



VALUES EDUCATION

“Anti-bullying posters” and “School bullying action guidelines”

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ANTI-BULLYING POSTERS

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CONTENT:

The set contains 6 sheets which are made of a hardwearing, washable, high quality material. They are designed to hang up on the wall. Diameter of the sheets: 30cm.

RECOMMENDED AGE:

From 3 years.

These anti-bullying sheets help to prevent school bullying from an early age and enable schools to display an attitude of zero tolerance towards bullying in school.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Promote awareness of bullying in school.
- Identify the most common situations of bullying in school.
- Recognise the different types of bullying in school.
- Identify the people involved in bullying incidents in school: the bully, the victim, the observer or observers.
- Prevent the development of these behaviours.

ACTIVITIES AND GAMES:

The sheets show school bullying incidents that are physical, psychological, social exclusion, and cyber bullying. It enables the pupils to work on the different types of bullying and the implications of each one.

A debate with pupils about each of the sheets is recommended, analysing the behaviour of each of the people and observing the role that the bully, the victim, and the observers play. Identify the emotions and feelings that each person may experience in the different situations. Come up with a conclusion as a group as to why these behaviours that are shown on the sheets are prohibited.

Below, there is a guide with action guidelines for school bullying, written by Araceli Oñate, school bullying experts.



SCHOOL BULLYING ACTION GUIDELINES

What is school bullying?

School Bullying is a process of continuous abuse which undermines the dignity and fundamental rights of the child in the school setting. It could be defined as a “deliberate and continued verbal and non-verbal abuse received by a minor on the part of another person or persons, who behave cruelly towards him/her with the aim of suppressing, intimidating, scaring, threatening them, or obtaining something from them through blackmail, undermining the dignity of the child and his/her fundamental rights.”

Three parties are generally involved in school bullying:

1. The bully or instigator (or group of bullies)
2. The victim
3. The observers or witnesses

The role played by each person in the bullying process is very important and can mark different consequences over time. One in four school pupils gets out of their abusive situation thanks to the support of friends (the true heroes of our classrooms) who stick by the victim's side, risking suffering the same fate of exclusion and isolation. The group then appears to be protected which makes it difficult to choose new victims and triggers a reaction which is capable of stopping the abusive behaviours, cutting them off at the root and depriving them of the social recognition that makes the violence worthwhile.

How do I know if I am facing a school bullying case?

If these three situations occur:

- The existence of one or more **abusive behaviours** and harassment in the school setting.
- **Repeated abuse** that the child expects to suffer systematically within the school setting, beyond behaviour which is merely incidental or sporadic.
- **An ongoing process** that may include a wide range of abusive behaviours and results in a process of helplessness which is capable of affecting the resistance of any child suffering from it affecting significantly, over time, all areas of their life (academic, affective-emotional, social, family...)

The concurrence of these 3 situations substantiates the existence of school bullying. It is important to know that we should NOT wait to see the psychological or physical damage to the child to establish an assessment of school bullying. The bullying exists from the moment the repetitive abusive behaviour begins, independently of whether it has generated



physical or psychological damage for the victim, since these usually appear later.

Some considerations to bear in mind:

1) Avoid pointing towards the victim as the cause of the bullying

There is no profile of a victim. Anyone can be the victim of school bullying. The victim is not physically or psychologically weak. It is the abusive behaviour which must be pointed out as unacceptable to avoid the social learning of the profitability of violence and the response that turns “everyone against everyone” into “everyone against one”, the beginning of the school bullying process.

In the beginning, the “signal effect”, jealousy or envy of some characteristic of the victim (they arrive late one day, they are popular, they get good grades, they are good looking...) can be enough reason to start the bullying process against someone. Sometimes, the victim is perceived as a threat to the bully (because of their personality, their independence, their leadership qualities, etc.). Non-confrontational children, new students, or simply, those who make a trivial mistake, becoming significant and relevant for some (e.g. tripping over, getting a bad grade, etc.) are also susceptible to suffering abuse by being marginalised, attacked and excluded.

Bullies look for social recognition by teasing, ridiculing, and belittling and “learn” by trial and error that violence is worthwhile. The victim is never to blame for the bullying situation, they are chosen randomly by the bully and there is nothing within them that explains or justifies the abuse.

Unfortunately, there is a mistaken tendency to focus on the victim instead of cutting the harassing behaviour off at the root in such a way that the child victim of the abuse is attributed the cause of the violence and abuse they suffer. They are often labelled as “weak”, with a difficult personality, or by saying they are introverted, that they don’t know how to relate to others, that they misconstrue reality, that they are “the weirdo”, the different one... or that they have characteristics or shortcomings that make them deserve it, be responsible or to blame for the situation they are suffering. A basic error of attribution that tries to make the victim the cause of the abuse they put up with.

However, **nothing justifies bullying**. No physical feature, attitude, ability, or personality characteristic can be a motive or justification to receive violent behaviour or abuse. As soon as systematic violence is detected and recurring against a child they should be immediately protected, without evaluating whether the cause was their personality, in their attitudes, in their family situation, in their shortcomings, in their weaknesses, or in their qualities.

Neither should there be a search for solutions which put the focus on training or improving psychological or physical characteristics of the victims: social abilities, assertiveness, self-esteem, resilience or personal defence. This can generate the false belief that it is them or their lack of ability which has caused them to be on the receiving end of the abuse and that

they should defend themselves against the bullies.

Schools must guarantee effective protection against violent behaviour to avoid the process which is school bullying.

2) Don't allow bullying behaviour to go unpunished

Violent and bullying behaviours which arise when a pupil continuously abuses another pupil must be monitored and stopped from the first time they occur and not be trivialised by arguing that "it's child's play".

They are intentional and repeated behaviours which are carried out with the aim of intimidating, suppressing, belittling, frightening, and emotionally and intellectually consuming the victim, for the purpose of obtaining a favourable result for the bully, or to satisfy their need to suppress, attack, or destroy others. In many cases, the child who bullies others is looking for the recognition and attention they lack. Their relationships are based on belittling and excluding others.

Those children who bully a classmate without seeing their behaviour pointed out as unacceptable, will soon find themselves accompanied by a group of "bullies" who, universally, join in with the bullying process and persecution against the victim. If the majority is in this group, it is more difficult to defend the bullied child.

The phenomenon of "everyone against one" proves there is a collective violent reaction and it is necessary to avoid this triggering the school bullying process by cutting the root from the beginning of any demonstration of physical or psychological violence within a classroom or in the school.

3) The importance of the role of the observers

Observers or witnesses in cases of school violence play a crucial role when it comes to preventing, stopping, or maintaining these bullying situations.

The different positions of the witnesses towards a bullying situation are:

1. Some witnesses reinforce the bully, they actively help the leader in the bullying situations, or, even though they don't actively take part, they observe the aggression, laugh and reinforce the bullying or abusive behaviour.
2. Other witnesses choose to remain passive towards bullying and violent situations, without intermediating on behalf of the victim or without stopping the violent behaviour of their classmates. They seem indifferent. They don't act because of fear, because they think it isn't their problem, or they don't want to be the "snitch". In many cases, they fear exclusion and isolation or the reprisals from the bullies and when faced with this they prefer to keep out of it.
3. A small number of witnesses choose to defend the victim, whether that is directly



intervening at the time of the aggression, getting an adult or consoling and supporting the classmate who is being bullied. Their action can help the bully not to feel reinforced in their behaviour and therefore stop their bullying behaviour.

If the bullying behaviour is not punished in school, the witnesses can internalise that it is better to stay on the side of the stronger party, of the bullies, since not being on their side could put them in the spotlight as the next victims. For this reason, many witnesses end up actively participating in violent situations and learning that they only have two options which are to be complicit or be the victim of the violence.

The school must avoid this by strongly sanctioning the violent behaviour and educating pupils in helpful and supportive behaviour. Make them feel they are in safe surroundings where there is zero tolerance towards school bullying and violent behaviour is not tolerated, whether physical or psychological.

Only in a protective environment of maximum respect towards others, witnesses will forcefully curb this type of bullying behaviour.

The action of the schools

- Foster a culture of zero tolerance towards school bullying and violence. Cut abusive behaviours at the core, pointing them out to be unacceptable, avoiding the consolidation of the process of school bullying.
- Don't point to the victim as the cause of the bullying.
- Don't expect the child to present psychological damage in order to evaluate the case as school bullying. Act from the first minute.
- Offer immediate protection to the victim of the school bullying. The school is responsible for guaranteeing this protection.
- The victim is ALWAYS innocent: do not allow anyone to look to them for the causes of the abuse they receive.
- Do not disregard the psychological and social violence. It is the most important and the one which causes the most damage.
- Sanction any abusive, inhumane or degrading behaviour towards another person immediately, whether it comes from a pupil or a teacher. The educational community must pull together to educate all those implicated in attaining zero tolerance towards abuse and zero tolerance towards the indifference in the light of these behaviours.
- Don't consider school bullying as being just from the moment that the situation reaches its limit and that the victim presents serious psychological or physical damage. Understand that there is a prior process of abuse that can last for months or years and in which the victim has been suffering, in many cases, in silence.
- Periodically evaluate violence in the classroom, through proven efficiency systems like TEBAE (Brief assessment of school bullying) or AVE (school bullying and violence)

- Develop a Comprehensive Prevention Plan against School Bullying within the school in which the whole educational community is involved, from the management team to the infant pupils.
- Maintain a vigilant and alert attitude, as well as active behaviours which prevent or stop the aggression or abuse.
- Do not trivialise or sent toxic messages such as “it’s not that bad”, “it happened to me too”, “it will be a joke”, “put up with it”, “this prepares you for life” ...

Keys to detect a bullied child

You may suspect your child is being bullied:

- If they have damaged clothing, have lost items, injuries...
- If they find excuses not to go to lessons
- If they avoid involvement with their friends
- If they don’t want to go to birthday parties, excursions, school trips...
- If they isolate themselves at break time
- If they cry easily for no apparent reason
- If they have nausea and vomiting in the morning
- If they say “we are worthless”
- If they bite their nails
- If they are scared of going to school
- If they are restless and uneasy
- If they talk about bullying situations happening to “another child”
- If they worry too much about their safety or that of members of their family
- If they don’t want to go to P.E lessons
- If they have exaggerated fits of rage
- If they can’t say what is wrong or name their bully
- If they have a feeling of imminent danger
- If they are anxious or distressed and can’t concentrate
- If they talk about “getting out of the way” to solve everything
- If they are worried about being falsely accused

What should you do if your child tells you that someone is making their life impossible at school?

- Firstly, make them feel that they are not alone, that they are the most important thing to us and that together we will find the way to continue and stop the bullying.
- Validate emotionally their experience. Don't stop them from expressing their painful emotions or reject them crying or showing they are vulnerable.
- The child must understand that their needs and worries are taken into account and can be shared.
- Remind them they are not responsible for what is happening, that they are innocent and that it is their classmates who are carrying out socially unacceptable behaviour.
- Go to school with the aim of informing the teacher of tutor and gather the relevant information.
- Demand the necessary preventive action for the safety of your child as well as the forcefulness of the school system.
- Do not allow anyone to look for "the cause" in the victim of the abuse they receive. The abuse is never justified.
- Avoid the feeling of helplessness in your child. Communicate security and confidence in creating a plan of action to change the situation. Avoid them feeling that there is nothing that can be done.
- Act by sending written reports to the school.

What should you do if you are a victim of school bullying?

If you are a victim of school bullying, you are innocent. There is no reason to justify the type of abuse you are suffering.

You don't need to pass psychological tests, but the situation of harassment that you are suffering must stop immediately, you must be protected, the actions of your bullies must be pointed out as unacceptable and there must be a guarantee of a safe school environment, free from violence.

Look for friends inside and outside the school setting, both adults and people of your age. Don't look within yourself for the cause of abuse you receive, EVER.



Cyberbullying or online bullying

This includes behaviours such as:

- Distributing images recorded on a mobile phone
- Designing or uploading things on websites where they belittle the victim without consequences
- Spread false rumours
- Activate web cameras to record classmates in embarrassing situations.

The behaviour includes characteristics for School Bullying: blackmail, exclusion, threats.

The main indicator continues to be FEAR but the use of tools and applications such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, Messenger, SMS, or the use of other social networks intensifies the phenomenon that surrounds School Bullying or Mobbing:

- Impunity of the bully
- Helplessness of the victim
- Unanimous persecution or all against one

Technology enables the teenager:

- To be online without leaving their bedroom
- To stay hidden
- To invent false identities to experience virtual emotions
- Create a life which is far from reality where it is possible to separate from the tolerance of the frustration and the acceptance of their own weaknesses.

As educators, we should not let our guard down with new technologies, and we must communicate the same zero tolerance towards these bullying behaviours, which can also be carried out through digital media.