do if you are bullied.
- You could turn some of the stories into raps that people could learn and help to remind them that bullying is wrong.

- You could use music, dance and drama lessons to do a school production on bullying. Then you could sell tickets and everyone could come and watch at the end of the year.
- They could have sessions where people get to know other people better so you know older and younger pupils and then they wouldn't bully you.



## Young People's ideas for using 'Journeys' booklet in secondary school

- Teachers could use the book to do more interactive lessons. We could do role-plays based on the stories in the book. You could maybe have a student acting as a victim and another one acting as an agony aunt. You could help kids to find their own solutions to bullying problems.  
*Year 11 student.*
- You could get ideas from the book and turn them into a play then video them and put them onto a DVD and then put them in the school library. Then you could watch them in assembly.  
*Year 7 student.*
- You could get young people to run workshops for other young people. You could get them to show how people are bullied and what to say to them when it happens. You could also do workshops on phone numbers to call if you are being bullied.  
*Year 8 student.*
- Teachers could get students to do drama plays to act out the different stories in the book and

- have two different endings for the story. One could be where an adult is told about bullying and the other one could be where the bullying is just left to carry on. Then you could get the class to talk about which one is better.  
*Year 8 student.*
- As a class you could make up a bullying game that has different stories, like in the book, and you have to make decisions about what to do.  
*Year 8 student.*
  - You could have photos of stories actually happening instead of using cartoons in the book. You could get the class to take their own photos and use them instead.  
*Year 11 student.*
  - We could make a presentation for our class or the whole school in assembly.  
*Year 11 students.*
  - We could design a workshop for people who get bullied.  
*Year 11 students.*

## Anti-bullying work - the big picture

Teachers are employing a range of approaches, which the children we consulted recognised and eagerly described. These range from group activity to playground schemes and punishment systems. Children and young people generally displayed a good knowledge of the language and terms used to define and discuss bullying. They described creative uses of drama and art, and some citizenship classes, which did preventative work, but in some locations, strategies appear to be mainly reactive. There is less evidence of work aimed at building resilience and coping skills. Where good practice was in place, the children and young people displayed greater confidence and trust.

A large number of strategies at primary level simply involve the child telling the teacher and then not being an active agent in what follows. This can lead to learned helplessness<sup>4</sup> and disempowerment. The child repeatedly gets bullied and simply tells the teacher, but learns no skills with which he or she can deal with bullying. The perpetrator may be told off or punished but bullying continues without the bully learning new behaviour. In a large number of cases, it was unclear who might be at fault and teachers spend inordinate amounts of time trying to unravel this, often unsuccessfully.<sup>5</sup> This does not take the work of changing behaviour forward.

### Ages and stages

At transition, learners fear being bullied and this fear can itself have harmful effects.<sup>6</sup> Successful and safe integration in year 7 can be the key to attainment and pro-school attitudes. However, intensive further work is needed in year 8 when young people tell us that bullying is very prevalent both inside and outside school.

### Developments young people draw to our attention

- Carrying weapons for 'self-defence' is a dangerous development.
- While most children and young people get on remarkably well with children from other ethnic backgrounds, there are a few who do not and they may influence others.
- Although there is evidence that some forms of bullying have diminished, there have been new developments such as bullying by mobile phone or online (collectively known as 'cyber bullying'). Adults therefore need to respond to fast-shifting youth culture.



## The views of Primary stage pupils

### What anti-bullying approaches have children experienced?

#### Through the Curriculum

- Sometimes we do assemblies. In PSHE we learn about bullying.
- Every Monday we have citizenship lessons and they tell you all about why children bully, what you can do about it and how you can stop being a bully.
- In our PSHE lessons our teacher takes us into four groups and tells us to discuss what happens with bullying. We talk about why it happens, what you can do about it and what you can do to help the bully and the victim when it happens.
- They teach us that the world would be boring if everyone was the same.

#### In the playground

- If somebody's getting bullied we sit at the friendship stop in the playground and there are playground friends who come and play with you.
- We play with people who are in wheelchairs or can't walk or something.<sup>7</sup>
- You are supposed to tell the teacher or an adult (if you see bullying).
- Our playground has zones for different games and older children teach us games.

#### Through creative learning

- They do demonstrations like role-plays and get children to do it too so they learn about bullying.
- We read books on bullying.
- We have to make posters. Then judges came in and they judged them and the posters were laminated and put up around school to remind us not to bully.

#### Through the sanctions policy

- You get lines and a detention if you bully.
- You get a red card for bullying and it's bad because then you can't do other stuff like be a form captain or peer counsellor.

- They get people to write lines, a hundred, the bullies say they won't do it again but they do.
- They have a policeman in the school.
- You get in trouble if you bully but they don't teach anything.

#### Through general advice

- They tell us to not bully them back.
- If there is serious bullying they might call your mum and tell her to not let you do it.
- Teachers teach us not to say rude things.

### How are these approaches working?

#### Getting it right

- In my old school they used to do rapping and my teachers made up raps in my class. Sometimes they bought professionals in. I liked that best because they made us really happy.
- No one bullies in our school.

#### Doing nothing

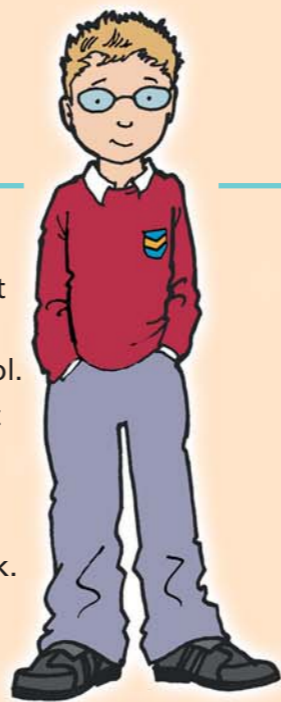
- People do bully in our school but we haven't talked about it yet.

#### Missing the problem

- Some people get beaten up for money and things that are really important to them like medicine. They are really upset and they can't say anything then. The teachers don't recognise what's happening because it's silent bullying or they say nasty words that the teachers don't hear.
- At school we have lots of physical and silent bullying and abuse like name calling and spreading rumours. Teachers don't tell you how to deal with that.

#### Dealing with it insensitively

- Most of the time they teach about bullying, they force you to do discussions and activities. They shout at you if you don't but they don't understand how hard it is talking about bullying.



- They ask other people to tell them if our stories about bullying are true and it makes us feel like we're lying but we aren't.
- Sometimes if it's not serious they just tell them to stop it. If it's serious they tell them to stay away from you. The teachers don't really do anything, they should talk to them more.

### Approaches proposed by children

- They should teach children more about people who have special needs - like bring in visitors who can explain so children know about this before someone comes to their class who's, say, autistic.
- If they still bully in the playground you ask people to be kind to the person they are doing it to. I would get people to be friends with her.

## The views of Secondary stage pupils

### What anti-bullying approaches have young people experienced?

Teachers under pressure may give the impression of being too busy, while learning mentors seem to have the time to listen but little power to help. There is little evidence of efforts to develop resilience and social skills. Systems, which offer a clear-cut pathway work well, as do systems that engage young people. Ownership of any strategy is essential and the whole school population should be involved in developing the school policy and strategy. There are key times and locations which contribute to bullying and schools might wish to consult learners about 'hot spots' and times when bullying tends to occur. Young people wanted anti-bullying work to be sustained rather than spurts of activity. Bullying shifts beyond the school gate when schools become more successful at stopping it.

#### Preventative approaches

- In my old school we did full activities on bullying. We had assemblies and poster design activities.
- In this school I know they won't let me get bullied, their attitude is different, but in my old school I was bullied for years.

- The teacher should say: This girl or boy is disturbing my lesson and I have given them lots of chances. He or she must go and think about what they should be doing.
- If people start laughing then the bully does it more. They shouldn't laugh.
- They should make sure you know what's bullying and what's not bullying because people think every little thing is bullying.
- They make us sit and watch but they should let us give our ideas about how to teach it.
- You have to teach bullies how to be nice.
- Some bullies are just unhappy so you need to talk to them and get them to be friends.

- Our teacher told us that we should go around in pairs or groups and try and avoid being on our own, both inside and outside school.
- Our school has a quiet room you can go to at break and there is always a person there you can talk to.
- Our teacher did this thing with scenarios, which taught us what we could do if we were being bullied and how bad the people who were bullied felt. Hopefully it stopped some people from turning into bullies.
- They teach us: Don't stop to watch fights that are happening as this is encouraging it - don't get involved.

#### Responses to bullying

- Bullies get warnings or detentions.
- When the school gets tough on them, they bully you on the bus instead.
- We have peer supporters and we know them and we can go to them any time.
- Our school used to be bad but now they've got a totally new system and we are asked what we think should happen all the time. There is a council and they ask us and then they tell the school.
- We had a bully box in my old school.



## How are these approaches working?

Much of the advice from adults is discounted by secondary pupils as being either risky or unlikely to succeed. There is a fair amount of cynicism. Victims, as can be expected, may either be depressed and feeling helpless, or alternatively feel aggressive. Some of the steps proposed might make a young person more at risk from retaliation or humiliation. He or she may decide to take matters into their own hands or call on siblings. Pupils may be humiliated by their parents coming in and making a fuss or alternatively they may be trying to protect their parents by not telling them. Talking to trained older pupils was recommended. It is constructive to work with the pupil body to develop safe ways for pupils to support those who are being bullied without being exposed to the risks described below.

### What is not working well?

- No one wants to use the methods teachers suggest as they may or may not work.
- You get bullied for snitching on the bullies.
- Parents get involved and sometimes it gets out of hand.
- You feel guilty that you have got someone into trouble and then you feel scared.
- Sometimes it involves other students like when you know someone is carrying weapons.
- When the school gets tough on them, they bully you on the bus instead. They say they will help you but nothing gets done.
- Teachers have been shouting at this girl about being a bully for ages, but she just goes on. Now she told me she'd get me after school and I live near her. There is nothing I can do because the teachers have tried.
- (I don't like) teachers talking at you and giving boring lessons. We need more interactive lessons with activities to get involved in.
- Sometimes the advice teachers give just isn't practical, like they say if you get bullied then tell a teacher, but when it comes to it there are not any teachers around.
- 'Space' time doesn't work that well because it isn't taken that seriously by some people in the class and it isn't very confidential if you



say stuff. There is also too much listening and not enough participation.

- Sometimes assemblies and things can make the bullying worse as then the bully knows that you have grassed on them and they will just beat you up again for telling.
- It's never talked about.
- Tutors talk about it in registration but we don't have much time.
- Teachers are always too busy.
- It's done in Space lessons, but there is not enough time for it.
- Learning mentors do listen but they can't do much.
- They talk about it but they don't tell you what to do when it happens.
- They say they will help you but nothing gets done.

### What works well?

- The teacher called us both in and made us get on and that. Like she made us realise what we were doing.
- In drama in year 9 we wrote a play and we did it for the year 7s. We learned a lot ourselves too and some of the people who'd been bullying stopped.
- We did a whole day when the school worked on what to do about bullying. We did a manifesto, and posters and music and stuff and they had outside visitors come in and talk to us with a video - we saw they were taking it seriously. I just hope they keep it up now.
- It is good that teachers walk around outside the school gates after school it makes you feel better.

## Approaches proposed by young people

There is a demand for practical advice with realistic scenarios, and using a variety of media, including video and audio. Young people point out the need for advice that can be safely followed and are insistent on confidentiality. Delayed meetings can put the victim at risk. Teachers should ask the pupil what they want them to do about the incident before acting.

### Be creative

- We could write poems and songs about bullying that people will remember.
- We could make T-shirts and wear them in the playground.

### Be real

- The scenarios thing is really helpful. It helps you to know what to do if you ever get in that situation.
- They need to give us more examples, like real life stories and stuff. Real life stories would be good so you can see what really happens and what you should do, but it would have to be real life stories from somewhere else, another school, so people could not be identified.
- Young people need more true stories about bullying and how people dealt with it.

### Be private

- It would be better if the child and teacher were able to talk quietly and privately about issues and then get them sorted out confidentially.
- Teachers shouldn't just tell the whole class you are being bullied and they should help!

### Take action faster

- Teachers should speak to bullies straight away instead of arranging a meeting with them. If they arrange a meeting then the bully knows what's coming and you are likely to get beaten up again, the bully also has a chance to skip school and not go to the meeting.

- The teacher should make senior staff aware of what is happening and get advice from them about what to do too as they have more experience.
- When you tell the teacher they tell you to collect evidence and this can be used to get the bully. (Remind those receiving abusive texts or emails to save them as evidence.)

### Use accessible materials

- Sometimes they give you stuff with too much reading and it is boring, nobody can be bothered to read that much.
- You could put posters around the school to tell the people being bullied who to see and where to go in school.

### Involve everyone and be long-term

- Teachers could do lessons against bullying and have continuous discussions with us so that we are always thinking about it.
- We have had a few assemblies on bullying, they tend to get into doing stuff like that and really do lots and then forget about it again.
- They should give parents key messages about some cases.



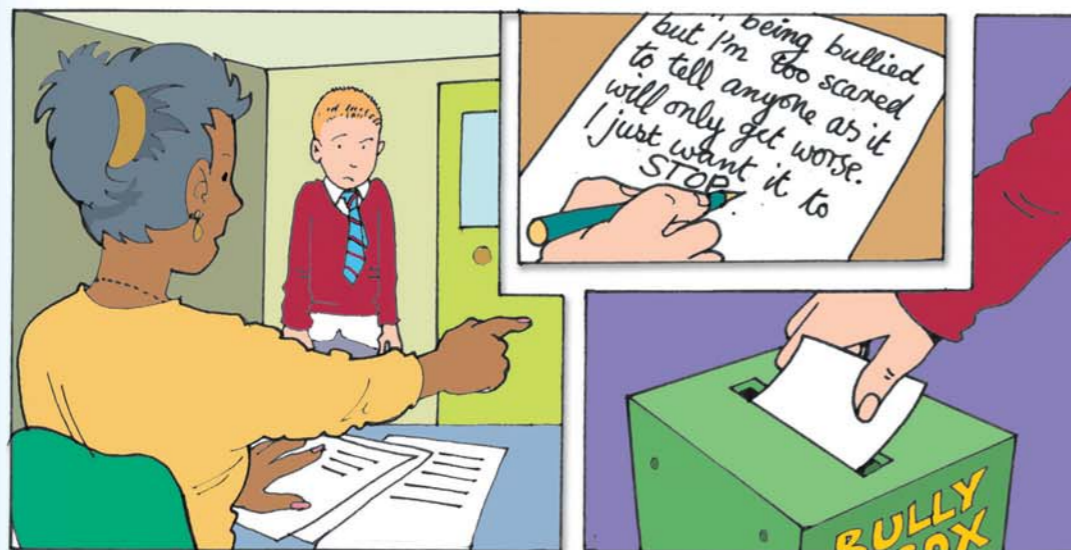
## Conclusion: Good Practice in Primary and Secondary Schools

### Successful approaches will:

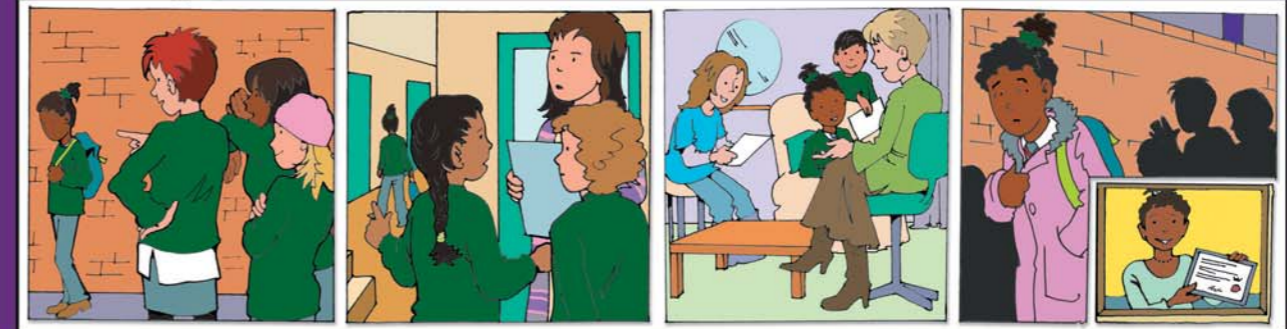
- Include the whole school body.
- Encourage and facilitate participation by children and young people.
- Offer practical options on steps to take.
- Show sustained visible commitment to an anti-bullying ethos.
- Help those who bully to change their behaviour.
- Keep safe anyone who reports being bullied or a bystander who intervenes.
- Successfully reintegrate someone who has been bullied and where possible, those who bully.
- Accept the complexity of the behaviour and avoid simplistic solutions.
- Be reviewed regularly.

### Unsuccessful approaches will:

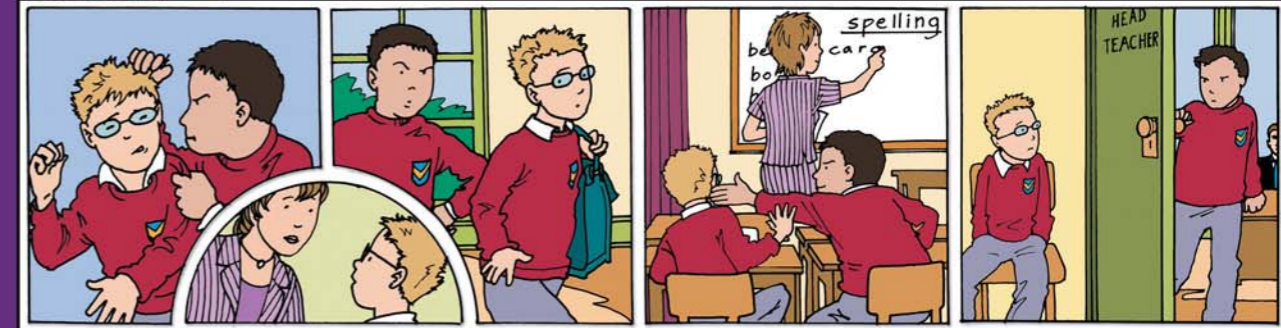
- Fail to make the bullied child feel safer.
- Fail to sustain the effort.
- Fail to change the perpetrator's behaviour.
- Fail to understand the complexity of bullying - there are not two distinct groups, bullies and victims, but some young people can be both, or at times, move from one group to another.
- Fail to involve and engage pupils in the programme to confer ownership.
- Fail to address repeated and ongoing bullying.
- Fail to recognise serious underlying problems in a child who is bullying.
- Fail to recognise that bullying may extend beyond school.
- Fail to retain pupils' confidence and trust.
- Fail to respond to bullying incidents consistently.
- Humiliate or expose children.



Gemma's Journey



Billy's Journey



1. Since September 1999 schools have specific duties with regard to bullying. They must have anti-bullying procedures in place. There is a framework of legislation and guidance to support work to tackle victimisation and prejudice driven bullying. Useful guidance can be found in: *Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools* (Ofsted). Bullying is mentioned twice explicitly in the outcomes of Every Child Matters. Read more at [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com) or [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk) or [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)
2. Much guidance is available online from DfES, and [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
3. Where do the Views in this briefing come from?  
**Primary stage**  
 50 children participated directly in the preparation of this briefing. They were located in Camden at Ossulton St Youth Centre, Falcon Lodge Youth and Community Centre Sutton Coldfield and in a scout group in Staffordshire. These views are augmented by contributions from children with special needs in Coventry via a Young Voice workshop.  
**Secondary stage**  
 26 Pupils at Heston Community School participated in two in depth sessions. Their views were augmented by 120 young people who answered a Young Voice online survey.
4. Seligman, Martin E. P. *Helplessness : on depression, development, and death* /New York: W. H. Freeman, c1992.
5. Some children are 'aggressive victims' Cowie,H. (2000) *Aggression & Bullying Behaviour in Children & Adolescents*. Roehampton Institute, London. Boswell & Olweus,D. (1978) *Violent Children and Adolescents*, Bergen.
6. Brook, L. *Tales of Transition* (2004) Young Voice, London.  
 Bolton, M.J. Arazi, A. Rotenberg. K. & Bishop, S. 'Predicting Maladjustment among junior school pupils from peer victimisation and fear of future peer victimisation.' University of Keele. (forthcoming).
7. Inclusion - Extended schools: the views of children with special needs. (2005) Young Voice.