Media release: Embargoed until: 12:00pm Friday 8th November 2024

**Headline: New research shows 1 in 5 children are frequently bullied, as millions prepare for Anti-Bullying Week**

* **Worrying new research: More than 1 in 5 children face frequent bullying, with increased risk for those with SEND or from low-income families.**
* **Calls for urgent government action: The Anti-Bullying Alliance calls for anti-bullying leads, mandatory staff training, and a duty to record incidents in schools.**
* **Anti-Bullying Week 2024 theme is Choose Respect: Takes place 11-15 November, reaching over 8 million children and supported by public figures.**
* **Odd Socks Day is Tuesday 12 November: celebrating that we’re all different.**

**New Research Highlights Bullying Concerns**

More than 1 in five school children are frequently bullied, according to new research, from the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) and analysed by Goldsmiths, University of London, released head of Anti-Bullying Week 2024 which starts this coming Monday.

A study of almost 45,000 pupils in England, showed that 23% experience frequent face-to-face bullying, with rates much higher for those with special educational needs or disabilities (29%) and for children in receipt of free school meals (29%).

These findings highlight an urgent need for government action to ensure all children are able to grow, play and learn in safe and supportive environments.

[Read the full report here](https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Pupil%20bullying%20wellbeing%20and%20school%20experiences%20in%20schools%20in%20England%202024.pdf).

**A Call to Government: Three Key Policy Requests**

ABA is calling on this new government to take urgent action to reduce bullying's impact on education, school attendance and avoidance, wellbeing (which can last well into adulthood), and social inclusion.

There has been no government-funded anti-bullying support for schools since March 2024, despite the success of previous programmes, leaving many educators without essential training and whole-school initiatives. Government anti-bullying guidance has not been updated since 2017.

The organisation’s Advisory Group (consisting of over ten elected anti-bullying organisations - *see more in Notes to Editors*) has outlined three urgent policy recommendations:

1. **Establish Anti-Bullying Leads in every school:** Require schools to designate a lead member of staff and a governor responsible for implementing a whole-school anti-bullying strategy.
2. **Comprehensive anti-bullying training for the school staff:** Provide anti-bullying training for all school staff including mandating it as part of initial teacher training, to equip educators with the skills to prevent and address bullying.
3. **Introduce a duty to record bullying incidents:** Require schools to record bullying incidents to track the scale of the issue nationwide and develop targeted interventions.

Martha Evans, Director of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, said:

*"These findings reveal worrying levels of bullying in England, but with whole-school anti-bullying initiatives, supported by skilled staff and strong leadership, we can make a real difference—boosting achievement, attendance, wellbeing, and belonging, especially for children with SEND and those in poverty breaking down barriers so that every child has the chance to succeed. We urge the new government to act now."*

**Anti-Bullying Week 2024: An opportunity to ‘Choose Respect’**

Every year ABA works with young people to develop a theme for Anti-Bullying Week and this year it is ‘Choose Respect’. ABA has created free resources for schools, other settings, parents and young people to help empower children and young people to not resort to bullying, even when we disagree and remind adults to lead by example, online and offline.

It is expected that over 8 million children across the UK will get involved during the week, supported by millions of adults, including many celebrities. ABA is even taking its message to Parliament at an event attended by young people and its patrons.

ABA Patron, Rúben Dias, said of Anti-Bullying Week:

"Anti-Bullying Week is a great opportunity to raise the profile of anti-bullying efforts for children across the UK, and I'm proud to be a patron of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, working towards the aim to ensure that no child has to experience bullying."

**Odd Socks Day: A simple way to get involved**

For the eighth consecutive year, children, young people and adults across the UK will kick off a week of awareness and action with Odd Socks Day, which this year will be held on 12 November.

Organised by ABA, in partnership with CBeebies and CBBC star Andy Day and his band, Andy and the Odd Socks, the campaign encourages everyone to wear mismatched socks to celebrate uniqueness and promote the theme for Anti-Bullying Week 2024, Choose Respect.

More than 5 million children have joined in the fun in previous years, as well as a host of celebrities, including Ant and Dec, Paloma Faith, Sir Brian May, Emma Willis, and Sir Mo Farah. This year's event promises even greater engagement, with Odd Socks Day symbolising a powerful stand against bullying and a reminder that everyone deserves respect.

To raise support and help promote awareness for Anti-Bullying Week, Andy and the Odd Socks are releasing their song ‘Choose Respect’ which you can [watch here](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FFLoHRqkKi18&data=05%7C02%7CMEvans%40ncb.org.uk%7Cca6a3f55e20a42060b8e08dcfd965f27%7Cadc87355e29c4519954f95e35c776178%7C0%7C0%7C638664069497481851%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=3ScUgOrm6ElHcByZj2oJ9vG3QuAi5fIbVJhjjQWQF6A%3D&reserved=0).

Andy Day commented:

*"We’re thrilled to partner with the Anti-Bullying Alliance for Odd Socks Day and Anti-Bullying Week. Our song ‘Choose Respect’ is all about celebrating diversity and choosing respect over bullying. Join us on 12th November—let’s put on our odd socks, encourage respect, and make this Anti-Bullying Week unforgettable!"*

**Get involved this Anti-Bullying Week and Odd Socks Day!**

It’s easy to get involved on social media using #AntiBullyingWeek and #ChooseRespect on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and X (Twitter).

* Anyone can join in with Anti-Bullying Week with school resources, parent tools, campaigning ideas and by wearing odd socks and sharing the message on social media.
* Anti-Bullying Week and Odd Socks Day reaches millions of children, and their families so look out for **#AntiBullyingWeek** trending across your social media feeds.

**\*\*\* END \*\*\***

**Notes to editors**

For further information, please contact the National Children’s Bureau media office: [media@ncb.org.uk](mailto:media@ncb.org.uk) / 07721 097 033.

**About Anti-Bullying Week**

Anti-Bullying Week is coordinated by the [Anti-Bullying Alliance](https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/) in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and by [respectme](https://www.respectme.org.uk/), Scotland’s anti-bullying service. The event aims to highlight the impact of bullying and promote effective prevention strategies. During the week millions of children get involved across the country and ABA and our members have provided schools and other settings free resources to enable them to celebrate the week. Through the week we also have numerous partnerships including one with Radnor who are donating a percentage of their drinks sales to the Alliance and with [Monster High](https://bit.ly/3NKVgfQ) who have released findings from a poll and resources for parents and children.

**About the Anti-Bullying Alliance**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance, part of the National Children’s Bureau, is a coalition of organisations working to create safer environments for children to thrive. For more information, visit [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk). The ABA Advisory Group is elected from core members of ABA every three years. Currently, it consists of representatives from BulliesOut, Childnet International/UK Safer Internet Centre, Diana Award, Kidscape, Mark Holliday from London Borough of Wandsworth, National Children’s Bureau, NSPCC, NASUWT, Professor Lucy Betts and Professor Noel Purdy. The group is chaired by Professor Peter Smith.

**About the National Children’s Bureau**  
For over 60 years, the National Children’s Bureau has worked to champion the rights of children and young people in the UK. We interrogate policy and uncover evidence to shape future legislation and develop more effective ways of supporting children and families. As a leading children’s charity, we take the voices of children to the heart of Government, bringing people and organisations together to drive change in society and deliver a better childhood for the UK. We are united for a better childhood.

For more information visit [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk/)