

# Developing a response process for peer-on-peer bullying: a tool for schools

---

## Anti-Bullying Alliance



**NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
BUREAU**  
Part of the family

---

Evidence shows that the negative consequences of experiencing bullying can last well into adulthood. Those who are bullied are more likely to earn less money in their lives, access mental health services as adult, not be in a stable relationship and achieve fewer academic qualifications. These outcomes get significantly worse for those people that have been severely bullied. **Timely and well planned responses to bullying can have a positive affect on lessening the negative impact of bullying on those who experience it<sup>1</sup>.**

This tool provides guidance for schools and other settings about how to develop their response to bullying incidence. **It is based around ABA's 3-step response to bullying framework.** We believe that by recording your responses using this tool, it will help evidence your response, improve the quality of responses, identify trends and enable the school to reflect and ultimately stop bullying sooner.

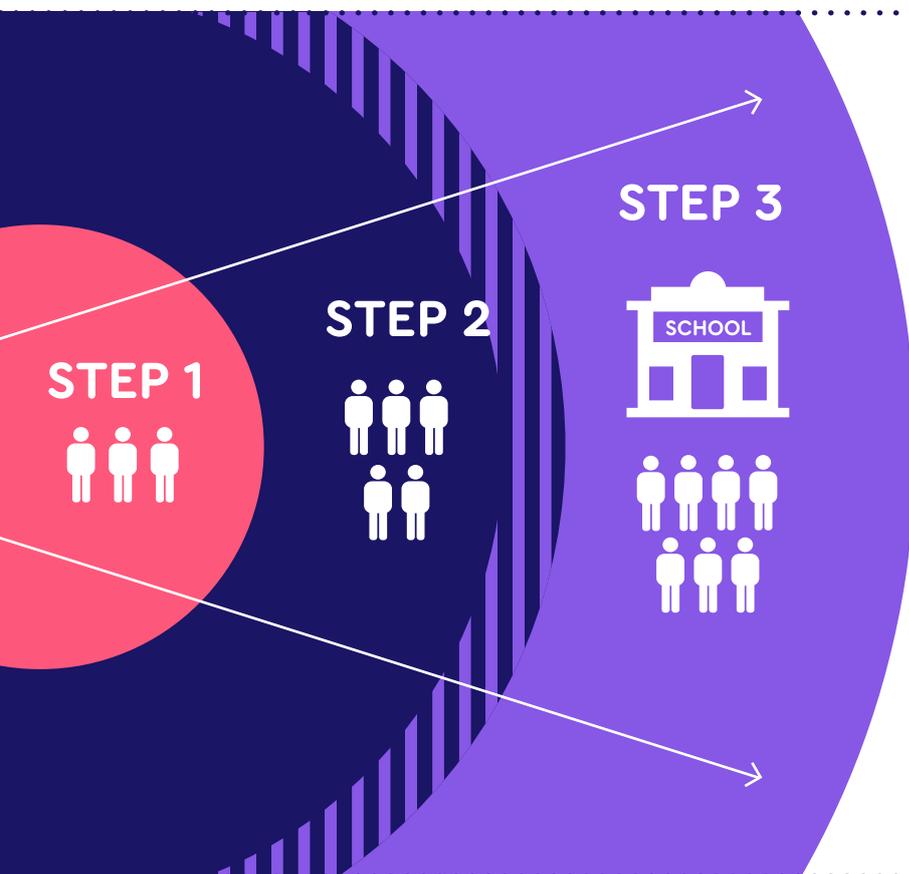


We welcome any feedback about how you have used this tool and any suggestions for changes. Please email your comments/suggestions to [aba@ncb.org.uk](mailto:aba@ncb.org.uk)

<sup>1</sup> – Takizawa R, Maughan B, Arseneault L. "Adult health outcomes of childhood bullying victimization: Evidence from a 5-decade longitudinal British birth cohort" is published in the American Journal of Psychiatry

# ABA's 3-step Response to Bullying framework

ABA's 3-step response to bullying aims to help you develop a consistent, reflective and more effective approach to responding to bullying incidence in schools and other settings.



## The 3 steps are:

### STEP 1

Safety of those directly involved

### STEP 2

Preventing the bullying from reoccurring

### STEP 3

School learning and reflection

The next three pages outline the key questions and considerations that should be made at each step of the process, which can be used as a framework to help you develop the best possible response to bullying in your setting.

At the end of this document there are appendices which aim to provide practical ideas, examples and further information on the evidence that has been used to develop this tool.

Whilst we know that every setting is different, we strongly encourage you to incorporate this into your existing practice to ensure that every incident of bullying is dealt with as effectively and consistently as possible.

# STEP 1 – Safety of those directly involved

Bullying can have a long lasting impact on a young person's mental health for those who are getting bullied, witnessing bullying and doing the bullying. That is why our first step is about securing and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those involved. Below are some questions that should be asked at this stage. It is important to have a record of these considerations. In most bullying situations you do not need to use outside agencies such as social workers or police however this should always be considered. Young people often tell us that at this stage they aren't asked what they would like to happen. So it's important to involve them along the way.

- A. Are all pupils involved safe?**
- B. Is anyone's physical health or wellbeing at risk?**
- C. Have you needed to use the child protection policy?**
- D. Did you access any outside support?**  
E.g. NHS, police.
- E. Have you recorded the incidents themselves** (see Appendix A)?
- F. Did you tell the pupil/s being bullied that you are taking it seriously, it's not their fault and they don't have to put up with bullying?**
- G. Have you asked the pupil/s being bullied how they're feeling and how they think it can be resolved?**
- H. Have you informed the pupil/s being bullied what you will do next?**



STEP 3



STEP 2



## STEP 2 – Preventing the bullying from reoccurring

Once you've secured the safety of those involved, the next step is about working with the group of individuals involved to prevent the bullying from reoccurring. Bullying is a group behaviour. It rarely happens between two individuals in isolation. So it's important to consider the wider peer group at this stage. We use Salmivalli's Role Participant Scale here to help us identify the group and work with those involved. You can see Appendix B for more information about these roles. At step 2, you should work through the activities below to develop a peer strategy. Make sure you record your actions, involve pupils and keep your actions in regular review. you can use Appendix C to help you.

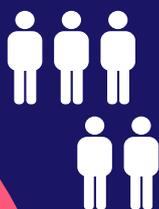
- A. Record names based on the roles involved in bullying** (See Appendix B), **how they were involved and what you could do to change their behaviour** (See Appendix C for template).
- B. Have you been clear what steps you are taking with those involved?**
- C. Have you developed a strategy together with the target and are they happy with your agreed way forward?**
- D. Have you sought agreement from all those involved about the way forward? Sometimes this could be done with a signed agreement by those involved or simply a conversation but it is important to record this agreement.**
- E. Have you regularly checked in with the target/s? Do they have a discreet way to report to you about how they are feeling at school regularly? Have you talked to parents/carers?**
- F. Is your response built upon changing the behaviour of the group and not solely on changing the behaviour of the Target/s? This is important to avoid sending a message to the target that the bullying is their fault.**

STEP 3

SCHOOL

STEP 2

STEP 1



## STEP 3 – School learning and reflection

This is an important step. It allows us to reflect upon our school practice to ascertain if there is anything we can do to prevent a similar situation in the future. Steps 2 and 3 can and should happen concurrently. You don't have to wait to 'fix' the issue amongst the group before you implement the learning and reflection step.

Spend some time on reflecting on the incidents. Ask yourselves:

**A. What has this incident taught us?**

**B. Does this reveal any issues in school?** E.g. do you have an issue with language in school or an area within the school which needs more adult supervision

- Do staff need any training? Remember to think across the whole staff team and include after school/breakfast club providers and break time staff.

- Do you need to refresh your school policy and procedures? Have you identified any gaps?
- Do parents have a good understanding of what bullying is and isn't? Do they know the school approach to anti-bullying?

**C. What needs to happen/who do you need to speak to in order to make this happen? By when and how?**

### ABA resources to help

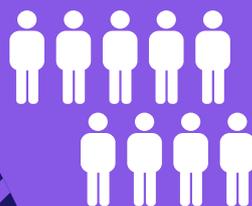


All Together – whole school anti-bullying programme



Free CPD anti-bullying online training

STEP 3



STEP 2



STEP 1

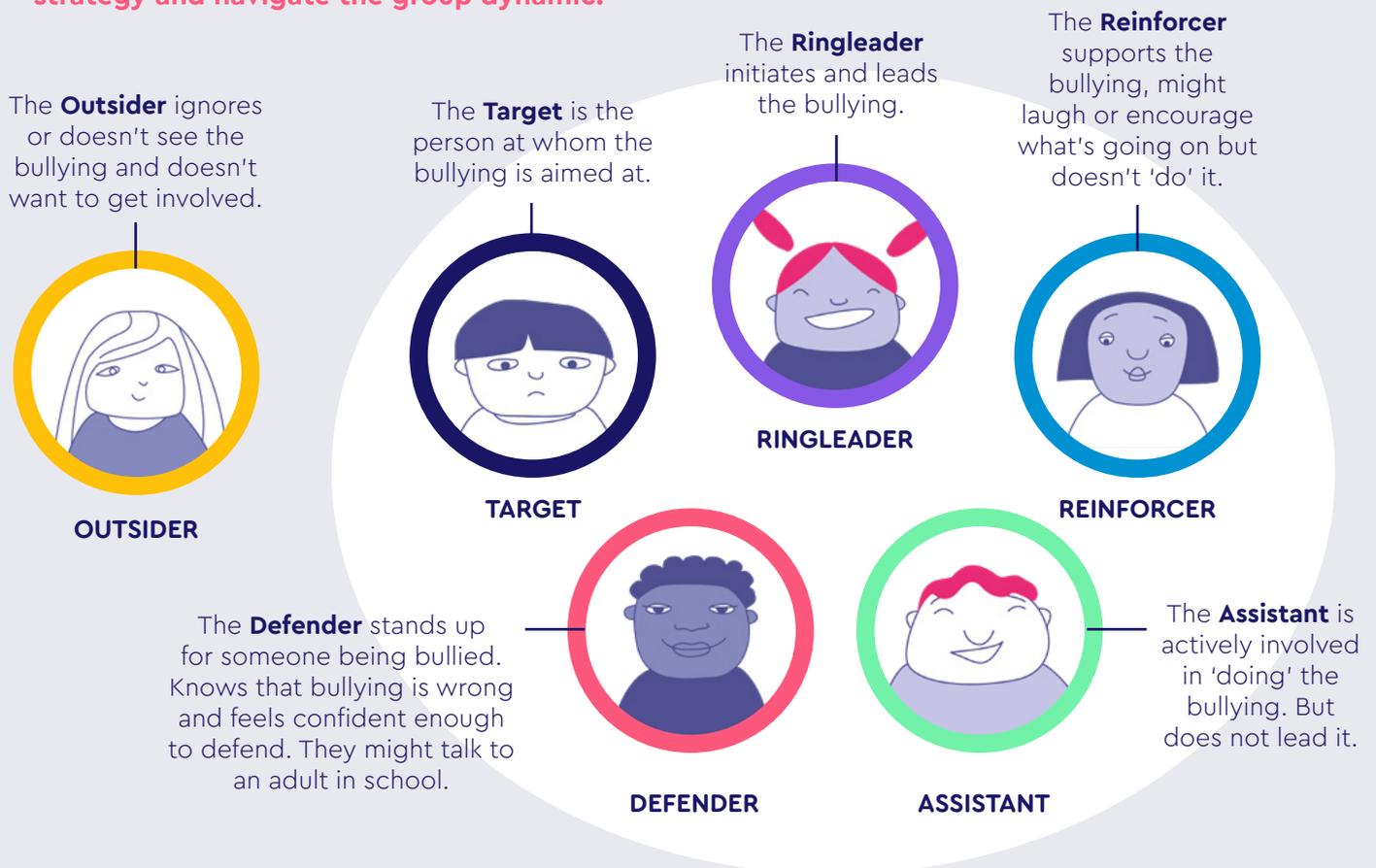


This sample log aims to give you advice about the things that should be included in your record of bullying. **You will want to edit and make it work for your school/setting but remember that it is important to record your actions to ensure the safety of pupils, understand levels of bullying amongst young people and to be able to evidence actions taken.**

<p><b>Member of staff recording:</b></p>	
<p><b>Date / time of report:</b></p>	
<p><b>Name of target(s)</b> You may also want to record details about the demographic of the target here to allow you to identify any groups which may be more vulnerable e.g. SEN status / race / faith etc.</p>	
<p><b>What happened?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What type of bullying</li> <li>- Who was involved?</li> <li>- Where did it happen?</li> <li>- When did it happen?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Was the bullying targeting any aspect of the child's character?</b> E.g. disability, SEN, looked after, young carer, LGBT+, race or faith, appearance, gender/sexism</p>	
<p><b>How was the target (bullied child) affected at the time?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did the child feel?</li> <li>- What did they think should happen to make it right?</li> <li>- Were there any injuries (are there photos)?</li> <li>- Later effects</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Who was spoken to and what actions were agreed?</b></p>	
<p><b>Did you access any external support?</b> E.g. NHS, police</p>	
<p><b>Does this constitute a child protection issue? Do you need to record an injury?</b></p>	
<p><b>Review box.</b> Regular reviews with dates and agreements.</p>	

Research undertaken in Finland by **Christina Salmivalli (1996)** gave us a greater understanding of the roles involved in bullying. It showed that the traditional view of bullying where there is a 'victim' and a 'bully' was much more complicated.

The information below has been adapted from that research and we believe it can help develop your Step 2 strategy and navigate the group dynamic.



Roles in school are continuously shifting, especially in schools where there is a problem with bullying. A person can be a 'ringleader' at one time and become an 'outsider' or 'target' very quickly as people come into and out of the group dynamic.

Bullying is seen to be a group phenomenon. Others can have a significant influence on the outcomes of behaviours in school either intentionally or otherwise. By utilising these

roles and encouraging other options such as 'not laughing along' or 'checking in' after the incident to say that you will help a target to report, you can have a positive affect on bullying incidents.

For further information, sign up to take our free CPD online training

This sample record is aimed to help you use the roles explained in Appendix B to identify routes to influence more positive behaviours amongst pupils. Keep this record in review and involve young people in developing the strategy.

Role	Name/s	How they were involved?	What could this group do to help stop the bullying? E.g. stop the reinforcers laughing or create defenders	Agreement: what approach have you agreed to take with each group?	Review: What levers did you use, and did they work?
Target/s					
Ringleader/s					
Reinforcer/s					
Assistant/s					
Defender/s					
Outsider/s <i>(you don't need to outline everyone! Just those that you think could potentially have a positive impact)</i>					