



National Anti Bullying Award for schools and services

New award to cut bullying backed by charities and parents

Mencap, Show Racism The Red Card, The Diana Award and Educational Action Challenging Homophobia call on parents through Mumsnet to ask schools to join the new BIG Award scheme that rewards high standards of anti-bullying practice.

If your child is severely bullied in school, it is twice as likely that they will be neither in education, nor in employment at age 16.¹ Young people targeted by bullies can become scared, depressed and isolated. Their long term physical and mental health can be affected².

Bullying can affect all children, but especially the vulnerable. It limits their social inclusion and educational potential if they have learning difficulties. They are less likely to stay on in education if they suffer racist or homophobic bullying. If disabled children are isolated or shunned, it increases the barriers they already face. Yet bullying that stems from prejudice is the hardest to change. Left unchallenged, it can lead to hate crime affecting whole neighbourhoods. But many teachers say they are not trained to tackle this behaviour.

Esther Rantzen, CBE, President of ChildLine, a champion for children and young people who are bullied, said "Bullying Intervention Group BIG Award is a brilliant scheme because it allows organisations to work towards excellent anti-bullying intervention practices, and to show parents and children that they care about this crucial issue. Bullying is one of the most serious and wide-spread problems children ring ChildLine about. The scheme has already been used in some schools and I know of children and young people who have personally benefited. I recommend the BIG Award to all schools and organisations."

ChildLine receives over 30,000 contacts linked to bullying in a single year and Mumsnet has desperate mums asking each other for help online. These days, cyberbullying relentlessly brings bullying into every area of the victim's life, driving some to suicide.

'But a lot of this could be avoided' says Val McFarlane of the Bullying Intervention Group (BIG). 'Bullying can be reduced by good prevention programmes and it can be effectively dealt with when it happens. We invite schools to show that they tackle bullying effectively by joining this new national award scheme and working to agreed quality standards. Parents want to know that the school they choose for their child will be using effective practice and will have staff trained to tackle bullying. Every child has a right to be safe.'

Ctd...

Editors' notes

Why have we come together?

The Big Award has been joined in this call by Mencap, the Diana Award, EACH and Show Racism the Red Card. Through parents on Mumsnet we are expressing our concern that schools' work on bullying will no longer be scrutinised thoroughly, as systems for doing this are scrapped. Nor will they receive world class guidance and support. The Big Award hopes to fill this gap by offering a consistent standard of judgement on effectiveness with support and resources.

What has gone?

Specialist guidance on bullying related to disability, racism, homophobia and cyber bullying.
The national annual children's survey Tellus
National Indicators are scrapped, so we cannot compare how different regions are doing. Regional government offices are gone – they held local authorities to account.
New types of schools leave the system for delivery of best practice fragmented
Many Local Authority staff who led on anti-bullying have gone or see their services wound down.
The Anti-Bullying Alliance field force that worked across all of England, is gone.
Ofsted inspections will be radically reduced and 'limiting judgements' on Safeguarding and Equality/Diversity dropped. Although Ofsted will still put an emphasis on bullying, inspections will be less frequent. The government is currently reviewing the duty to report racist incidents, the teaching of Citizenship education and the duty to promote Community Cohesion. There is a possibility they may all be dropped. Many hard won gains may be lost if these positive drivers are scrapped.

What we know

Our research shows that prejudice-driven behaviour is hardest to change. It is resistant to punishment and if left unchallenged can intensify. Skilful ways to challenge discrimination and prejudice are required and teachers need support and training to do so. (Teachers say that lack of training is the second most important barrier to educating against racism)³. The Equality Act 2010 requires all public bodies to be more active in addressing equality matters. But 62% of schools are unaware of their duties under the Equality Act.⁴

How does the BIG Award scheme work?

Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) has set up a national anti-bullying award scheme that helps schools achieve award status. A school develops a portfolio of evidence over time. They get online support and resources to work towards excellence, with updates on policy and research. When they are judged to have achieved all the criteria, they are given the BIG Award. Parents who see the BIG Award logo can feel confident that this school has key elements in place. If bullying occurs it will be dealt with effectively. Parents can hold their school to account. BIG works with our partners to ensure that every child's right to be safe is upheld in schools and services for children. Awards are renewed annually. Bullying Intervention Group is a not for profit social enterprise. It will award schools and services and sits alongside the Diana Anti-Bullying Award for Children and Young People.

■ How many are bullied?

In a survey for DCSF carried out during the autumn term 2009, 28.8% of children reported having been bullied in school during the previous 12 months. Of these 23% were bullied most days, and 11% every day. Out of school, 21% were bullied - a quarter of them in the previous four weeks.⁵ (*Tellus 4 National Report. DCSF Research Report 218. DCSF 2010*)

■ Learning disabilities

8 out of 10 children with a learning disability had been bullied and 6 out of 10 had been physically hurt. (*Bullying Wrecks Lives. Mencap, 2007*). 26% of those with SEN reported being badly bullied compared to 9% of their secondary peers. *Safe To Play 2009*.

■ Race, Religion and Culture

83% of teachers have witnessed racist behaviour amongst their pupils
Only 61% of teachers had received any training on tackling racism⁶

■ Homophobic bullying

38% of badly bullied pupils reported homophobic aggression⁷
Almost 2/3 of LGBT pupils at secondary school have experienced bullying⁸

37% of those who received homophobic bullying messages on their mobiles, said it was bullying carried on from their life in school, leaving no part of their lives safe and secure.⁹

■ Cyberbullying

48% of young people reported being targeted for one or more aggressive experience online and 20% considered it cyberbullying.¹⁰

■ Other vulnerable children are those **in care** and **young carers**. We know that children facing **family upheaval or bereavement** can suffer excessive bullying too. This is unacceptable.

■ Suicide

All forms of bullying were significantly associated with increases in suicidal ideation
Cyberbullying victims were almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide compared to young people who had not experienced cyberbullying.¹¹¹²

Cases from Mumsnet

► *'Her confidence is zero...The cumulative effect is just devastating her'*

► *'The thing is there are 10 of them and it's constant. Name-calling, threatening, pushing, piss-taking - yesterday he came home with a swollen bruised hand. He told me he hit it on a wall however I learnt from his facebook page that someone had pushed him over and stamped on his hand. I was on the phone with the school this morning to find out what they intend to do about it and from what I can make out it's basically an endless circle of "exclusion, parents in, isolation, exclusion, parents in, isolation, exclusion etc etc - these kids don't care about this stuff!!*

► *What can I do? I feel that the school don't take us seriously - I myself feel a dread when I contact them yet again about something. Before this school my daughter was happy, bright, cheerful with oodles of friends. She moved to this school in yr 5 (normal for where we are) and hates it. She simply hates it.*

No friends, name calling (really nasty unpleasant stuff) she's not 'allowed' to sit down on bus, at lunch, play in certain games, gets teased cruelly about size of breasts/clothes/name (unusual surname) endlessly always. She is now always unwell, asthma, eczema and is at school less than 50% with genuine health problems which are, I am sure, all stress related. She starts at CAMHs next week with clinical psychologist.

She is bright (school told me too bright for her own good!) and gets good grades always. She doesn't want to do well at subjects now cos people ease her for being a nerd.

What can I do? It seems impossible to move out of catchment but we cant sell our house (have tried). I am at my wits end to be honest.

► *My son and his best friend have been suffering homophobic bullying in their primary school. This situation has been going on for more than one year and they are only 9. Both myself and the mother of his friend have been reporting the situation to the Headteacher. The Headteacher does take notice and often speaks with the boys carrying on with the bullying. When this happens, the bullying stops for a while and then starts again, by another group of children.*

Contact details overleaf

¹ DfE, Green, R. Collingwood, A and Ross, A (2010) Characteristics of Bullying Victims in Schools. National Centre for Educational Research

² Arseneault, L. Arseneault, L., Bowes, L., Shakoor, S. (2010). Bullying victimisation in youths and mental health problems: "Much ado about nothing"? *Psychological Medicine*, 40, 717-729.

³ Bullied Young People and the Development of Mental Health Problems talk given March 2011

⁴ The Barriers to Tackling Racism and Promoting Equality in England's Schools.

⁵ The Equality Duties and Schools, EHRC (2011)

⁶ DCSF 2010 Tellus 4 National Report Research Report 218

⁷ Show Racism The Red Card 2011 The Barriers to Challenging Racism and Promoting Race Equality in England

⁸ Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, 2010 Safe To Play survey

⁹ Stonewall, 2008, The School Report

¹⁰ The Cybersurvey for Reach, 2011 funded by Big Lottery a project for EACH

¹¹ The Cybersurvey, 2010 carried out in 5 local authority areas by Youthworks Consulting.

¹² Hindjua, S. and Patchin, J. (forthcoming) Bullying, Cyberbullying and Suicide in Archives of Suicide Research

Contact details:

The BIG Award Val McFarlane 07502189658; Adrienne Katz 07956834288

info@bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk

Website: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk

Mumsnet: Kate Williams Kate@mumsnet.com www.mumsnet.com

ChildLine: media office 020 7825 2514 / 1373 Email: mediaoffice@nspcc.org.uk

Mencap: colin.young@mencap.org.uk

The Diana Anti-Bullying Award for Children and Young People (also currently running the Ambassadors programme) <http://diana-award.org.uk/> Vari Lambert is media officer

Show Racism The Red Card: sara@theredcard.org

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia: director@eachaction.org.uk
www.eachaction.org.uk