

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Training to understand the roles involved in bullying

How Summerhill Academy used training to understand the roles involved in bullying

Context of our anti-bullying work

We have done a lot of work on our Peer on Peer Abuse policies and procedures over the last year, including introducing our new Core Values document that sets out our purpose, with a clear sense of inclusivity and acceptance of all members of our community. Our focus on 'kind, safe, respectful, learning' is 'consistently followed by everyone' (Ofsted, April 2022). Ofsted also noted that 'Pupils accept that bullying occurs, but very rarely. They know adults will deal with it well'. Following the Ofsted visit, we were awarded an Outstanding judgement in the area of Personal Development, with the inspection team noting that 'Pupils are excellent ambassadors of the school. Leader's work to support pupils' personal development is exemplary'.

What we hoped to achieve

Notwithstanding the above, we wanted to take things further, specifically with some of the wide aspects linked to bullying. All children could speak clearly about what a bully was and how to act if they felt they were being bullied, but our tracking of peer on peer abuse through our Peer on Peer Abuse Chronology showed some incidents continuing to occur.

We wanted to ensure that children understood the role that they sometimes played in bullying, to recognise that it often takes more than one child to create a bullying situation (an imbalance of power), and to identify areas of school life where we could minimise the chances of bullying.

The action we took

Following our DSL's attendance at the ABA training earlier this year, we did some work on identifying the different roles within bullying behaviour using the 'Bullying is a group behaviour' ABA resource. Our Pupil Council and Safeguarding Champions groups worked together to create a simple, easily accessible poster guide to these roles. Staff training was provided in a CPDL session to make teaching teams and the wider staff body aware of the key themes. Following this, the Principal led a whole-school assembly to introduce the poster, with follow-up workshops led by teachers in school during weekly whole-class Thrive

sessions. The posters are displayed across the school, and staff reference these when talking to children about their adherence to our values. There has been a clear emphasis on acceptable behaviour in school but also in our wider community, whether that is in our local park, the shop across the road, or online.



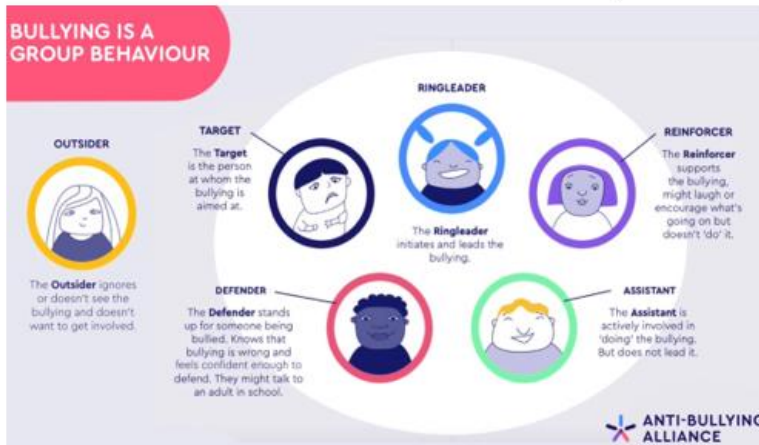
Kind | Safe | Respectful | Learning

What is bullying?

‘Bullying is the **repetitive, intentional hurting** of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. It can happen **face to face** or **online**.’

ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE
Definition of bullying

Bullying is not acceptable in the Summerhill Community



What should we do?

Speak out and report any behaviours that are not **kind, safe** or **respectful** to trusted adults in school straight away and at home as soon as possible.

Impact and outcomes of the work

We took feedback from staff as well as pupils.

Staff were very positive about being given the *vocabulary* to describe the group behaviour often involved in bullying. They said that being able to name 'assistants' and 'reinforcers' to children made a huge difference in supporting children to understand the consequences of their choices and actions. Promoting the 'defender' behaviour has also received positive feedback, with adults (including our lunchtime staff) reporting that they are witnessing more

of the pro-active support role from children across the school, with peer groups more often able to move difficult situations on themselves without the need for adult intervention.

Pupil voice has continued this theme. Children have always been very responsible when dealing with any peer on peer abuse in school, but there has been a large shift in thinking about the potential for bullying online. Children report feeling more confident to speak out against unkind behaviour while on gaming or social media apps, and we have had incidences where children have stuck up for each other when this occurs. Parents are being more proactive in contacting the school with concerns reported after incidents online, and we have had success in supporting families to improve monitoring of inline activity of their children.

What we have learned

The key improvement to our practice has been around the labels/learning of the wider roles often present in a bullying situation. By being able to identify these, we have been able to explicitly teach children and adults about them, which has lead to both greater understanding and an easier way to hold children accountable for their actions.