**ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE**

# DEVELOPING BULLYING QUESTIONNAIRES
## TOP TIPS

It's really important to monitor levels of bullying in schools and settings. This gives you a picture of levels of bullying and wellbeing and also helps you to identity where you might need to focus your anti-bullying energy.

When developing anti-bullying surveys and questionnaires for children and young people (CYP), it is particularly important to ensure your indicators are accessible by all and provide accurate and reliable data.

**We have written some tips about developing questionnaires/surveys:**

- **The term bullying should be deliberately avoided** when developing questionnaire items for a number of reasons.

- First, research shows that 'bullying' is often conceptualised different children, for example younger children do not tend to distinguish between bullying behaviour and fighting when compared to older children (Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefooghe, 2002).

- Second, research has shown that behaviour-based questions assessing bullying are a more sensitive measure of bullying compared to a single directly asking about bullying frequency (Sawyer, Bradshaw & O'Brennan, 2008). As such, we suggest focusing on specific bullying behaviours commonly reported in the literature.

- Based on research we suggest a **structure for your questionnaire across four areas:**

- Assessing CYP's experience of bullying within the school context;

- Assessing bullying behaviour, in order to more closely examine the concept of reactive bullying – bullying behaviour perpetrated by CYP who are also bullied by their peers;

- Assessing school climate and belonging, including relationship with teachers; and

- Assessing CYP's emotional and behavioural problems as an index of well-being and the social-emotional impact of bullying experiences.

- Before administering the questionnaire it is critical to undertake **piloting to provide feedback** on the adequacy of wording, questions or response options that may pose a challenge for CYP with language or communication difficulties. Ensure your focus group you test it with are representative of the school community. Ask yourself if the data you get back from testing reflect accurately the population and if questions were understood by all pupils.

- We would recommend an **electronic system to collect the questionnaire data** that both presents the questionnaire items and securely collates the associated data. Research has shown that systematised approached to questionnaire presentation with CYP result in fewer missing data points, and less variable overall scores when compared to paper-and-pencil questionnaire administration (De Leeuw et al., 2003).

- It is vital though that any electronic platform or paper version of the questionnaire **is fully accessible for all pupils,** for example, can screen readers read the questions? Is the font accessible?

- If developing the system online we suggest **presenting questions individually** will go some way to ensuring that each individual question is given due consideration.

- **Parent/carer permission** should be obtained before questionnaire completion. To make this system as simple as possible you could do this via an 'opt-out' system where if you don't hear back from parents/carers you will assume consent.

- Ensure you monitor bullying levels of groups of **pupils with certain characteristics – for example: children with SEN, looked after children, children on free school meals, children from a race or faith minority group** – best practice would be that you had an online secure system for pupils to record their answers which will record data about these characteristics. If we rely on children to report their own characteristics, you run the risk of the data being inaccurate however it is very important that you are able to see if certain groups are more vulnerable to experiencing bullying.

**At the Anti-Bullying Alliance, we have developed our own questionnaire with Anna Freud Centre. The questionnaire is available at the bottom of this webpage: https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/aba-bullying-survey**

### 3-step response

**Find out about the Anti-Bullying Alliance's 3-step response to bullying framework https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/abas-3-step-response-bullying-framework**



**Access our free CPD-certified anti-bullying online training https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/free-cpd-online-training**