



“why won't they
let me join in?”
“I know I can go and
get some help”
“I should tell
someone”
“I'll go and get
this sorted out”
“this is NOT
MY fault”

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum

Strategy 2005 - 2008

*“working to create and promote an
environment free from bullying for
children and young people.”*

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum

Background

In 2004 Save the Children, at the request of the Department of Education, brought together representatives from organisations across Northern Ireland to establish a regional Anti-Bullying Forum. During the first year we worked to ensure a wide range of organisations were represented on the Forum, and engaged with other locally based groups working on similar issues.

The Forum is an interagency body comprising regional statutory and non statutory organisations involved in the reduction of bullying and creating a safe environment for children and young people¹. Its work is supported by the Department of Education and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY).

The Forum is chaired by Save the Children and is represented on the British and Irish Anti-Bullying Forum which comprises one statutory and one voluntary representative each from England, Scotland, Wales, and from both jurisdictions in Ireland.

This document outlines our plans over the next three years to co-ordinate regional approaches, to raise awareness, to share good practice at school and classroom level, and to strengthen a culture that listens to and safeguards children. It includes an initial plan which sets out some of the proposed actions to tackle bullying in the first year 2005 – 2006. Thereafter action plans will be developed annually that will translate the strategy's principles and aims into practice.

¹ Membership at November 2005 comprises Save the Children, Childline (NI), Parents Advice Centre, the five Education and Library Boards, Barnardo's, NSPCC, Teachers' Representatives, CCEA, Rainbow, NCH, Children's Law Centre, Disability Action, Contact Youth and CCMS.

There has been initial consultation with children and young people regarding the strategy; however their role in its implementation will be developed over the next three years.

Statement of purpose

The overall aims of the strategy are to:

- Raise awareness of the serious and profound effects of bullying on children and young people
- Promote a culture where bullying is unacceptable
- Develop a shared understanding of the nature and range of bullying behaviours including racist, homophobic, and disability based bullying
- Work towards a more co-ordinated approach to ensure greater consistency of policy and practice between agencies and schools, including intervention and prevention strategies
- Share and disseminate good practice
- Be inclusive of the views and contributions of children and young people.

While we recognise that bullying occurs in many aspects of life, affects adults as well as children, and can be associated with other types of unacceptable behaviour, the remit of the Forum extends only to the bullying of children, and to the emotional impact on them whether they are bullied or bullying. It is not specifically concerned therefore with other aspects of 'good behaviour' except insofar as these relate to promoting an anti-bullying ethos.

Vision and Mission Statement

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) is working towards a society where children and young people can live free from bullying. The members of the NIABF are committed to working together to create and promote an environment free from bullying for children and young people.

Definition of Bullying

The NIABF defines bullying as the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

Principles

The NIABF is committed to the following principles:

- The rights of children and young people should be upheld in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour
- Bullying has an adverse affect on the development of children and young people's personal, social and emotional health, well being, life chances and achievement.

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Three Year Strategy Plan

2005 - 2006

Establish a Regional Anti-Bullying Forum which will include representatives of a broad range of statutory and voluntary organisations.

Develop a Regional Anti-Bullying Forum policy which will include:

- Principles
- Statement of Purpose
- Vision
- Mission Statement
- Definition of bullying

Undertake a baseline audit of current practice within the member organisations.

Collate, analyse and identify key priorities from the audit.

2006 - 2007

NIABF commitment to (a minimum of) three meetings per year with a number of task sub-groups committed to development of specific areas.

Appointment of Regional Co-ordinator to:

- Lead, manage and develop the profile, role and activities of the Forum
- Develop and co-ordinate a media strategy for dissemination of information including an annual Anti-Bullying Week
- Direct and co-ordinate work across Northern Ireland, forging links with existing structures.

Supplemented by information emerging from the audit, plan for:

- Development and implementation of a Participative Model of Good Practice to focus on:
 - (a) Prevention strategies
 - (b) Intervention strategies.

2007 - 2008

Continued commitment of NIABF members to strategy implementation through Forum meetings and task sub groups.

Plan for 3 year strategy review.

Draw up initial Action Plan outlining proposed actions for implementation within the next 12 months.

Plan for launch of Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (Week 21-25 November 2005) to:

- Publicise 3 Year Strategy Plan
- Raise awareness of the effects of bullying on children and young people.

Plan for and secure appropriate and adequate funding from Department of Education on a 3-year basis.

The funding to include:

- Salary costs for a Regional Co-ordinator
- Administrative support
- Launch/Anti-Bullying Week costs
- Publicity and materials
- Seminars
- Website development.

A group to be set up by the five ELBs to facilitate co-ordination of good practice in line with NIABF strategy.

Develop a detailed Action Plan for 2006-2007 to address emerging priorities following first year review of strategy.

Plan and organise annual Anti-Bullying Week to include:

- Website launch
- Continued promotion of models of good practice to address specific areas, i.e. disability based bullying and homophobic bullying.

Regional Co-ordinator to:

- Organise regional conference to explore international experience in relation to bullying in schools
- Design and develop an interactive Anti-Bullying website.

Five ELBs begin the process of implementing agreed models of good practice in line with NIABF strategy.

Develop a detailed Action Plan for 2007-2008 to address emerging priorities following second year review of strategy.

Anti-Bullying Week:

- Launch of interactive area of website
- Continued promotion of models of good practice to address bullying issues, particularly racist bullying.

Plan for the continuation of the programme for the next three years.

Continued implementation of five ELBs' agreed models of good practice in line with the NIABF strategy.

Development of partnerships with young people through NICCY's Children and Young People's Panel, NI Youth Forum, Fermanagh Shadow Youth Council, Childline and other existing partnerships.

Plan for the development of partnership with parents through NICCY's Parents Representatives and Parents Advice Centre.

Establish a Children and Young People's Reference Group to become a voice for the NIABF:

- Incorporating and promoting their ideas for sharing practice
- Consultation for interactive website.

Continue to further develop partnership with parents through NICCY's Parents Representatives and Parents Advice Centre.

Explore direct parent representation on Forum.

Children and Young People's Reference Group becomes active member of NIABF to promote the voice of young people.

Further embed parental partnerships.

