

Preventing Racist Bullying

What Schools Can Do

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No Easy Answers

In a school day crammed with demands, dealing with bullying, especially racist bullying, is one of the most difficult problems facing teachers. There are no easy answers or instant solutions, but KIDSCAPE has found the following suggestions to be effective.

Schools can ensure that:

- pupils are told from Day One that bullying of any kind is not tolerated
- they carry out an anonymous survey of the pupils to find out if racist bullying is a problem and then act upon it
- parents are informed that the school is committed to ensuring racial harmony amongst its pupils, staff and the community
- they have materials, books, lessons and activities which are used in the curriculum to help the pupils learn appropriate ways to behave
- PSHE modules cover prejudice, direct/indirect discrimination, stereotypes, celebrating diversity
- their guidelines state that all pupils are entitled to feel safe and secure
- their ethos is one which values and respects people from all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- all staff and governors are trained in equality issues, working with parents, supporting victims, changing negative behaviour and school procedures for resolving bullying

Helping Pupils

In order to support pupils, schools need to:

- work with staff and pupils together to create an anti-bullying policy that includes issues of racist bullying
- ensure that the policy is readily available to staff, parents and pupils. Some schools ask pupils to sign the policy and keep it in their school file
- explain that everyone has a part to play in preventing bullying - no one is allowed to be a bystander. Anyone who knows about or witnesses bullying, must tell and get help
- act when told about racist or any kind of bullying
- be aware and vigilant. If possible, the staff should try to uncover the bullying as this protects the victims from being seen as 'grassing' and further risking their safety.
- provide a private way for frightened victims to tell, such as individual meetings with all pupils on a regular basis so no one is seen to be singled out or a box where children can anonymously post suggestions, complaints and comments
- ensure that the PSHE programme includes lessons in self esteem and friendship skills, assertiveness, handling conflict
- teach all pupils bullying prevention programmes such as KIDSCAPE which includes strategies such as:
 - ignore the bullying, pretend not to hear
 - walk away quickly; use body language to look determined, strong and positive even if you feel frightened inside
 - shout NO, GO AWAY as loudly as possible
 - always tell a trusted adult if you are bullied

Consequences

Pupils, parents and staff need to know that racist bullying will not be tolerated and what will happen if it persists.

It is important that schools:

- set up procedures for resolving incidents. A policy statement on its own is not enough - clear guidelines ensure action is taken
- ensure the safety and support of victims
- try first to mediate so that pupils are given a chance to resolve things peacefully, if possible
- realise that some pupils do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour
- help bullies to understand that their behaviour is completely unacceptable and that they must take responsibility for their actions, apologise and make amends
- use sanctions if initial attempts to stop the bullying fail
- record repeated and or serious incidents of bullying so that trends in a class or with certain pupils can be monitored and stopped
- inform parents/guardians about bullying incidents and what action is being taken - in serious cases, ask them to come to a meeting to discuss the problem
- call the social services or police, if necessary and appropriate
- make it clear that suspension or exclusion will be considered in serious cases

What is Racist Bullying?

Any hostile or offensive action against people because of their skin colour, cultural or religious background or ethnic origin.

It can include:

- physical, verbal or emotional bullying
- insulting or degrading comments, name calling, gestures, taunts, insults or 'jokes'
- offensive graffiti
- humiliating, excluding, tormenting, ridiculing or threatening
- making fun of the customs, music, accent or dress of anyone from a different culture
- refusal to work with or co-operate with others because they are from a different culture

Legal Position

The Race Relations Act 1976 states that schools and governing bodies have a duty to ensure that students do not face any form of racial discrimination, including attacks and harassment.

Useful Organisations

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) 0207 828 7022
Gives legal advice and related information

KIDSCAPE Children's Charity 0207 730 3300
Kidscape aims to prevent bullying and child abuse. It runs teacher training workshops, and produces books, leaflets and safety prevention programmes for schools. Helpline for parents of bullied children.
10 a.m. -4 p.m. Mon - Fri 0207 730 3300

Refugee Council 0207 820 3000
Gives support and advice for refugees.

Runnymede Trust 0207 600 9666
Deals with issues of racial equality and justice.

Resources

AIMER (Access to Information on Multicultural Education Resources) 0118 9875123 ext. 4871

Equality Assurance in Schools by Runnymede Trust, Central Books, 0208 986 4854. Guide of good practice.

How to Stop Bullying: KIDSCAPE Training Guide 0207 730 3300. Practical guide with over 90 student exercises.

Leeds Racial Harassment Project 0113 293 5100
Produces guidelines, videos, pupil activities, resources.

Anti-Bullying: a whole school approach by Maggie Stockton Folens 01582 472100. Reducing and resolving bullying.

Kidscape Booklets:

Preventing Bullying: A Parent's Guide
You Can beat Bullying: A Guide for Young People
Stop Bullying

For a free copy, send a large SAE with 60 pence stamp to: KIDSCAPE, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DM For more information contact www.kidscape.org.uk