

SCHOOL BULLYING

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER

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Introduction

Drop out can be caused by bullying experiences, either in the role of the aggressor or in that of the victim. In this sense, empirical research and best practices have shown that the most suitable line of action against bullying is to adopt a perspective focused on the whole policy approach (WPA). Thus, although it is obvious that teachers should act in any bullying event, it is also clear they also have to prevent it, that is, even when we do not perceive any bullying problem at a first glance. Teachers have a great opportunity to prevent and reduce bullying. Therefore, their tasks must turn around its prevention, their action with pupils at risk and the intervention with implied pupils. All of these actions should be performed with the adaption - as much as possible - to the particular characteristics of the school and, possibly, with the best level of quality. In order to achieve these goals, we recommend the following phases:

Understanding the Complexity of Bullying

It is important that teachers understand the key concepts of bullying, so that they can distinguish it from other behavioral problems. Bullying is a problem of psycho-social nature that is sustained by two rules: the rule of dominion-submission and the rule of silence. The latter is a rule typical of peer relations, as it is of common thought that things that happen between pupils must be kept among them. In fact, it is not well thought of by peers to inform adults about bullying episodes, and the guy who informs adults is seen by his/her mates as a snitch. Moreover, over the last years a new form of bullying has appeared, due to the use of the ICT and virtual social networks that must be also taken into consideration. Accordingly, before acting against bullying, we must understand:

- The characteristics of the phenomenon
- The roles that are implied
- The rules that facilitate and sustain it
- The direct and indirect forms that it may adopt

Websites

- [Olweus Bullying Prevention Program](#)
Olweus was the first researcher who explored bullying and designed an intervention program to cope with. In the website you can find the most relevant aspects of the phenomenon.
- [Success Story](#)
In this website you can find success stories in tackling school bullying.

Knowing Best Practices and Evidence-Based Practices

It is important for teachers to know which initiatives are successful and which are not, so they do not work from zero, but they can optimize resources and efforts.

Once the teachers are aware of the problem and its complexity, they feel the urgency to act rapidly. However, this could be a mistake and an unnecessary waste of energy and resources. That is the reason why the first step of action must be to know what things are being done in other schools and if that could be useful for such purposes. This is the reason why it is important to distinguish if resources, programs or materials are good or not, or what is known as evidence-based practices: resources, programs or materials that have been rigorously tested and which have received a positive evaluation will be taken into consideration in relation to what was pretended to accomplish with them.

Websites

- [Best Practices](#)
"Bullying prevention resource guide" is a part of a general guide to prevent bullying issued by the Bullying Prevention Initiative (BPI).
- [Training Source](#)
This manual named Cyberbullying project in Europe is a good resource for teachers.

Exploring the Situation of the School

Although it is known that bullying is present in all of the schools, it is necessary that each team of teachers check the level of prevalence of the problem in their particular school. For this purpose it is necessary to have validated instruments and choose those that may offer relevant information for our action plan. Therefore, the steps to be followed will be:

- To choose the instruments or group of instruments to adopt.
- To decide the target groups to whom they will be addressed: pupils, teachers and families.
- To design the conditions of data collection: whether individual or collective, and on a no name basis or not.
- To codify and synthesize the information provided by the different informants.

Websites

- [Investigating and Resolving Bullying in School Further steps for teachers](#)
The Cool School Programme was developed within the North Eastern Health Board's Child Psychiatry Service (Ireland). You can find here strategies for investigating bullying.
- [Training Sources](#)
Stop Bullying website has a lot of resources to reduce bullying, cyberbullying and harassment for different audiences, but mainly for teachers.

Perceiving the Initial Situation from Different School Perspectives

Once the information on the perceptions of students, teachers and families is collected, the results of the perceptions of all of the groups should be presented to them, so that they become aware that not all of them perceive the bullying problem the same way. This is an important phase as each group - mainly teachers and families - must become aware of the perceptions about what is happening in relation to bullying and cyber-bullying. Considering that the perception of the problem is deeper in pupils than in adults, if the latter do not perceive the existence of the phenomenon, they will be less sensitive towards action. In a brief summary, the following steps should be assessed:

- To meet with the group of teachers to present the results of the Third Phase and interpret the causes or factors that are facilitating the existence of the problem.
- To perform tutorial sessions in the classes with all of the pupils, so they can help to complete the interpretation of the results and identify the reasons why the existence of this kind of phenomena is being facilitated.
- To inform and sensitize the families, making them able to contribute to the interpretation of the results and the identification of the risk factors.

Websites

- [A comparison of perceptions of students, parents and school Personnel regarding bullying behavior](#)
An example of how similar and different the perception of the people involved can be.
- [Training Sources](#)
Stop Bullying website is also useful in for this step.

Giving Priority to Preventive Action Lines

Once the educational community is aware of the problem, and in particular the teachers, it will be decided which aspects should be addressed in the short term and which might be left for the long term. In this respect, it is important to start from the reference to the results obtained in the prior phase and then begin with those aspects that the majority of the target groups feel as necessary and progressively incorporate other lines of action, that being also important, are not perceived as such. Accordingly,

- Introduce actions and activities concerning aspects agreed between the different groups involved. For instance, improvement of discipline.
- Include, progressively, other lines of action as emotional, educational or socio-moral education.

Online manuals

- [European Strategy to Prevent and Tackle School Bullying](#)
This report presents the best way to deal with bullying after analyzing the situation in eight countries developed in the framework of the "I am Not Scared Project".
- [Taking action against cyberbullying](#)
It is a training handbook on an emerging form of bullying - cyberbullying - and perhaps it should be a priority for intervention on it. It has been developed under the CyberTraining project.

Establishing Programs for Students at Risk

Besides preventive action, it is necessary to implement programs to work with students who are not directly involved in bullying, but that are at risk of becoming involved. According to this, it is necessary to have prepared programs or activities aimed at pupils that, due to their behavior or personal circumstances, might be at risk of being involved in bullying or cyber-bullying, whether as aggressors or as victims. The steps to be followed would be:

- To identify a boy or a girl at risk
- To identify the reasons why he/she is at risk
- To look for the appropriate program or action and the teacher who will develop it.
- To develop the program with a specific deadline with the avoidance of being permanent.

Websites

- [Who is at risk](#)
Stopbullying.gov is a website dealing with the theme of coping with bullying. There is a part dedicated to students at risk.
- [Many hands make light work](#)
Example of a successful solution for a bullying situation.
- [Cyberbullying and School Success](#)
A publication on the School Safety Net Portal about the relation between cyberbullying and successful school profiles.

Implementing Direct Intervention Programs

Although most overall teacher performance should be preventive, the whole school has to be prepared to address potential bullying episodes. Interventions will be needed both with the aggressor and with the victim. For such purposes, it is advisable that teachers have certain knowledge of programs designed for this kind of pupils as the sooner the problem is identified the quicker the action is taken. The steps to be followed would be:

To plan a bank of resources related to the action with pupils directly involved: victims and aggressors

- To identify a boy or a girl directly involved
- To identify the reasons of the involvement
- To look for the most appropriate program or action and for the teacher who will develop it.
- To develop the program with a specific deadline with the avoidance of being permanent.

Online Publication



[How the Method of Shared Concern works](#)

Synthesis by Professor Rygby to assist in the development of the program Shared Concern developed by Pikas.

Designing or Selecting Protocols of Action

To establish protocols of action it is necessary to clarify the responsibilities of each of the educators and the steps to be followed in a specific case of bullying. Although it is not common, in some places the educational administration provides with a specific protocol. In this case, it would be important that all of the teachers were familiar with it. However, where such a protocol is not provided, it is important that the teachers reflect on the procedure to follow further to the detection of a bullying event. The steps to be followed would be:

- To review the prospective existence of a bullying protocol in the area
- In case of its existence, analyze and make it known among all of the teachers. To perform a simulation is clearly recommended
- In case there is no such protocol, look for existing protocols, choose the one that is considered as the most suitable, or plan a protocol yourself starting from the existing ones. Analyze the definitive protocol and make it known among all of the teachers. In this case, to perform a simulation is also recommended

Online Publication



[Model Protocol for Bullying in DuPage County Schools](#)

Good resource for designing your own protocol to be included in the Best Practices Handbook of this American area.

Evaluating the Process and Outcome, and Establishing Improvement Proposals

Prevention and intervention are important, but they need to be evaluated in order to provide indicators of their effectiveness and to find the keys for improvement. It is essential that the teachers plan the system to evaluate the actions in order to ascertain whether they have served to reach the projected objectives that were previously proposed as regards the line of prevention, the action with pupils at risk or the intervention with pupils involved in bullying (victims or aggressors). The evaluation, although performed at the end, must be planned from the beginning. Following the principles of evidence-based practices, it is desirable that the evaluation is carried out with instruments validated prior to the development of the intervention, and also among pupils that will develop the intervention (known as experimental group) and among pupils that will not develop the intervention, but is similar to the experimental group (known as control group). Finally, although it is not always possible for the teachers, the instrument must also be validated after the intervention. The purpose of this action is to determine the changes that occur due to the intervention program. In case it is not possible, it would be important to have whatever kind of valuation from teachers and pupils involved. The steps to follow would be:

- To value the feasibility of an experimental design of evaluation.
- To elect, prior to the development of the intervention, the instruments to be used (it would be adequate that they were the same than in phase three).
- To define the target groups to whom they will be addressed: pupils, teachers and families.
- To design the conditions of data collection: whether individual or collective, and on a no name basis or not.
- To codify and synthesize the information provided by the different informants comparing it with prior results and with the control group (in case we have them).
- To analyze the results in order to improve the intervention in future actions.

Online Publication



[What Works for Bullying Programs](#)

A brief research published in 2013 in which attention is drawn on lessons from experimental evaluations of programs and interventions.

Publishing and Disseminating the Experience

Any initiative is likely to be a good resource for other teachers. However, in many cases, good teaching practices fall into oblivion or registration of anecdotes. It is therefore important that all experience is told and published to the benefit of other colleagues.

The steps to follow would be:

- To register - in writing - all of the decisions that are taken in the development of the program and the reasons for taking them.
- To look for potential readers that may be interested in the experience.
- To identify a magazine or website that allows the publishing of the experience and with a wide number of potential readers.
- To write a memorandum respecting the conditions of the magazine or the website.

It is also recommended to publish the materials and videos used during the program, so they can be available for other teachers. In this respect, it is important to consider that, if the sessions performed with pupils are to be published, a permission from their parents or legal tutors has to be requested.