

Safe from Bullying

on journeys



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Introduction

'I worried about how I would get home all day. I could hardly concentrate. This girl had been bullying me for a long time and she said she'd beat me up after school. I stayed in when the bell went and didn't go the gate or the bus stop. Finally a teacher said he would walk with me to the gate. But I knew it would just happen the next day and she [the bully] lived near me.'

Female 13

Young people and parents say bullying is among their top concerns. Bullying can make the lives of victims a misery; it undermines their confidence and self esteem and destroys their sense of security.

Every year ChildLine, the UK's free 24-hour helpline for children and young people, speaks to almost 33,000 callers about bullying. Bullying can have a life-long negative impact¹, limiting the places where children and young people feel safe to go and reducing their ability to become successful, independent adults. At worst bullying has been a factor in suicide.

Bullying does not only happen in schools. It can happen anywhere, including on journeys to and from home, school and other activities.

To tackle bullying successfully, the whole community and all services for children and young people need to work together to change the culture so that bullying is unacceptable.²

The government has made tackling bullying a key priority. This guidance discusses bullying on journeys and public transport, and the different forms it can take, and sets out ways in which different partners can work together to prevent bullying on journeys, and respond effectively when bullying occurs. It is part of a suite of guidance³ on preventing bullying outside of schools that includes guidance on tackling bullying in:

- Play and leisure
- Extended services in and around schools
- Children's Homes
- Further education colleges, and
- Youth activities.

Each of these guidance documents is designed to be used in conjunction with a set of training

1 Olweus, D. (1994) Bullying at school: long term outcomes for victims and an effective school based intervention programme. In L.R. Huesmann (Ed), *Aggressive behaviour: Current perspectives* (pp 97-130). New York, Plenum Press. Nansel, T.R. Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J. Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviours among US youth: prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment, *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

2 National Crime Prevention Strategy, Canada found that interventions were more successful when the whole community was involved. <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/bully-eng.aspx>.

3 Available at: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00363/>

resources. Because we know that bullying can follow children between different settings, this suite of guidance also includes guidance for local authorities and others who are in a position to coordinate anti-bullying activities at a local level.

This suite of guidance builds on the existing guidance on bullying in schools: 'Safe To Learn'⁴, a suite of materials which includes supplementary guidance on Racist bullying, Homophobic bullying, cyberbullying and bullying involving children and young people with Special Needs and disabilities, and will shortly include bullying related to gender and gender identity. Although Safe to Learn focuses on tackling bullying in school, it contains a large amount of detailed information on tackling different forms of bullying, which may be useful to those involved in tackling bullying on journeys.

Who is this guidance intended for?

Those who have responsibility for the safety of children and young people on journeys to and from home, school and leisure activities. This includes transport operators, local authority transport coordinators or commissioners, police and community safety teams, schools, colleges and leisure and play providers.

"Over recent years the Anti-Bullying Alliance has become increasingly aware of how bullying in the wider community impacts on the well-being of children and young people. We welcome this latest DCSF guidance with its timely reminder of how it is everyone's responsibility to help create safe environments in which children and young people can live, grow and learn."

Christopher Cloke, Chair of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

This guidance is also supported by 4Children, Action for Children, EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) and Childnet International.

The context

Jess was aged 13 and had started to dread leaving school. She was happy in her friendship groups but they lived over the other side of town and when the end of school came they would go their separate ways. Her only option of getting home was the school bus, and it was there she suffered the bullying. Older more boisterous pupils pushed and shoved her up the stairs. Some would spit at her and throw bus tickets that had been set alight at her from the higher level. Her mother had suffered from a serious illness and people would tease her saying that her Mum was a 'skeleton' and a 'freak'.

What is bullying?

One person or a group can bully others. Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally.

How does bullying differ from banter?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist, or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

What forms does bullying take?

Bullying includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours; or always leaving someone out of groups. It is also bullying when a child or young person is pressured to act against their will by others.

Bullying can sometimes take the form of harassment. This is defined as unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

Increasingly, bullying is happening through new technology. This can involve sending inappropriate or hurtful text messages, emails, instant messages, or posting malicious material online (e.g. on social networking websites), or sending or posting offensive or degrading images and videos.

'Cyberbullying', as it is often called, might take the form of 'real world' bullying being played out online. Situations may be deliberately engineered in order to photograph someone in a humiliating way and circulate this online. It can be particularly insidious, because of the potential to follow children wherever they are, including in the home.

Bullies may pick on children for no apparent reason, seizing on some aspect of the victim's appearance, or personality as an excuse to bully them. This kind of 'mindless' bullying may be seen as 'harmless' fun by the perpetrators, but not by the victim.

However, bullying may also take the form of singling out children because they belong to a particular group or wear certain clothing. The following sections cover different types of prejudice-based bullying in no particular order.

Racist and religious bullying

Racist bullying can be defined as 'A range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status'⁵.

No child should be made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion. Forms of racism which are the result of ignorance are nevertheless hurtful to the recipient and other members of that group. It is vital that all children and young people are valued and learn to respect others. Adults should make their stance on racist behaviour clear to all children so as to discourage

racist behaviour and to encourage reporting if it does take place.

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, all public bodies have a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations. Tackling racist bullying is a key part of fulfilling this duty.

Sexual, sexist, and transphobic bullying

Sexual bullying includes any behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, where sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or by girls. It can be carried out to a person's face, behind their back or by use of technology. Sexist bullying refers to bullying simply because the victim is a girl or a boy, based on singling out something specifically gender-linked. Transphobic bullying refers to bullying because someone is, or is thought to be, transgender.

While young people may express an acceptance of sexual insults because they are widely used, such insults are often used to bully someone.⁶ Inappropriate touching can also be a form of bullying and harassment, and may escalate into abuse. Similarly, 'jokes' about sexual assault, or rape, if unchallenged, can create an atmosphere in which this behaviour is seen as more acceptable.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation). It can be particularly difficult for a young person to report, and is often directed at them at a very sensitive phase of their lives when identity is being developed. What might be called

5 Bullying Around Racism, Religion and Culture: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=10444>.

6 Young Voice and Youthworks survey for BBC Panorama more than one in five said these insults were 'often' used against them and a further 14% said it happened 'all the time'. The concern is that young people may come to see it as acceptable. More than one in four thought it was acceptable.

banter can be deemed harassment if it is at the expense of someone's dignity and meant offensively. The term 'gay' as an insult is unacceptable and should always be challenged, as such use can create an atmosphere in which a young person feels denigrated and even hounded. The term 'gay' is sometimes used as a proxy for racist or disablist bullying because young people may believe they can get away with using these words in an abusive way, whereas racist insults would be challenged by staff.⁷

Adults can find homophobic bullying difficult to challenge, but some excellent resources are available⁸. If homophobia is approached as a rights issue – by arguing the case that everyone has a right to be and feel safe – young people are usually more receptive⁹.

Homophobic bullying has been shown to have an extremely damaging impact, with depression, suicidal thoughts and self harm reported.¹⁰

Regulations made under the Equality Act 2006 outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of 'goods and services', including those provided by public bodies. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 also place a duty on employers to protect all staff against discrimination or harassment on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

Disablist bullying

Bullying involving children and young people with disabilities employs many of the same forms as other types of bullying, with name calling and

pushing and shoving being common. Additional forms include:

- Manipulative bullying, where the perpetrator tries to get the victim to act in a certain way – do something they should not do – steal from a newsagent for example, when they may not be able to recognise that they should not do this.
- Bullying that exploits a particular aspect of a condition such as sensitivity to sensory stimuli, lights or sounds.
- Conditional friendship where the victim is 'allowed' to be in the friendship group only on certain conditions. These are intended to get the victim into trouble or to humiliate them and may put the victim in danger.
- Children with disabilities also report persistent, seemingly 'low level' bullying from which there is no let up. Eventually the victim 'snaps'. This is commonly seen among children on the Autistic spectrum. They can become uncontrollably angry when this occurs, and some are then blamed by adults without looking at the full context behind their behaviour.
- Among children with disabilities of various kinds a hierarchy can develop based on skills. Bullying can occur within such a hierarchy. For example the sighted may bully the unsighted.
- There may be high levels of bullying between children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as bullying of them by other children.

7 Safe to Play (2008) – young people with SEN were significantly more likely than peers to say they had been called 'gay'. Survey of 4546 children in Dudley.

8 See <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00363/>.

9 See Safe to Learn: Homophobic Bullying, Download 11: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=11860>.

10 Rivers I. (2000) Mullen 1999 Young Voice in association with Oxford University 1999

Young people with disabilities report being bullied in the street, on the bus and in shops or at college. Prejudice against them is evident in the primary years and is resistant to change in the secondary years.¹¹ It should be addressed as early as possible.

In a recent Mencap survey, 8 out of 10 children with a learning disability had been bullied, with 6 out of 10 children experiencing physical bullying. Eight out of 10 were scared to go out because of bullying¹².

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons in the provision of facilities and services.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, all public bodies have a duty to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment on grounds of disability and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. Tackling disablist bullying is a key part of fulfilling this duty.



11 Safe To Play (2008).

12 Mencap (2007), *Bullying Wrecks Lives – the experiences of children and young people with a learning disability*

Bullying on Journeys

Fears about safety limit young people's use of local amenities. While most children feel safe most of the time, there are those who fear they will be bullied on public transport or in the street, near school gates or on the journey home. The Tellus 3 survey found that 5% said they felt 'very unsafe' on public transport while 22% felt 'a little unsafe'. Several children consulted for this guidance said bullying occurs on buses to and from school. Many also mentioned that it happens walking to or from school. In one survey, approximately half of the respondent at secondary age said it happened 'in the street'.¹³

Journeys offer unsupervised situations in which large numbers of children and young people may be travelling to or from school, or to other activities. A child may feel he or she cannot get off the bus or train if they are being bullied – there may not be another bus for some time in rural areas and they may risk being late for school or returning home.

Bullying and disruptive behaviour can occur when bus routes meet, bringing pupils from different schools to the same bus station, making some children vulnerable every day.

Why tackle bullying on journeys?

Every child and young person should feel safe to learn, play and socialise.

Whether on the bus, the train, the tram, or in the street, every child should be safe from victimisation and discrimination. No-one should suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause.



Anti-bullying activity contributes to safer neighbourhoods and promotes community cohesion. Successful bullying reduction can play a part in reducing crime.¹⁴

Bullying and the wider Staying Safe Agenda

Effective anti-bullying practice gives all children and young people the assurance that they are cared for in a safe and friendly environment. It upholds their fundamental right to be safe.

¹³ Safe to Play (2008).

¹⁴ Bullying Prevention Is Crime Prevention. Fox, J.A et al (2003) Fight Crime Invest in Kids. Washington DC

Bystanders: an audience for bullying

Bullying at bus stations, on the street or at school gates will usually be witnessed by a group. 48% of secondary pupils said they had watched bullying.¹⁵ When one person bullies another there is likely to be an audience and supporters who reinforce the bully. Bystanders can lend support to the bullying simply by watching. Research shows that 85% of bullying takes place with bystanders present.¹⁶ However, young people often say they have wanted to help the victim, but felt they could not.¹⁷

A school's behaviour policy, as determined by the head teacher, may, to such extent as is reasonable, include measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the school and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school. (Section 89 Education and Inspections Act 2006)

If children are being bullied, the achievement of all or any of the five Every Child Matters outcomes may be seriously undermined. Tackling bullying is mentioned explicitly under two of the Every Child Matters outcomes:

Outcome 2: Stay safe

- Aim: Children and young people need to be safe from bullying and discrimination.

Outcome 4: Make a positive contribution

- Aim: Children and young people are helped to develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate.



15 Safe To Play (2008) Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

16 Craig and Pepler (1997) O'Connell and others (1999).

17 Safe To Play (2008).

If children are worried about bullying on journeys they are less likely to choose healthier travel options, such as walking or cycling to school, and fears around using public transport may restrict their access to positive activities. It may also lead to their parents driving them to and from school, thereby increasing local congestion.

Responsibilities with regard to bullying on journeys

All organisations and adults (paid or unpaid) who work with children owe them a duty of care, and must take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.

The Children Act 2004 established a duty for local authorities and their local partners to co-operate to make arrangements to improve children's well-being (section 10) and for local authorities and partner agencies "to safeguard and promote welfare" of children.

How can bullying be stopped?

Bullying can only be stopped through a combination of **prevention** and **response**. Preventative work is ongoing and sustained. It should provide consistency and a clear framework. When an incident occurs, a response is required to deal with the bullying behaviour and support the victim.

The next two sections of this guidance will outline the steps different partners can take both to prevent bullying and to respond to it when it occurs.



Preventing bullying

Local Authorities

There are a number of steps which different partners can take to reduce the likelihood of bullying on journeys in any local area. However, the action of any given partner is unlikely to be effective in isolation. Local authorities have a key role in coordinating the anti-bullying activities of partners in their area to ensure an effective joined up approach.

The key first step is for the local authority anti-bullying lead to work with Local Authority Transport Officers, School Travel Advisers, transport providers, police, community safety teams, schools, colleges and play and leisure providers to agree a safer travel policy. This will

form the basis for joined up working across local partners to tackle bullying.

An effective local safer travel policy should:

- Include children and young people in its development.
- Cover all forms of bullying, including prejudice based bullying and cyberbullying.
- Cover all local forms of journeys, including walking and cycling, and all local modes of transport including services contracted by the local authority and those used by the general public.

Transport policies work in several directions



- Set out the roles that different partners will play.
- Make links with other local policies, such as sustainable travel policies.
- Make links to relevant equalities legislation.

One of the most important features of a local safer travel policy is to create a system by which staff such as bus drivers can report incidents of bullying to inform the local response. For example, if reports identify frequent bullying on a particular route, the local authority and police could use police community support officers, or street wardens, to provide a presence on those routes. Alternatively, if children in the uniform of a particular school (or schools) are identified as being involved in bullying, the school (or schools) could be asked to investigate and run anti-bullying interventions to address the issue.

The policy should be widely communicated within the local area. To do this, the local authority anti-bullying lead might:

- Produce a version written in child friendly language, and distribute via local schools, colleges and other settings.
- Work with local transport providers to place prominent messages stating that bullying will not be tolerated, for example through posters on bus shelters and inside buses.
- Encourage schools, colleges and play and leisure providers to cover bullying on journeys in their anti-bullying policies, and discuss acceptable behaviour on journeys as part of their anti-bullying work and advice to children and young people about safe to travel.

The role of local authorities in commissioning transport such as school buses can be an important lever in tackling bullying. Where a

Case study: Borough-wide initiative on bullying out of school

Aim: Consult young children on bullying concerns and respond to them.

Implemented by: Camden Children's Fund with 4Children and Young Voice.

In Camden, a series of workshops were conducted with young children on the issue of bullying. Through the use of specially adapted music, theatre and cartooning workshops, the children described locations where bullying took place. These included bus stops, subways, the canal, alleyways, park play areas and outside shops. The children created slogans and designed posters that were printed and displayed in the panels at bus stops to make clear that they should be 'Bully Free Zones'. A pack was developed and distributed to play centres, schools and clubs in the borough. It contained posters and postcards of children's work and advice to the setting, 4Children and Young Voice provided training for street wardens and local authority staff in preventing bullying in those areas. Proactive steps were taken to include children with special needs.



Poster for bus shelters developed by children in Camden Children's Fund anti-bullying initiative, with 4Children and Young Voice.

transport provider is contracted by a local authority to take children to and from school, the local authority can include conditions that include anti-bullying procedures.

Public transport providers

Public transport providers have a duty to take reasonable care to ensure the safety of their passengers. This primarily involves ensuring that vehicles are in good working order, and are operated and driven safely. Providers also have a duty to take reasonable care to prevent acts or omissions that could reasonably be foreseen as likely to injure people using the service. Whilst this does not have the effect of imposing specific legal obligations, providers should reasonably take the

following steps to assist in the prevention of bullying, working with the support of other local partners:

- Engage in local partnership work to tackle bullying on journeys and sign up to any safer travel policy.
- Make it clear to passengers that bullying and harassment will not be tolerated on their services, for example through posters on bus shelters and inside buses.

Case study: Anti-bullying posters in Birmingham

Aim: Raise awareness of bullying on buses and suburban trains

Implemented by: Young Voice and Anti-Bullying Alliance, and Birmingham City Council with sponsorship by Vodafone.

Young people in the LIFT community trust youth project at Welsh House, Quinton Birmingham created a poster to counter bullying. This was converted into formats for school notice boards, bus interiors and advertising panels on trains. The advertising spaces were booked and the posters ran for two months on buses and trains. Copies were provided free to schools, youth clubs and any setting requesting them. Young people used the slogan in other anti-bullying work such as plays and songs.



Poster designed by young people in the LIFT Community Trust youth project Quinton Birmingham and used for Anti-Bullying week 2005 by Young Voice and Anti-Bullying Alliance. Used on buses. Another version used on trains.

- Cooperate in local efforts to monitor and respond to bullying on journeys by encouraging their staff to report incidents and sharing this information with local partners such as the local authority, the police, and local schools and colleges. This might involve designating a manager to collate reports and liaise with partners. (See Case study: Inter-agency partnerships reduce incidents in Birmingham).
- Raise awareness amongst their operational staff of bullying, the different forms it can take, and what they can do if they witness bullying.

Police and community safety teams

The police, including, where appropriate the British Transport Police, are the lead agency for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the streets and on transport. As such, they have a key role in tackling bullying on journeys, working with local authority community safety teams.

Police and community safety teams should support local partnerships to tackle bullying on journeys by:

- Acting on information from partners on locations and peak times for incidents (incident mapping), and deploying resources appropriately to provide a presence in identified hotspots.
- Taking part in bullying prevention activity in schools, colleges, youth and play and leisure settings, explaining to children and young people what the consequences for bullying on journeys might be.
- Liaise regularly with other local partners as part of the local safer travel policy. This might be best achieved by working through a Community Safety Partnership or Safer Schools Partnership where there is one.
- Share intelligence about bullying on journeys with local partners, such as local authorities and police and consider asking for outside support, e.g. asking for a police presence outside or near the school, college or activity or on transport routes at key times.
- Involve young people in developing guidelines for safer travel.
- Make sure children, young people and their parents/carers know how to report bullying on the journey to or from school and where they can get help.

Schools, colleges and leisure and play providers

Schools, colleges, leisure and play providers work closely with children and young people, and are well placed to carry out bullying prevention activity. The steps which staff in these settings can take to prevent bullying are set out in other guidance documents as part of this suite of guidance¹⁸. Although they cannot take responsibility for every incident off site, staff should take the following steps to ensure that children and young people can travel safely to and from these settings:

18 Available at: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/stayingsafe/bullying/>.

Case Study: Purbeck School Travel Plan, Dorset

Aim: Improved safer travel by pupils.

Implemented by: Purbeck School.

After bad behaviour on the buses emerged as the issue most commonly raised by students in a consultation (2006), Purbeck School in a rural area of Dorset responded by consulting with all students, parents, staff and Governors to develop their travel plan. Students' choices of transport were limited. Over 67% of the 1441 students travelled to school by bus, and the issue was taken seriously by the Student Parliament.

The aim of the travel plan was to raise awareness of issues facing students travelling to school, and put actions in place to improve the current situation. The Student Parliament drew up a Student Bus Conduct Code which is now part of the School Travel Plan, and monitored its effectiveness. Further work was undertaken with students, parents and governors to raise awareness of health issues (emotional, social and physical well-being) which could be improved through travel arrangements.

- Make sure that their behaviour or anti-bullying policies cover what behaviour is acceptable on journeys, developing this in consultation with children, young people and transport providers.
 - Ensure bullying is addressed when agreeing School Travel Plans.
 - Support any local systems for transport providers and others to report bullying involving children and young people, and act on these reports.
 - Make links with other agencies and local voluntary sector provision to share good practice.
 - Liaise with residential care managers closely on anti-bullying initiatives for looked after children to ensure safe journeys.
- Schools in particular have the power under Section 89 (5) of Education and Inspections Act 2006 to take measures to regulate the conduct of pupils off site.

Responding to bullying

Sometimes bullying does occur. When this happens, **a clear consistent response is essential**. There are many different ways to respond to bullying. However, the goals of any intervention should always be the same:

- To make the victim safe.
- To stop the bullying, and change the bully's behaviour.
- To make clear to every other child that bullying is unacceptable.
- To learn lessons from the experience that can be applied in future.

Different partners have different roles in responding to bullying which takes place on journeys.

Local authorities

As with preventing bullying, local authorities have a role to play in coordinating the response to bullying. This can be done, for example, by operating a monitoring and referral system so that different partners can share information about which routes and areas are bullying hotspots. Where hotspots are identified, the local authority should work with different partners involved to make sure that the bullying is addressed, for

example by arranging for a police presence on buses.

Transport providers

The transient nature of journeys means that it will often be difficult to foresee when incidents might occur, and to put in place specific immediate, or long term, preventative and follow-up measures. However, transport providers' staff are frequently present when bullying incidents occur and are key to an effective response. Staff such as bus drivers and train guards are in a position of authority, and it may be appropriate in some circumstances for them to intervene directly – for example by telling bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable or even ejecting them from the vehicle, though it is important to remember that they are not required to do this, and that it will not always be an appropriate response, especially where it would put staff themselves at risk of physical harm.

Employment policies should ensure that staff are provided with information about how to report an incident to those better placed to deal with it. For serious incidents, where an individual is at risk of imminent harm, this would mean calling the police. For less serious incidents it might mean reporting the bullying to the relevant school or other setting, so that an effective response, addressing the behaviour of the bully, can be put in place.

Case Study: Lancashire Safer Travel Unit

Aim: Reducing anti-social behaviour on school buses

Implemented by: The Lancashire Safer Travel Unit.

The Safer Travel Unit was set up in response to the results of a school bus travel survey in Lancashire. Over 8,740,000 journeys are made in Lancashire each year by young people on buses to travel to and from schools and college. The survey found that there was a peak in anti-social behaviour on buses in the afternoon, on journeys between school and home.

The Unit developed an incident reporting protocol as part of four main components to their pilot initiative: reporting, training/education, CCTV and interventions. Senior Bus Monitors receive free travel, including evenings and weekends, in return for monitoring acceptable behaviour. Bus Monitors are then presented with a certificate of achievement from the Safer Travel Unit, to add to their portfolio. The Unit has also implemented an Anti-Social Behaviour on buses Hotline, operated by Lancashire County Council. Twelve operators have received training from the Safer Travel Unit, and deal with all enquiries received by the hotline.

The hotline is used in conjunction with the Safer Travel Unit web based reporting/investigation tool, FIRST (Fast Incident Reporting for Safer Travel). The moment a call to the hotline is finalised, FIRST sends an electronic message to the school concerned, the bus operator, and the Safer Travel Unit. Each can then securely log into FIRST, via a standard internet connection and web browser, to view details of the incident.

The pilot initiative resulted in an 85% reduction in anti-social behaviour, and the initiative has been progressively rolled out across 77 high schools in Lancashire and Blackburn and Darwen. Innovative partnership working has seen reports of anti-social behaviour on buses reduce by 33% since 2004.

Website www.safertravelunit.co.uk. Tel: 01772531290.

Transport operators should provide clear guidance to their staff about what they should do if they witness bullying, making clear in which circumstances it would be appropriate for them to intervene directly, and making staff aware of how to report an incident – whether through their managers, an identified lead member of staff within the company or a local reporting hotline if one exists.

Police and community safety teams

Bullying behaviour may involve the commission of a number of different criminal offences, such as assault, theft, criminal damage, harassment, misuse of communication, incitement to hatred or sexual offences. It also represents a form of anti-social behaviour directed against other young people. As such, the police have a role in responding to bullying on journeys, as they would for other crime and disorder in public spaces.

Case study: Inter-agency partnerships reduce incidents in Birmingham

Aim: to tackle bullying and increase pupil safety; to reduce crime and the number of young people drawn into trouble.

Implemented by: West Midlands Police in a regional partnership with Safer Schools.

Interview with the Safer Schools Officer:

“Sometimes incidents that have happened outside school can be blown out of proportion and can escalate into huge cases particularly if parents were not told about the bullying earlier.

I work with a behaviour improvement teacher within the school. Multi-agency meetings are held weekly. If a complaint is received it is reported to the school, and the parents of all parties are called. This is followed by meetings along the lines of the Restorative Justice model, to explain consequences to parents.

The parents might not be aware that what has happened could be considered a criminal offence. We explain (to the bully, victim and parents) what happens if the bullying continues – first we might deal with this in school- but at a later stage if it happens repeatedly we might send them a formal warning. For example, if they send threatening or abusive texts, we would do this via the Protection from Harassment Act 1998. In most cases the bullying tends to stop after the initial meetings. It helps the parents of the victim to realise that it is being taken seriously, and the bully and the parents of the bully to realise the seriousness of their actions. The joined up approach is very successful.

After investigating the bullying and why it has happened, we try to see how the young people can move on from here and what each person eventually wants to happen.

The key thing we tell parents is that if they are aware of a problem outside school they need to let us know. The bullying may have been happening for a long time – from primary school to secondary school – we need to make sure that they (the primary school) also pass this information on.

We liaise with the transport authorities like Centro- they report to the Safer Travel team – who will report incidents involving school children to me. If there is a problem- like fighting on the bus- the driver will contact the depot, who will contact the police. We can get video stills (from CCTV) and this can usually easily identify the young people involved. The buses seem to be a key area where children are vulnerable. Often they are targeted by thieves and mobiles are stolen.”

Interview with his counterpart, the teacher in the school:

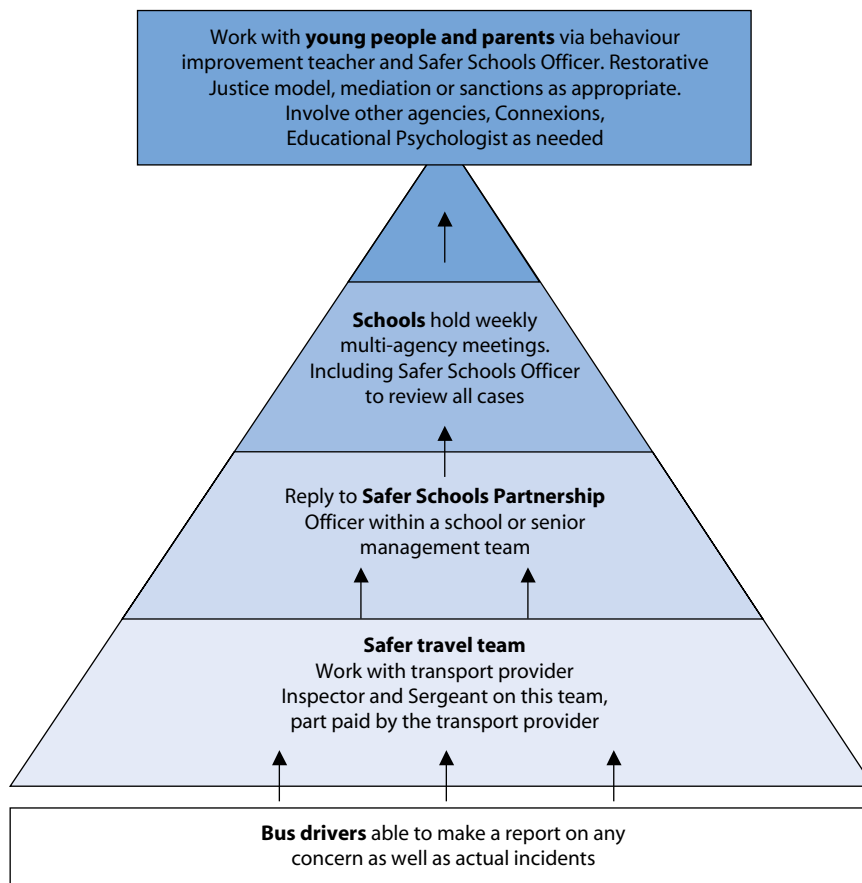
“We have a weekly meeting with the school and other agencies such as the school police officer, education welfare and Connexions. Sometimes the Educational Psychologist will also be involved. The transport agencies are not usually involved in this – but they liaise with us through the police. These meetings take place as part of the Safer Schools protocol.

Sometimes bullying happens outside school and parents/young people report this to the police. It has often started in school but then spilled over to outside school. The police will then report to us what has happened. We try to deal with it within the school rather than criminalise the behaviour- but it depends on how serious it is and what the parents and young people want to do about it.

There is no standard response and it depends on the individual situation.

Quite often the more serious bullying takes place on the bus and as it is out of school it gets reported to the police- so the transport authorities and police then share the information and they report it to us.”

Diagram illustrating how the process works:



Where an incident takes place on public transport or in the street the police are likely to be the agency best placed to respond quickly. Acting on information from partners they can improve the efficiency of this response by having a presence in identified local bullying hotspots at the times bullying is most likely to take place.

In responding to bullying, police will bear in mind that a bullying incident may be part of a much wider pattern of bullying behaviour which is best dealt with by a permanent setting which the child attends such as their school, working with their parents/carers. A response may already be in place. For this reason, it is important that the police share information about bullying incidents with other local partners, such as the local authority, transport providers, schools and colleges, and agree who is best placed to intervene.

Schools, colleges and leisure and play providers

Where staff in these settings receive reports from other partners, such as transport providers, that children and young people travelling to or from the setting have been involved in bullying, they should put in place actions to respond. These would include ensuring the victim's safety, addressing the bully's behaviour and sending a message to other children that this behaviour is not acceptable. Where children from one setting have been bullying children from a different setting, staff from the two settings should liaise to agree a joined up response. Cyberbullying can be traced and tracked to find proof of the bullying so it becomes less of a question about one person's word over another.

In responding to bullying, schools should follow the guidance in *Safe to Learn*¹⁹; Further Education

colleges, play and leisure providers, extended services in and around schools, Children's Homes, and youth activity providers should follow the guidance set out in this suite of documents.

Where bullying is challenged in a setting, bullies may become more secretive and start bullying their victims on journeys to and from the setting where there is less supervision. Where settings are trying to respond to bullying but find that they are having insufficient impact because of their inability to supervise children on journeys to and from the setting, staff should engage with local partners such as the local authority anti-bullying lead, police and community safety teams, and transport providers, to monitor and address bullying on journeys.

How do we know our actions have been successful?

Regular consultation with young people is the most effective way to find out if anti-bullying interventions are working, and young people feel safe.

There are three key questions to ask about intervention:

- Does the victim feel safe?
- Did the bully's behaviour change?
- What have we learned?

Information gathered by schools, Further Education colleges, play and leisure providers, extended services in and around schools, Children's Homes and youth activity providers and collated by local authorities should inform local partners' assessment of the effectiveness of their response to bullying.

19 <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/>

Further Information, Advice and Support

Within your local authority

The Safer Travel team, the Anti-Bullying lead and steering group, neighborhood policing, Community Safety team or community support officers, may all be working together to reduce bullying.

Anti-Bullying Alliance

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

For a description of ways to enable participation for children and young people with special needs http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/downloads/pdf/youngvoice_participation.pdf.pdf

Beat Bullying: Provides support to young people who have been bullied as well as 'cybernavts' on cyberbullying and other ways for young people to become involved www.beatbullying.org.

BECTA: For more information on cyberbullying www.becta.org.uk/safeguarding.php.

EACH (Educational Action Challenging

Homophobia): Provides training for local authorities to challenge homophobic bullying: www.eachaction.org.uk.

EACH also provides a national helpline for young people experiencing homophobic bullying:
Tel: 0808 1000 143.

Kidscape: A charity helping to prevent bullying offers 2 leaflets 'Safety On The Bus', one for young people and one for parents. www.kidscape.org.uk

MENCAP: The Don't Stick it, Stop It! campaign contains stickers and useful materials, such as line animations and video clips, which can be used for training/awareness purposes www.mencap.org.uk/dontstickit.

NSPCC: Offers a wide range of advice and support in this area, including what to do when a child may disclose a further problem such as domestic violence or neglect. Visit www.nspcc.org.uk.

Stonewall: For information on tackling homophobic bullying www.stonewall.org.uk.

The Council for Disabled Children: for requirements on inclusion www.ncb.org.uk.

Transforming Conflict: For information on restorative practices and training <http://www.transformingconflict.org>.

Examples

Example of a Local Authority policy for schools on bullying in the community:

Warwickshire ([http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/web/corporate/pages.nsf/\(DisplayLinks\)/B1813F078EB321798025735A0040DC09](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/web/corporate/pages.nsf/(DisplayLinks)/B1813F078EB321798025735A0040DC09))

Example of a Leicestershire's county wide policy on bullying in the community
www.beyondbullying.com.

and
<http://www.beyondbullying.com/uploads/bullying-in-our-community---upda.pdf>

Example of local authority web pages on bullying in the community from North Lincolnshire includes advice for young people and for those who work with them:

<http://www.binbullying.co.uk/advice-to-those-who-work-with>.

A more comprehensive list including ideas for training and suggestions for developing policies is available in the training resources as part of this suite of guidance²⁰.

²⁰ See: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00363/>

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