

Additional Assessment Questions

Bullying

Child's medical / social history

1. Any previous history of bullying or being bullied?
2. Are the child's carers aware of the bullying problems?
3. Do the parents/child understand why the bullying is happening?

5.2

Factsheet

Advice for schools

The most effective thing a school can do to prevent bullying is to have an effective anti-bullying policy, linked to the ethos of the school, the curriculum, the attitude of teachers and all staff. A positive, open approach will encourage young people to speak out about concerns and will promote more caring patterns of behaviour.

The following may be helpful:

- Circle time: works best in groups of 6–18. Open circle of chairs or cushions, including teacher. Try to keep it positive. Basic rules:
 1. only one person speaks at a time
 2. no put-downs
 3. an object is used to pass and whoever holds it can talk, but you can pass if you don't want to speak.
- These rules keep order and protect the emotional safety of the children taking part. It is good to start with a game. Especially useful in bullying because it promotes self-esteem and respect for others. Works best if a regular activity and involves whole school.

(Mellor and Munn, 2000)

- Bully boxes: enables young people to post their concerns anonymously. However, may also allow for malicious entries
- Bully courts: school council sits in judgement on their peers. However, will need adult guidance
- Counselling: for victim and perpetrator by teacher, school nurse or trained counsellor
- Mediation: works best where there is not too great an imbalance of power. Third person – peer, teacher, or school nurse – mediates between bully and victim
- Peer counselling: more appropriate for secondary schools. Training and supervision is vital to support the peer counsellor
- No-blame approach: group of young people support victim by suggesting solutions, but no blame is attached. May work best for those being bullied by a gang or being verbally abused. Encourages the bully to accept responsibility
- Reporting systems: imperative that school has a safe, recognised pathway for reporting incidents of bullying and that it is seen as 'not telling'
- Safe rooms: refuge for bullied children set up at break times. However, may cause children to view rest of school as unsafe
- Telephone helplines: such as Childline. Some schools have set up their own internal helplines
- Talk: no strategy can be effective without communication between school, pupils and families

(Mellor, 1997)

Factsheet Advice for parents

- Bullying can be:
 - physical: pushing, kicking, hitting or threats
 - verbal: name-calling, persistent teasing or spreading rumours
 - emotional: tormenting, excluding, humiliating or ridiculing
 - racist: racial taunts, graffiti or gestures
 - sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments or homophobic abuse.
 - cyberbullying
- Watch out for signs that your child is bullying or being bullied. If so, talk calmly and get the facts. Reassure your child that talking is the correct thing to do and that you love them very much
- Arrange to see the teacher
- When talking to the teacher stay calm, be specific, make a note of what the school intends to do and ask if you can support the school in any way. Ask to see the school's anti-bullying policy
- Support the school by discussing alternative strategies with your son/daughter rather than also resorting to aggression
- If you do not think your concerns are being dealt with, contact your school nurse and make an appointment to see a school governor or the head teacher

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Possible signs of bullying:

- being unwilling to go to school or becoming school phobic
- begin truanting
- school work deteriorates
- becomes distressed or anxious, or stops eating
- possessions regularly go missing/get destroyed, or loses lunch money
- begins to bully other children or siblings and behaviour becomes aggressive/unreasonable
- unexplained scratches or bruises, etc.

What school nurse or school can do:

- treat problem seriously and investigate the incident
- interview bullies and victims separately and interview any witnesses
- inform teacher and family
- keep written records
- follow up
- hold assembly or other intervention about bullying.

Advice for bullies:

- encourage bully to change his/her behaviour
- investigate bully's history, may be issues of abuse, domestic violence, learning difficulty or previous bullying
- ensure that school have spoken to parents and arrange anger management or behavioural referrals if necessary.

Advice for victims:

- stay with a crowd – you are less vulnerable
- try to ignore or laugh at comments or teasing. This is difficult to do, but the less reaction the bully gets the less they get out of it.
- keep a diary of all events
- try not to look like a victim – walk tall
- sign up for self defence or another interest which gives confidence and a chance to meet other friends
- always tell a teacher or your parents – it is never WRONG to tell

Always keep accurate records of any intervention, ensure good communication between school parents and pupils. Remember, both bullied and bully may be victims and unresolved issues for both can lead to serious emotional problems in the future.

(Based on Kidscape 2001 'Preventing Bullying: A Parents' Guide' and 'Stop Bullying')

Factsheet Helpful organisations

- **Childline:** 24-hr helpline 0800 1111 for children in distress. Website: www.childline.org.uk
- **The Samaritans:** 24-hr helpline for suicidal/depressed. 08457 909090 Website: www.samaritans.org
- **Young Minds:** 0800 802 5544. Open Mon–Fri 10.00–13.00 and 14.00–17.00. Confidential service for those worried about the emotional well-being of young person. Website: www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Kidscape:** 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH. Phone: 020 7730 3300 Fax: 020 7730 7081. Website: www.kidscape.org.uk Helpline: 08451 205 204 – Mon-Tues from 10.00-20.00 and Wed-Fri from 10.00-16.00.
Our helpline is for the use of parents, guardians or concerned relatives and friends of bullied children. If you are a child and are experiencing bullying problems, then please visit or ring Childline 0800 1111
- **Department of Education:** Website: www.education.gov.uk Includes material previously published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families on bullying or www.antibullying.net (also useful for teachers and professionals)
- **Black Mental Health Resource Centre:** Help in English, Punjabi and Urdu. 0113 237 4229.
- **Asian Family Counselling Service:** Open Mon-Fri 09.00-17.00. 020 8571 3933 / 020 8813 9714 (any issues). www.asianfamilycounselling.org.uk
- **Pace:** Open Mon 9.30-12.30 and Thurs 16.30-20.30. 0808 1807 223, info@pace.dircon.co.uk or Website: www.pacehealth.org.uk.