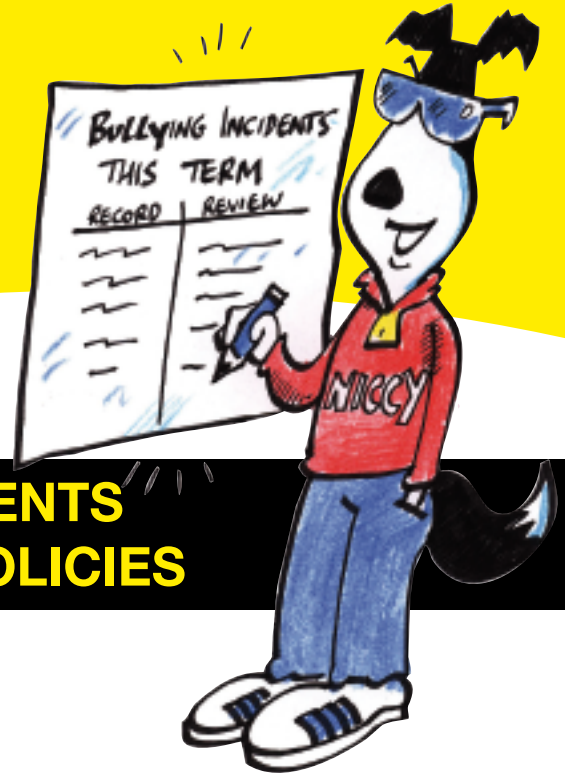




BULLYING

>> RECORDING BULLYING INCIDENTS AND REVIEWING BULLYING POLICIES



Recording Bullying Incidents

It is common practice for schools to have a designated member of staff who has responsibility for overseeing bullying policies and recording bullying incidents. Details of bullying incidents can be recorded in log books or on behaviour incident cards and a register could be set up to monitor pupil behaviours which require attention. Recording bullying incidents in this way provides a comprehensive record whilst making the bully aware that their actions are being closely watched and monitored.

Research, however, shows that although pupils are often aware of anti-bullying posters and which member of staff is the designated anti-bullying officer (Schubotz and Sinclair 2006) they may not avail of the support networks available in their school. This is often because these are perceived to be ineffective (Stanton 2002) or because they feel the punishment system for bullying is inadequate (Davey et al 2004).

Moreover, pupils are rarely asked their opinions on how to track bullying incidents and what they think of the interventions used to resolve these situations, which means an important opportunity is lost for schools to use feedback from pupils to improve the effectiveness of these procedures and policies.

In light of this finding we would recommend that teachers and pupils annually review their anti-bullying policy to identify strengths and weaknesses. With research showing that the most effective school

policies are those which are regularly re-visited, monitored and reinforced (Schubotz and Sinclair 2006) it may be useful to conduct post-intervention surveys with pupils and staff to assess the effectiveness of this policy as a visible means of demonstrating to pupils how seriously their school views bullying behaviours.

Reviewing Anti-Bullying Strategies

NICC Y recommends that time should be set aside for pupils and teachers to evaluate the anti-bullying school policy.

This would involve:

STEP 1: AWARENESS RAISING

Schools need to publicise their commitment to addressing bullying issues using some of the anti-bullying strategies featured in this resource folder or in recommended websites.

STEP 2: POLICY WRITING

Pupils, teachers, management and governors should be given the opportunity to define the term bullying and to suggest ways of tackling this issue in their particular school.



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STEP 3: GUIDELINES

The agreed anti-bullying policy should provide clear guidelines for teachers and pupils on the actions that must be taken if bullying occurs and what strategies of support will be put in place for the victim and the bully. This policy should also be written in child friendly language and posted in classrooms, corridors and in pupils' homework diaries as a visible sign that bullying behaviours will not be tolerated.

STEP 4: ADVERTISING

Anti-bullying wall collages, 'Making it better' suggestion boxes and information on anti-bullying helplines should be displayed in the school and teachers should use the messages in these displays when discussing issues such as friendship, citizenship, violence in the media and reconciliation.

STEP 5: LISTENING

A school council should be established to give pupils a forum to voice their concerns and suggestions for improving the school. Pupils sitting on this council should be encouraged to take a proactive role in organising events in the lead up to anti-bullying week and in gathering pupils' views on how the current anti-bullying school policy could be improved.

STEP 6: WORKING TOGETHER

Schools could examine the possibility of implementing a peer mediation scheme to enable pupils to take a more proactive role in resolving bullying situations.

Schools should therefore ensure that pupils are made aware of anti-bullying strategies and these are fully integrated into the whole school ethos. Research suggests that a school culture where teachers afford pupils little respect can provide an atmosphere where bullying thrives (Kilkelly et al 2004). This is why it is important to make bullying strategies overt and integrate them fully into the whole school ethos. Doing so not only promotes wider ownership of school policies through a genuinely participative culture, but it also empowers children to feel respected and valued members of the school community in being able to positively contribute to the management and running of the school, where their views are sought, voices are heard and their opinions listened to.

Further Information

- >> Further advice for teachers on how to review anti-bullying policies can be downloaded from www.kidscape.org.uk
- >> Self assessment questionnaires to assist with evaluating anti-bullying policies are also available at the ABA website www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk and from Save the Children www.savethechildren.org.uk