

# Introduction to Bullying Behaviour Module One

THE  
**STOP** CAMPAIGN

PREVENTING AND TACKLING **BULLYING** IN DERBYSHIRE



## Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Be aware
3. What is bullying?
4. What makes bullying different?
5. Bullying relationships
6. Where does bullying happen?
7. How many children are bullied?
8. Why do some children bully?
9. Why are some children bullied?
10. In Summary

# Introduction

Welcome to this learning programme on preventing bullying behaviour. The purpose of this short programme is to help you recognise and respond to bullying behaviour and understand best practice. It is designed for anyone who comes into contact with children through their work or leisure activities. In this first module we will look at what is meant by bullying behaviour. We will also explore bullying relationships and the reasons they happen.

Bullying, or the fear of bullying, is a major concern for children and for their parents, and it can happen anywhere that children come together. It is abusive behaviour that damages the lives of those involved - whether they are being bullied, witnessing it or doing it.

**Everyone who works with children and young people has a responsibility to keep them safe and promote their welfare.**

## Be Aware

This programme focuses on aspects of bullying and prevention that are relevant across the UK regardless of variations in legislation and government guidance. The programme is relevant to everyone who works with children and young people, whether you are paid or a volunteer.

### Terminology

- Children and young people are used interchangeably.
- Parents refers to parents and carers.
- In England, social service is often called children's social care.
- We have used the terms bullies and bullied for brevity, not to label those concerned.

### A note of caution

Not everyone has the same view of what bullying is. It's important to remember that children are individuals and that you should support a child who is unhappy and expresses concerns - whatever the term used to describe the causes.

# What is bullying?

Although the programme focuses on children, we should keep in mind that bullying behaviour can also happen in adult relationships, in the home and the workplace. Sometimes adults bully children. And in some instances children and young people bully adults.

It is important to distinguish bullying behaviour from other behaviour that can cause unhappiness and distress. Most definitions of bullying include the following characteristics - the list can be helpful in assessing whether behaviour is bullying.

**Bullying always hurts**, sometimes physically, always emotionally. It wears down self-esteem and self-confidence because it makes those who are bullied feel weak and inadequate.

**Bullying is intentional.**

**Bullying behaviour is usually repeated**, or there is a threat of it being repeated, with the bullied in a constant state of worry and fear, though children can be disturbed enough after a single incident to phone ChildLine.

**There is an imbalance of power** so that the bullied is unable to prevent it. This imbalance can be caused by a number of factors, including age, size, or differences in ability, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation (actual or perceived) and social class. As the bullying relationship develops the imbalance increases.

# What makes bullying different?

As children grow up they have a range of experiences. At the time, some are unpleasant and cause unhappiness. By their own actions they sometimes cause others to be unhappy. But most of these experiences and actions do not amount to bullying.

## **Name calling**

Many children have affectionate nicknames given to them by their peers. Banter and teasing between friends is acceptable when permission is understood. But name-calling becomes bullying when the intention is to hurt, when the person using the name or expression wants to cause offence and knows, or should know, that it is likely to.

## **Physical play and fun fighting**

Children play together and often that play is physical, and sometimes includes fun fighting. Accidents can happen and children can get hurt in their play. Some sports

are based on physical contact and physical contests, but the behaviour in these sports is bound by rules. In bullying there is an intention to hurt. This may involve continuing when it is clear that someone is finding the behaviour unpleasant or painful.

## **Friendships**

As children grow up their interests develop and their friendships change. They disagree and fall out, and may say things that are hurtful. When children stop playing and meeting together, one or both can feel excluded and experience a deep sense of loss. This becomes bullying when one or the other continues to act in a way that deliberately causes further hurt.

Those who work with children need to help them to be sensitive and to understand the possible effects of their behaviour on others.

## **Bullying relationships**

Bullying often involves two or more people. Nearly three out of four children who call ChildLine about bullying are being bullied by a group rather than a single person.

Within the group there are often one or two dominant individuals - the ringleaders - who are controlling the situation.

They are supported by others who actively join in. Some may feel pressured to bully even though they know its bullying different?

In some ways they too are being bullied.

Cyberbullying - bullying via the internet and mobile phones - can mean that children are no longer safe in their own home. We will look at this in more detail in module 2.

Apart from cyberbullying most bullying happens in front of an audience. Some in the audience are passive bystanders who do nothing to stop it. Others are active reinforcers who support the bullies by laughing and shouting encouragement. Both look on from the relative safety of the sidelines, maybe feeling guilty because they know bullying is wrong, maybe trying to avoid being the next victim. Both are effectively encouraging the bully to continue their behaviour.

The bullied may feel alone and isolated, and that they have lost their friends. They may be afraid to join in activities for fear of meeting the bullies. Their friends may not have the strength to stand up to the bullies and are afraid of the consequences for themselves if they report it. Sometimes, the friends may feel pressured into joining those bullying.

Anyone can be the target of bullying, but in many cases the person bullying picks on someone they know, perhaps a former friend.

**It is not unusual for a bully in one relationship to be bullied in another. In a ChildLine survey, 15 per cent of primary school children and 12 per cent of secondary school students surveyed said that they had both bullied and been bullied in the last year.**

## Where does bullying happen?

Bullying can take place wherever children come together: in and outside schools, at home and in the community.

An Anti-Bullying Alliance survey showed that 35 per cent of a sample of seven to 18-year-olds had been bullied outside of school. The majority (55 per cent) also thought that about half or more of the bullying that happens in school actually starts outside of school and four in 10 said bullying outside of school was more worrying as adults weren't around to help.

In primary schools, pupils identify the playground at break and lunchtimes as being unsafe, particularly where there are no "quiet" areas and where games and activities are not organised. In secondary schools, pupils often mention the corridors between lessons as well as toilets and changing rooms. In both, it is where there is a lack of supervision.

## How many children are bullied?

We do not have accurate statistics, not least because many bullying incidents go unrecorded. Many of those who are bullied do not report what is happening, either because they are afraid of the consequences or they feel ashamed and inadequate because they are unable to stand up for themselves.

However, there is considerable evidence showing that many children experience bullying and the ill effects can last a long time. In a ChildLine survey, half the primary school children and one in four secondary school children said they had been bullied in the last year. In a large NSPCC study 43 per cent of the young adults who took part reported having experienced bullying when they were children and 25 per cent said they had suffered long-term, harmful effects.

## Why do some young people bully?

We should remember that, whatever the reason, bullying is never acceptable and must always be challenged.

There are different theories about why some children bully. For some, the behaviour is occasional and out of character. Something may have happened that acts as a trigger. They usually behave well towards others and can be helped to stop the bullying behaviour because they understand it's wrong and are keen to put things right.

For others, bullying behaviour in their relationships is the norm. Some lack the personal and social skills to change and have low empathy with others, while some have considerable social skills and are popular with both peers and adults. Some are leaders and able to manipulate others into carrying out the bullying while having no direct involvement themselves.

For some it is learned behaviour and may result from attitudes and values that are prejudiced. For these children, it is difficult to change without considerable support.

## Why are some children bullied?

There are no simple answers and there can be many reasons.

Any child can be the target of bullying. Often it starts because a chance meeting gives the bully the opportunity.

Bullying behaviour often focuses on a difference, which may be physical or emotional or relate to a person's background. The behaviour seeks to emphasise and exaggerate the difference, using it to make the target feel bad about themselves. These reasons will be explored in module 2.

However, some children are bullied for no obvious reason. In a ChildLine survey, none of the children who admitted bullying singled out their own or the bullied's individual characteristics. Indeed, the bullied can be a former friend.

Children are more susceptible to bullying when they are experiencing stress in their lives. And sometimes children have a poor self-image and low self-confidence, and appear anxious and insecure. They may be sensitive and quiet, and have few if any real friends. They may seek to avoid rather than face and react to unpleasant incidents by withdrawing and crying.

## In summary

In this module we have defined bullying behaviour and looked at why it happens. We covered the characteristics of bullying relationships and where bullying takes place, as well as how many children may have experienced bullying. Finally, we looked at why some children bully and some are bullied. In the next module, we will focus on different types of bullying and their effects on children.



# Module 1 Question Sheet

NAME:

ESTABLISHMENT:

All the answers to the questions can be found in the corresponding module content (please note, exact wording may differ)

**Question 1** **Bullying behaviour is intentional.**

- A True
- B False
- C Sometimes

**Question 2** **Is name-calling bullying?**

- A Yes, name-calling is always bullying
- B No, name-calling is not serious enough to be deemed bullying
- C Yes, when the intention is to hurt or cause offence

**Question 3** **Most bullying takes place....**

- A On a one-to-one basis
- B In front of an audience

**Question 4** **Where does most bullying take place in secondary schools?**

- A The corridors between lessons
- B The toilets
- C The changing rooms
- D The corridors between lessons, the toilets and the changing rooms

**Question 5** **What makes children feel unsafe in both primary and secondary schools?**

- A Breaks and lunchtimes
- B A lack of supervision
- C The number of pupils in the school

**Question 6 Why might children who are bullied decide not to report it?**

6

- A They are afraid of the consequences and they feel ashamed and inadequate that they cannot stand up for themselves
- B They fear they will be blamed
- C They may secretly enjoy it

**Question 7 Why do some children bully?**

7

- A When something acts as a trigger
- B When their bullying behaviour is the norm
- C When they can manipulate others into bullying whilst having no direct involvement themselves
- D When it is learned behaviour that results from attitudes and values that are prejudiced
- E When something acts as a trigger, when their bullying behaviour is the norm, when they can manipulate others into bullying whilst having no direct involvement themselves or when it is learned behaviour that results from attitudes and values that are prejudiced

**Question 8 Which young people get bullied?**

8

- A Those who look weak
- B Those with no friends
- C Any young person can be the target of bullying

**Question 9 What does bullying behaviour often focus on?**

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- A A difference in status
- B A difference in appearance
- C A difference of any description

**Question 10 When are young people most susceptible to bullying?**

10

- A When they enter puberty
- B When they are experiencing stress in their lives
- C When they are experiencing a family break-up

