

Anti-Bullying Week

Starter Activity – Get the young people thinking about bullying

Begin by writing the word 'BULLYING' on the board. Encourage the young people to shout out what this means, why it happens and why bullying is wrong. Write key points on the board and use these to start discussion. Key points may be:

- That bullying is regular and continuous (however, a single unkind act, if deliberate, could be the start of bullying if not checked, so needs to be reported and dealt with)
- Because some people are different to others
- Because it is unkind and makes others unhappy.

We want the young people to show what they understand about bullying. Use these points to guide the conversation, making sure that the class have a good understanding of the issue. You should use this opportunity to reinforce the fact that we all have differences and, while this is sometimes used by people to be unkind to, or bully, others, we should all be able to enjoy our time at school and not feel upset or lonely.

Bully Proof

Discuss with your form how we can make Trinity a 'bully proof place'.

- How can we stop bullying at Trinity?
- What would you do if you saw someone being bullied?
- What values do we all need to show each other in order for school to be a happy place for everyone?

Some suggested values if they need help:

- Patience
- Courage
- Empathy
- Acceptance
- Understanding

Form Policy

Put together a form policy which states how members of your form are going to treat other members of the form and other pupils within the school. Get the form policy written up nicely and display it in your form room. The more pupils are involved in putting it together the more they will feel like they own it. Ensure the policy includes positives as well as negatives. i.e. your form could agree to congratulate people when they have done well as something, or comforting others when they are sad etc. You could get pupils to sign the policy once it has been written.

Scenarios

There are two documents attached to the email, one with longer scenarios on which are more detailed, you could probably only look at one during a mornings form time. The other document has shorter scenarios which can be split up among groups within the form to get them do discuss what they would do if they were the person being bullied. Groups can then feedback their scenarios and what they would do to the rest of the group. Groups can also discuss why they think the person is being bullied, what is the motivation for the bully?

Video - <http://www.youtube.com/beatbullying>

BeatBullying have a great video of celebrities standing up against bullying. Use this 5 minute video to start a discussion with your form about some of the issues raised in the video. Particularly, suicide due to bullying, calling things 'gay' etc.

Scenario 1

Danny is in Year 9 in a school which has a lot of problems with bullying and violence. Up till now, people have left him alone because his older brother, Steve, and his friends have a bad reputation, but his brother's not around any more because he's gone to prison. Danny doesn't have many friends of his own and recently a group of boys his age and older have started hassling him, taunting him and threatening to beat him up. One of them is Kyle, a boy who Steve and his group used to pick on and push around when they were at the school. Kyle always felt so powerless when they picked on him. Now he's thrilled to have the chance to get his own back in some way.

Josh is in Kyle's group. They used to be good mates when they were younger, but now Kyle has changed a lot and Josh isn't sure he wants to hang around with him anymore. He's sometimes scared of him now. So far, he's gone along with what Kyle and the others are doing but that doesn't mean he thinks it's right.

Danny's getting scared but he doesn't feel that he has anyone to turn to. He doesn't want to talk to a teacher. His school has no peer mentoring schemes or counsellors, and he doesn't want to burden his mum and dad. He knows that telling them what's going on will make them feel even worse at a time when they're already going through enough. Danny wants to keep his head down, do well at school and not get into trouble - he wants to make his parents proud and knows that it would break their hearts if he went the same way as his brother. But now he's thinking about carrying a knife to defend himself. He can't see what else to do.

Danny: Every day now, they wait for me. Outside school. In the street. In the park. So far they've only said stuff. But I know it's going to get worse. At first there were only a few, and that was bad enough. But last week there were about fifteen of them out there. All looking. All nudging each other. All saying stuff. They're everywhere I go. They're too clever to try anything too obvious in school, but I can't stay at school forever. Sometime soon it's going to be just me and them, and I'm scared. I'm really scared of what they'll do when they get me on my own.

Kyle: I bet he's scared now, isn't he? Good. Steve and all his mates made me feel like I was nothing, they treated me like I was scum every time they saw me just because they thought it was funny. Now it's me with the power, so watch out, Danny. Your brother's not here now, so you're going to get it. I'm going to hurt you.

Josh: I get that Kyle's angry, but it's not Danny's fault that Steve's such a waster. He's never done anything to Kyle. Trouble is, Kyle doesn't think. He just wants to get revenge any way that he can. He's always been a bit like that, but these last couple of years its got worse, especially since he started hanging around with that lot. I don't like what they're doing to Danny and I don't really want to be mates with them anymore, but how do I drop them without them all going after me instead?

Questions:

- What would be a good choice / the best choice that Danny could make at this point?
- What would be an unsafe thing for him to do / the worst choice?
- What might happen as a result of each of these?
- What should Josh do?

The idea here is to highlight that young people in such situations should always tell someone (for example their parents, or a teacher), and that violence and retaliation are only likely to make the situation worse. Then for young people to think through the potential long-term implications of their actions (for instance, if Danny carries a knife and ends up using it, he could kill someone and/or go to prison). This is also a good opportunity to point out that young people should not stand by and let such behaviour happen - Josh should tell someone about what is happening.

Scenario 2

Claire, who is 14, goes to an independent school with an excellent reputation in a small, quiet country town. Claire, who is very academic, enjoys school and is doing well. It has never seemed like an 'issue' that she is the only black girl in her class.

Then, in the same week, she wins an essay contest and gets the lead part in the school play, which another girl also really wanted. Suddenly, this girl, Michaela, has started a campaign to turn other people against her: whispering, nudging, laughing, dirty looks, etc. She starts writing notes and sending text messages to Claire, some of which have a racist element.

The school has a clearly stated anti-bullying policy and information for pupils about what to do if they're being bullied, but when Claire goes to see her form tutor she is shocked and says, 'We don't have that sort of thing here!' She makes Claire out to be the troublemaker and implies that she is lying - even after she's shown her the texts.

Claire has good friends, especially Lorna, Lizzie and Helen, but she's reluctant to tell them what's going on because she doesn't want her 'difference' to become a focus. She is close to her parents, but she doesn't want to hurt or worry them. Meanwhile, the hate campaign seems to be intensifying. There are messages on Facebook. More people are joining in.

Questions:

- What should Claire do even though her teacher hasn't helped her?
- What could Lorna and the rest of Claire's friends do to try to help?
- Why might Michaela be bullying Claire? What is motivating her?

The idea here is to highlight that young people should always tell someone if they are suffering abuse like this - and if telling that person doesn't help, that they shouldn't be discouraged and should try someone else (for example, Claire should tell her parents and not be afraid of worrying them). This would be a good opportunity to highlight other places that young people can find help, such as websites like www.CyberMentors.org. You should also draw attention to the important role that friends and peers can play in helping to overcome bullying - both in terms of directly supporting other young people and reporting such behaviour to adults. Finally, this is a chance to explore the motivations behind bullying; highlighting that most young people who display such behaviour are likely to be suffering in some way themselves. For example, Michaela is jealous that Claire is succeeding so much at school, especially in an area where Michaela wanted to be the star. Her response is to try to make Claire feel unwelcome and threatened by focusing on the obvious thing about her that is 'different'. Whether these differences are actual or not, all young people should be able to feel comfortable and able to be themselves, wherever they are.

Scenario 3

Kate has been bullied for as long as she can remember. Ever since she started school, she's been picked on about her weight and her appearance. Now she's in Year 10, and she's sick of it. Really, really sick of it. Something has got to change. But she's not sure how.

Then Rachel joins her class. Rachel's new, so she doesn't have any friends yet - and Kate's determined to keep it that way. For reasons that Kate herself doesn't even really understand, she starts picking on Rachel from the first day. She shoves her in the corridors so she drops her books. She pushes in front of her in the lunch queue. She holds her nose when Rachel goes past, she makes fun of the way Rachel speaks and walks, she makes loud comments about her in front of her.

A few people laugh and join in, but most people in the class think what Kate's doing is disgusting, immature and stupid. One group of girls in particular, who have never bullied Kate but don't take much notice of her normally, make a special effort to include Rachel and be friendly to her. Because of this, Rachel starts to settle in at the school, get involved in clubs and activities, and make more friends. The more she changes from shy and scared to confident and happy, the further Kate goes in picking on her, trying to get a reaction.

Deep down, Kate hates what she's doing. She knows it's wrong and it makes her feel sick. But at the same time, she's hooked on the feeling of power it gives her when she can get a reaction, when she can make another person feel the way that she's been made to feel. Some days, it's the only thing that makes her feel as if she matters. But now it's not even working. The more horrible she is to Rachel, the more disgusted everyone else is, and the more they dislike her. The more Kate hates herself, the more she takes it out on Rachel. Kate knows that her behaviour's only doing harm, both to Rachel and to herself, and she's desperate to change. But she doesn't know how to begin.

Rachel: I've just started at my new school and there's this girl who won't stop picking on me. She's had it in for me from the first day I came. I don't understand. What have I ever done to her? What could Rachel do?

Kate: I don't understand it myself. I've been bullied all my life and now I'm a bully. I hate what I'm doing. But I don't know how to stop. What could Kate do?

Melissa: Kate's so pathetic. Nobody thinks she's funny, so why does she keep on doing this stuff? If she ever made any effort to be nice, she'd be OK and have friends. I think she's using being bullied as an excuse to be horrible all the time. What could Melissa do?

The idea here is to highlight the importance of reporting behaviour such as this (Rachel should tell a teacher or her parents straight away), and the need to take responsibility for one's actions (Kate should stop behaving like this and apologise to Rachel. She should also seek support to help her come to terms with the bullying she has suffered herself, by telling her parents or teachers, or by visiting www.cybermentors.org where she could interact with trained peer mentors as well as counsellors). This is a good opportunity to draw attention to the important role that friends/peers can play in such circumstances, and the fact that people should never stand by and let behaviour like this happen. Speaking out is critical.

Scenarios

1. (In school/mobile phones)

Lauren is 16 and moved to Dairyside High School three months ago. She always gets laughed at in P.E. by Carina and her mates. They call her fat and say she shouldn't go out in public wearing shorts. They have a big impact on the rest of the class by using their mobile phone software to stretch photos they took of Lauren in her P.E. kit and then sent them around the school. Lauren often gets left out of games in P.E. because of what Carina says and does. P.E. used to be Lauren's favourite subject, but not anymore.

2. (In school/online)

John is 15 and plays football for a well-known under-25s team. He was spotted in his local park by a talent scout and has great potential. But, when playing at school, John is kicked and shoved in most games, and last week was head butted during a tackle. He also endures a lot of friendly 'banter' in the changing room and when the group has discussions during online forums and gaming, John is on the receiving end of the team's frustration; blogging that "if he is going to be a pro, then the school team should win 'every game' and if they don't, it's all his fault". Recently, John has thought about maybe putting his dream of being a professional footballer aside and getting a real job like the other boys plan to do.

3. (In school)

Yasmin is 14 and is quite a popular girl at school: she has lots of friends and is liked by all her teachers. Yasmin went into school one morning like any normal day, but wasn't greeted by her group of best friends at the school gate. When she went to registration her friends were there and wouldn't talk to her. She was confused because they were speaking to her yesterday and she hadn't done anything wrong. At break and lunch she tried talking to them but they would walk away and ignore her, leaving her out. Yasmin was dreading her last lesson of the day as she didn't speak to anyone else other than her group of best friends in that class.

4. (Outside school)

Paul hates getting the school bus home. Everyday a gang of older boys from a different school would throw pieces of chewing gum and food at him during the 20 minute journey. They also shout at him, calling him names and making rude jokes. His friends on the bus have started sitting away from him. Paul told the bus driver about what was happening, but he did nothing about it, and told him to "stop playing about and sit down."

5. (Online)

Mohammad is 14 and just got an Xbox for Christmas. He goes on there the minute he gets in from school until he goes to bed, to chat and play games online, and he's getting really good! He's not very confident and it's a great place to make new friends, but lately a group of people have started going online and calling Mohammad nasty names and telling him to "go back home" and purposely ganging up on him. He's started to get really upset and has asked them to stop, but they haven't. He doesn't understand why they would pick on him, as he was born in the UK and so were his parent. So the UK is his home.

6. (Online/mobile phone/in school)

Tasha and her boyfriend, Tyrone, have been together for three years. Last year, while Tyrone was away, Tasha cheated on him with his best friend. When Tyrone found out he was really mad, so to get his own back, he uploaded nude photos Tasha had sent him onto Facebook and by BlackBerry Messenger. The next day at school, Tasha walked in to find pictures of her stuck up all over the school, and people laughing and giggling at her in the corridors.

7. (In school/online)

Josh is 13 and lives with his mum and dad in a very small town. He has just moved to a secondary-school where he doesn't know anyone, except for a few girls who were at his primary-school, so he hangs around with them a lot. They all enjoy studying together after school rather than playing sports with the others. However, he is now being bullied by other boys who make fun of him for hanging around with girls all the time, and now a picture of him has been posted online that has been edited to make him look like he has pigtails and is wearing a dress.

8. (Outside school)

After school, Vivek likes to go to the local park with some friends from around his neighbourhood and play football. Recently, Colin, one of his next-door neighbours and a group of friends, have been hanging around outside his house. When Vivek leaves for the park they follow him and, on one occasion, Colin started to shout nasty names and comments about his family; because of this, Vivek is telling his friends he doesn't want to go out after school or play football anymore.