

# **Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders: guidance for teachers and other professionals**

## **SEN and disability: developing effective anti-bullying practice**



Funded by



Department  
for Education

Achievement for All 



**contact** a family  
for families with disabled children



**mencap**  
The voice of  
learning disability

**SEN and disabilities: developing effective anti-bullying practice:** A programme of work, led by the Anti-Bullying Alliance and funded by the Department for Education, to reduce the incidence and impact of bullying of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities in schools.

## Contents

SEND: developing effective anti-bullying practice programme of work	3
About this guide	4
Summary	5
What is bullying?	6
What is Autism or an Autism Spectrum Disorder?	7
What we know about bullying and autism	9
Action that school leaders can take/oversee – What does everyone in the school need to know?	13
Useful Contacts	17
Notes	18
Reference List	20
Acknowledgements	22

## SEND: developing effective anti-bullying practice programme of work

Evidence shows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are significantly more likely to be bullied or victimised than those who don't have any SEND.

From 2013–2015 the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) will be leading on the most extensive programme of training and resources ever undertaken to reduce the incidence and impact of bullying of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in schools. ABA will be working in partnership with Achievement for All 3As, Contact a Family, Mencap and the Council for Disabled Children. We plan to do this by:

- improving practice in schools
- early intervention through support for parents and carers
- disseminating information to the wider sector
- ensuring our training and resources are influenced and informed by children and young people with SEND themselves

This project is funded by the Department for Education.

During the course of the project we intend to provide training to 1000s of schools, parents and carers and other professionals to reduce the incidence and impact of bullying of children and young people with SEND.

To support this work and to ensure we are sharing our resources and learning we have created an “information hub” which, over the course of the programme, will house lots of resources and information.

You can find it here: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/1198>.

This module forms part of this programme and was written by the National Autistic Society (NAS).

### About this guide

This guidance gives a unique insight and is intended to help teachers and other professionals understand the issues around bullying and children and young people who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

It is written to apply to schools but could also apply to other settings for children and young people. It draws on evidence from both the research literature and evidence derived from consultation with children and young people with autism. It outlines the specific issues that schools, teachers and other professionals should be aware of where autism and bullying are concerned and also outlines actions that teachers and other professionals should take to prevent and respond to bullying of children and young people with autism.

A PowerPoint presentation is available to be used alongside this resource. This will enable you to share the key messages from this paper with your colleagues and can be used in planning autism awareness workshops for pupils and staff; and also provides important background information to school leaders and others in the planning, implementation and review of anti bullying policies and procedures in schools.

For the purpose of this guide we mean 'young people' to refer to all children and young people.

### Summary

Bullying is an important issue for all pupils but children and young people with autism are particularly vulnerable. The most recent evidence from the NAS survey and young persons focus group corroborates the evidence of all the recent research studies reviewed for this paper. There is clear evidence that bullying of pupils with autism is widespread and has devastating consequences for the emotional well being and learning potential of pupils. Understanding and respect are key. A multi layered approach could help, based on improved autism awareness for everyone within the school community, close partnership with parents and identifying and implementing peer support and strategies that address the most pressing autism specific needs, enabling each pupil with autism to engage socially and be better understood by other pupils.

#### Schools should:

- Talk to young people with autism about what approaches they would like adopted
- Talk to young people about bullying and autism
- Make sure school rules about bullying are clear
- Identify risk times and places
- Choose working groups and teams yourself or assign specific seating positions.
- Examine group dynamics
- Act as positive role models
- Celebrate positive behaviour
- Develop circle of friends and other peer support approaches
- Designate an area for quiet play
- Create structure at break time
- Introduce mentors and/or mentor groups
- Introduce buddies for home to school transport
- Stagger break times, where possible
- Offer pupils with autism a dedicated quiet space at breaks
- Involve parents and carers in the development of strategies

## What is bullying?

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as:

**“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 through cyberspace.

It can be expressed through physical violence and destruction of property, through verbal abuse, taunting and criticism or through psychological abuse. As such bullying can range from being very overt and easy to identify (when witnessed) to incredibly subtle and hard to distinguish from friendly jokes or ‘banter’.

In response to a survey by the NAS in 2013, one young person with Asperger’s said:

**‘Bullies can be made out of anyone. There is no prerequisite for a bully. If you hurt or offend someone with malicious intent, you are bullying.’**

More than 1 in 100 people have autism. This is about 1 child in approximately every 3 school classes. This means that around 700,000 people and their families are affected in the UK alone. The latest research from 2012 shows startlingly that over 80% of children with Asperger syndrome, or high functioning autism, reported that they had been bullied in school (Bancroft et al 2012).



## What is Autism or an Autism Spectrum Disorder?

**Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them.**

It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties or traits, **their condition will affect them in different ways**. Some people with autism are able to live a relatively independent life while others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. Some people with autism may

- have sensory issues, that is a under or over sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.
- have difficulties with the vestibular system which aids us with balance, posture, vision and coordination (Myles et al 2000)
- have problems with proprioception. The proprioceptive system enables us to carry out movements without thinking about them e.g. walking up a step or getting dressed. It can also negatively impact upon our ability to balance or correct ourselves when we lift etc (Myles et al 2000).

These can cause very significant difficulties in every aspect of daily life.

Asperger syndrome is a form of autism. People with Asperger syndrome are often of average or above average intelligence. They may have fewer problems with speech than people with autism but may still have difficulties with understanding and processing language and may speak in a particular tone which can set them aside from others. Children with Asperger syndrome may experience difficulties with their proprioceptive and vestibular systems which may mean that they find sport and other physical activities challenging. Effects of these difficulties maybe being the last to be picked for a team or finishing behind everyone else on sports day (NAS 2013). Autistic features can be seen in people with good language and cognitive ability (Howlin 1997). Many children with autism are bullied due to their 'different behaviours and characteristics .... easy targets for chronic, frequent and severe bullying' (Heinrichs 2003).





## 8 Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders

---

Every individual with autism and Asperger syndrome is an individual and their life and learning is affected by their autism in a way that is unique to them. The term Autism Spectrum Disorder is often used as an umbrella term for the spectrum. In this resource we use the terms autism and autism spectrum disorder. **It is important when referring to a child or young person with autism to use the terms to describe their condition that they are comfortable with.** For more information, visit the National Autistic Society website at [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk).





## What we know about bullying and autism

### Children with autism that are bullied

All who work with children and young people with autism will be aware that bullying is a significant issue. The extent and the consequences of bullying are shocking.

Figures for the number of children with autism bullied at school differ greatly and range between 40% and 82% (Rowley et al 2012 and Bancroft 2012); but there is consensus that the incidence is high and totally unacceptable. This data may understate the issue as not all children with autism will be aware when they are being bullied (Sofronoff 2011), so will not be able to report it. There is also strong evidence that siblings and parents of children with autism are being bullied too (Anderson et al 2011).

Bancroft 2012 found that unfortunately 63% of young people with autism have been bullied at school. This rises to 75% when we look at secondary school age, and 82% of young people with high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome. Schools' responses to bullying vary greatly. While some schools have excellent strategies, others do not always recognise the seriousness of the issue.

In response to a 2013 NAS survey, one young person commented that:

**'Sticks and stones may break my bones and words leave emotional scars that never heal.'**

Every young person who responded to the recent survey reported feeling upset, lonely and losing confidence as a result of being bullied. Many also described how being bullied makes it harder to trust friends, teachers and parents.

**One young person described how being bullied has so destroyed his confidence and trust in people that being in 'social situations feels like a punishment'.**

Young people with autism may be more likely to be bullied due to increased 'credulity' and 'gullibility' (Sofronoff et al 2011), that some children with autism may have as a result of their developmental difficulties, and that this leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. For example, a girl with autism is cajoled by three classmates, masquerading as 'friends', to place drawing pins on a teacher's chair; being told that 'Miss likes jokes' (Heinrichs 2003).

**This notion is backed up by evidence from the NAS focus group. Comments included that members of the group learnt to be 'suspicious of peoples actions' and one of the group reported that they 'missed being able to trust somebody'.**

Research found that children with autism who demonstrated bullying behaviours were likely to have 'psychological impairments including psychiatric comorbidity' (Zablotsky et al 2013). It also found that the amount of bullying can be directly related with the level of impairment: a finding that has huge implications for children displaying bullying behaviour, children who are being bullied, school staff, parents and healthcare professionals. Whilst it is necessary for schools to address all anti-social and bullying type behaviour they have a legal responsibility to ensure that a child is not being disadvantaged or discriminated against

because of their disability<sup>1</sup> (Stobart 2009). The same author states that schools should investigate the behaviour's triggers and deal with the issues that led to the disruptive behaviour itself.

An example of this is young people with autism who externalise their problems, such as, not being able to control their anger or frustration are more likely to be bullied (Hebron 2010). There is a risk that other children will know what 'buttons to press' in order to watch a person 'meltdown' which is when the person with autism has had all their resources depleted and the threshold for 'losing it'. Therefore a supervisor may witness a child with autism being very angry and aggressive at lunchtime but due to circumstances has missed the 'snide comments' being aimed at that child since school commenced.

### Young people with autism who display bullying behaviour

There is some evidence to suggest that some people with autism can display bullying behaviour (Kanne and Mazurek 2010, Zablotzky 2013). The authors also report that this type of behaviour is more prevalent among young people with lesser verbal and social skills. Bullying is often due to an 'imbalance of power'. Evidence suggests that bullying is a social activity in that it is often done in pairs (Stobart 2009) or groups (Kowalski and Fedina 2011) or with an approving audience (Heinrichs 2003). These social factors do not neatly fit in with the isolating traits often found in people with autism.

When people with autism are thought to be bullying it is often because the reporter is focussing on the child's aggressive or externalising behaviours, but not on the child's motivation which is a key component of bullying (Zablotzky 2012).

Evidence suggests that actions often perceived, by others, as bullying often do not stem from a desire to be 'top-dog' but results from various social misunderstandings, such as:

- children with autism wanting to join in activities or fun, but not being sure how to;
- anxiety caused by changes in routines or social rules having been broken, such as walking on the grass or leaving the toilet cubicle door open; and
- not being able to understand another person's perspective or point of view (Rowley 2012, Reid and Batten 2006).

**Responses from the recent NAS survey include admissions of that taking part in bullying 'for fun'; and, 'to fit in so I would not be bullied myself, for self-defence purposes'. However another young person with Asperger syndrome was clear, about responsibility for actions, 'If you bully people you have no excuse. It does not matter how your life has panned out so far, it gives you no reason to hurt other people'.**

### The impact of bullying of children and young people with autism

There is very clear evidence of the negative impact of bullying continuing to be felt into adulthood (Hebron 2010). For example the NAS focus group reported issues of not trusting people, wanting to be alone and being angry. All of these feelings could be damaging as an

## 11 Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders

---

adult if not addressed. Much of the research indicates that bullying effects self esteem and increases tendencies for children to make themselves isolated, which in turn makes them more susceptible to bullying (Sofronoff 2011). This view was widely expressed with the focus group, who described the effects of bullying to include:

**'lowering of self esteem and destroying confidence'.**

So pupils who appear to be lacking confidence and do not mix socially are more at risk of being targeted by bullies.

It is vital that incidences of bullying are addressed as quickly as possible as there can be serious consequences for both if this dynamic goes unchecked (Kloosterman et al 2013). The same authors warns that children who display bullying behaviour may develop conduct disorder or start to take part in negative behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse. Children and young people who are bullied are at risk of becoming depressed, anxious, having low self-esteem and falling behind in the classroom due to poor concentration and or sleepless nights (Kloosterman et al 2013, Hattersley 2009, Reid and Batten 2006). They are also more likely to miss school, leave school at 16 and to be not in employment, education or training (NEET) (DfE 2010).

Bullying interventions need to tackle the conversational and social skill difficulties experienced by children with autism (Sterzing et al 2012). Whilst at the same time addressing the higher incidence of bullying that occurs in mainstream schools by 'increasing social integration into protective peer groups'<sup>2</sup> and working with other students towards a higher level of empathy and social skills towards their fellow students with autism. This multifaceted approach does appear to be the way forward and will help children with autism to attend school without continually feeling: nervous, upset, stressed, depressed and alone (members of the focus group).

The seriousness of the incidents cannot be over emphasised. One young person recalled how they had

**'received death threats and had their special medically recommended diet contaminated'.**

Being bullied and victimised can lead to 'suicidal thoughts' as well as depression, low self esteem and a lack of confidence (Shtayermman, 2007).

Young people with autism are likely to be more isolated in school in terms of friendship and taking part in extra activities, many will spend break times in a classroom, a quiet corner or the school library in order to avoid the unstructured and less supervised parts of the school day (Wainscot et al 2008).

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are eight times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers who do not have these needs. In 2009–10, pupils with statements of SEN were seven times more likely to be excluded than those with no level of SEN (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012). Understanding the causes of behaviour is vital in tackling bullying.

## 12 Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders

---

For example every break-time a child is only allowed to play 'chase' with the other children if he is 'it'. The children then 'call him names' so that when he catches them he hits them and is then removed from the situation by teachers (Stobbart 2009).

**This correlates to the experiences of some focus group members who reported 'feeling angry and snapping' in response to be bullied.**

Young people with autism, in many studies, were found to struggle in noisy and bustling environments preferring instead a quiet atmosphere with a strict routine and low sensory stimuli (Humphrey 2008, Humphrey and Symes 2010). This was found by Wainscot 2008 to be similar at break times with children with autism often avoiding the playground and preferring to frequent the library or empty classroom instead (Wainscot 2008). However, this isolating behaviour can make young people more susceptible to bullying (Sofronoff 2011, Humphrey and Symes 2010).

### Teachers' response to bullying

Some children with autism report being made to feel 'negative' because of remarks made and actions taken by teachers (Heinrichs 2003). This was widely reported and understandably much resented by young people taking part in the focus group.

**'Teachers taking a dislike to you' and 'not responding to bullies appropriately' were mentioned in the focus group as ways of bullying or of making bullying worse. This meant that some young people lost faith in their teachers which made learning even more difficult and the school environment even more 'scary'. Pupils with autism spoke of 'not wanting to go' or being 'scared' of going to school.**

**One young person spoke movingly of not having 'much time to recover before you've got to face it again'.**

One parent said: 'My child is being bullied – the school say it is his fault for being annoying' (Reid and Batten 2006). Teachers must act as good role models for pupils in relation to how they treat others in a classroom.



---

## Action that school leaders can take/oversee – What does everyone in the school need to know?

There are some key facts to consider when considering how to address bullying issues in a school, particular for pupils with autism.

- There appears to be a direct link between children who get angry, 'lose their temper' and become aggressive and their being bullied. Children with autism should be taught strategies that help them to stay calm in difficult situations. This may involve them having a quiet area that they can remove themselves too when they need reduced stimuli, or just to escape other people.
- Whilst the typically developing child will learn many skills by experience and transfer these to different situations, children with autism often need to directly learn what is socially appropriate in every new situation and helped to understand the consequences of their actions. More research in this area is needed to help identify skills and strategies that can be used by vulnerable children and their supporters.
- Peer mentoring schemes using non bullied children to support, advise and coach bullied or very vulnerable children could have very positive outcomes.
- It is imperative that children with autism are observed or supported closely as they are not always aware that they are being bullied or due to cognition differences assume that the teacher will automatically be aware when they are being victimised.
- Young people with autism need to be included all school life and this is a key factor in deterring young people from bullying, the more isolated and fewer friends a person has the higher their chance of being picked on (Sofronoff 2011).
- Anger management issues at school due to bullying where highlighted as a key issue by members the focus group. Help in this important area is essential to address the feelings expressed by young people with Asperger syndrome in the focus group who feel they have lost a type of 'innocence' to bullying or 'become socially confused and paranoid'.
- It is important that when listening to a child or young person with autism who is being bullied that the adult:
  - Makes themselves aware of the specific communication needs that this child with autism has such as. allow extra processing time to enable the child to answer your questions, try to avoid sarcasm and metaphors, talk slowly with one topic at a time, use simple sentences, be aware of any communication aids that the person might have and use those if appropriate. (Wing 1996, Atwood 1998).
  - Be aware of any sensory issues that the pupil may have e.g. being distracted by noise or finding direct eye contact painful (Bogdashina, 2003).
  - Provide a private environment and remain compassionate and respond in a calm and even voice. (Heinrichs, 2003).



### Bystanders:

Numerous studies (Wainscot 2008, Humphrey 2008) suggest that receiving social support from classmates is the most effective way of either supporting the child with autism who is being bullied or in some cases preventing victimisation from occurring at all. With this in mind several authors (Humphrey and Symes 2010, Heinrichs 2003, Cappadocia et al 2012) suggest that it is the other pupils who, in many ways, could hold the key to reducing the numbers of people with autism being bullied.

Pupils should be included in bullying prevention strategies and programmes as a means of developing a sense of ownership and responsibility. There is also perhaps a need for a child to know how to intervene in a bullying situation so they remain safe, do not get into trouble by using violence or do not escalate a complicated and emotion fuelled situation.

If a bystander does get involved in a situation it would be very helpful to have a named person they can go to in order to debrief, document the incident and who is able to give some appropriate support. There is a danger that if bystanders are not utilised in a positive way in the bullying dynamic then they provide an audience for the bullying (Cappadocia 2011).

**'Other pupils do not like what they see as different', 'are not respectful' and are 'not informed about the issues' are some reasons why members of the focus group believed that people with autism are bullied.**

### Young people who display bullying behaviour:

It is important for school staff to approach the person who has been bullying in a skilful manner as depicted below:

- Try to change the young person's thinking and perceptions, try to encourage empathy/ understanding.
- Re-directing the person who is bullying's energy and their need to feel powerful.

This could even be done by making the young person responsible for a person who is being bullied. This strategy also gives the young person who has bullied an opportunity to see the negative impact of victimising people and a chance to be empathetic (Dublin 2007). The same author suggests the idea of positive mentors for children who bully and claims that rates of victimisation have dropped when this approach has been adopted.





### Understanding autism:

It is imperative for the school to be aware that pupils with autism have needs that are distinct from those pupils with SEN and also those without SEN. Promoting a greater understanding of autism amongst peers in the classroom is a useful strategy in both primary and secondary schools.

One possible way to achieve this would be to make autism a part of the entire school's learning curriculum with lessons and assemblies about Autism and the impact that it has for the individual (Stobbart 2009).

Pupils need to learn about autism and other differences, from very early on. Including learning about autism could be included in assemblies or PSHE lessons for primary school children, with regular additional learning opportunities about difference for older children and young people. Perhaps these could be include debates, role play and so on. Some schools have developed workbooks where pupils understand their own strengths and weaknesses as a way of understanding that everyone is different. It might be possible to use assemblies to talk about differences, for teachers to award credits and house points for kind behaviours as ways to empower peers to help prevent bullying or to understand how to report it.

### Break times:

Young people with autism often experience bullying during break times and at times of un-structured play. Playtimes should be made more structured as away of supporting children with autism. Offering a quiet safe place to go would be positive and not disruptive to the school routine. Schools might want to consider:

- Creating lunch time clubs
- Staggering lunch times
- Providing more structured playtimes
- Training adult supervisors during break times

### Training and school staff:

There is a need for more staff training regarding detecting different types of bullying early and dealing with it effectively and appropriately. Self reflection and critical self awareness is an important aspect of this. Teachers and school staff must set an example to others by not bullying pupils who have autism. This behaviour might be unintentional, for example, telling off a pupil with autism for not listening, because they were being distracted by the sound of the grass being cut and then labouring the point several times (Dubin 2007).

One researcher (Fisher et al 2013) has devised a social vulnerability questionnaire which identified four specific areas of social vulnerability: 'risk awareness', 'social protection', 'perceived vulnerability' and 'parental independence'. This author proposes that the higher the person scores the more at risk they are from bullying. Children with autism scored poorly

on the social protection section due to their difficulty in making friends. It might be possible for schools to adopt similar questionnaires in order to be aware of specific risk factors, Please see reference list for details of Fisher's work.

Members of the focus group highlighted the difficulties associated with tackling bullying. Some members felt that 'teachers needed to do more' and 'treat bullying seriously' and some held a view in that they considered punishing bullies with sanctions such as detention was often ineffective as was teaching about bullying. **There was general agreement amongst the young people in the focus group that autism awareness training and peer support were amongst the most effective strategies.**

Finally, teachers may benefit from additional training focused on developing further acceptance and understanding of the unique viewpoint and skills that pupils with autism bring to the classroom. In particular members of the focus group would be keen for teachers to be reminded that their humour or 'banter' can be misinterpreted by others and could possibly set a precedent to potential bullies. Teachers need a place to unload, reflect and be able to vent frustrations in a quiet place with trusted colleagues. SENCOs could play a really important part in this.

### Peer support:

One tried and tested strategy is the 'circle of friends' where a group of six to eight children volunteer to support the child with autism by including them in games, sitting with them at lunch or taking part in group tasks with them. Not only would this support the child with autism but would enable the members of the group to become aware of difference and disability.

Social support increases the young person with autisms resilience not only to bullying but to the consequences of bullying such as depression and lowered self esteem (Humphries 2008). Children often complained of being bullied during class change over so ensuring that there is appropriate adult supervision at this time is essential (Hattersley 2009), or by introducing a buddying system to ensure that the most vulnerable children remain safe.

### Parents:

It is important that parents are included in helping to solve bullying problems in schools. There is also the risk that if a child is bullied by their parents then they will potentially be more likely to bully others (Cappadocia 2012). So general support for children being bullied at home would be very beneficial and help to break the bullying habit. It is very positive to have 'bullying' as an automatic agenda item on Parent Teacher Organisation agendas. With this in mind having an information session about autism could also be very productive.

Parents of children with autism need to be included in schemes and approaches being implemented to support their child, such as, a peer mentoring scheme.

The NAS focus group did not identify the important role that parents played in identifying and supporting pupils with bullying behaviour and the impact of bullying. This might be an example of how some individuals with autism can see things very concretely, that is school and home are different entities unrelated to each other. This could indicate that the incidence

## 17 Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders

of bullying is higher than is reported, as children may not share their worries with their parents. However in reply to our survey, one young person stated:

**‘bullies need sorting out at school.....as soon as a bully is noticed parents should be making sure it ends’.**

This indicates the clear need for close partnership between parents and school. Practical bespoke solutions can then be considered, one report (Humphrey 2008) explained how one mother was allowed into school to take photos of her sons teachers outside their classrooms holding a card with the name of their subject on it. This practical easy to implement solution enabled the pupil to be on time for classes and concentrate better as his anxiety had been reduced.



## Useful Contacts

**Beat Bullying** <http://www.beatbullying.org/>

Beat Bullying work with young people and children to stop bullying

**Bullying UK** <http://www.bullying.co.uk/advice/anti-bullying-advice>

Bullying UK offer information on various types of bullying including school, text and email

**Chat Danger** <http://www.chatdanger.com/>

Chat Danger provide safety advice for online games, instant messaging, mobiles, chat rooms, and emails.

**ChildLine** <http://www.childline.org.uk>

ChildLine is for anyone up to the age of 18 who is in need of support or counselling due to anything of concern. Helpline: 0800 11 11 (lines open 24 hours).

**Cyber Mentors** <http://www.cybermentors.org.uk/>

Cyber Mentors are young people who help and support each other on line. They offer support to anyone being bullied, are feeling troubled or feeling low. Helpline: 08451 205 204 (lines open Monday–Thursday 10am–4pm)

**Gov.uk** <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/reporting-bullying>

Provides information from the Government regarding the legal position of school bullying. It includes information about how to report it and what schools and the police are obligated to do.

**Parent Partnership Services** [www.parentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk)

Statutory service offering information, advice and support to parents and carers about special educational needs. You can find your local service details at the link above.

**The National Autistic Society** <http://www.autism.org.uk>

The NAS is the leading specialist autism voluntary sector organisation in the UK. For various information and advice on bullying please visit the website or contact: [information@nas.org.uk](mailto:information@nas.org.uk) .

**Samaritans** <http://www.samaritans.org>

Samaritans are available 24 hours a day to listen to anyone in distress. Helpline: 08457 90 90 90 (lines open 24 hours) Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**Supportline** [http://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/bullying\\_at\\_school.php](http://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/bullying_at_school.php)

Supportline provides a telephone helpline 01708 765 200 (lines open Monday 8.30–10.30am, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 5pm–7.30pm) which offers support for any problems including bullying and cyber-bullying. Email: [info@supportline.org.uk](mailto:info@supportline.org.uk)

**Talk Safe** <http://www.talksafe.org.uk/>

Talk Safe an organisation which provides advice to children/young people aged 10–18.

**Youth2Youth** <http://www.youth2youth.org.uk>

This Kidscape project is a support helpline for those aged 11 to 19, run by young people. Helpline : 0208 896 3675 (lines open Monday and Wednesday 6.30pm–9.30pm)

## **Notes**

1. Equality Act 2010.
2. Sterzing et al 2012, p.1058.

## Reference List

- Anderson, C. (2012). IAN research report on bullying and children with ASD. Interactive Autism Network. Published online, 26 March 2012.
- Atwood, T. (1998). Aspergers Syndrome. A guide for parents and professionals. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Bancroft, K et al (2012). <http://www.autism.org.uk/Get-involved/50th-birthday/Survey-report.aspx>.
- Bogdashina, O, (2003). Sensory perceptual issues in autism and asperger syndrome. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Cappadocia, M.C., Weiss, J.A. and Pepler, D. (2012). Bullying experiences among children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, volume 42, no.2, February, pp266–77.
- Coloroso, B. (2003). *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School – How parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence*. New York, NY: Harper Resource (An imprint of Harper Collins Publishers).
- Department for Education (2010, Characteristics of bullying victims in schools <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/characteristics-of-bullying-victims-in-schools>
- Dubin, N. (2007). *Asperger syndrome and bullying: strategies and solutions*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley.
- Fisher, M.H., Moskowitz, A.L. and Hodapp, R.M. (2013). Differences in social vulnerability among individuals with autism spectrum disorder, Williams syndrome, and Down syndrome. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, Vol.7, Issue 8, August 2013, pp931–937.
- Hattersley, C. (2009). *Autism factfile Special*, (Nov). pp24–26.
- Hebron, J. (c2010). Prevalence, risk and protective factors associated with the bullying of young people with autistic spectrum disorder in England. [http://www.interdisciplinary.net/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/Bullying\\_paper\\_for\\_ebook\\_Judith\\_Hebron1.pdf](http://www.interdisciplinary.net/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/Bullying_paper_for_ebook_Judith_Hebron1.pdf).
- Heinrichs, R. (2003). *Perfect targets: Asperger syndrome and bullying: practical solutions for surviving the social world*. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Humphrey, N. (2008). Including pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream schools. *Support for Learning*, vol.23, no.1 (Feb). pp41–47.
- Humphrey, N. and Symes, W. (2010). Perceptions of social support and experience of bullying among pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream secondary schools. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, vol.25, no.1 (Feb). pp77–91.
- Howlin, P. (1997, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) *Autism and asperger syndrome. Preparing for adulthood*. London: Routledge.
- Kanne, S.M. and Mazurek, M.O. (2011). Aggression in children and adolescents with ASD: prevalence and risk factors. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, volume 41, no. 7, July, pp926–37.
- Kloosterman, P. H. and others (2013). Types and experiences of bullying in adolescents with an autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, vol.7, no.7, July 2013, pp824–832.
- Kowalski, R.M. and Fedina, C. (2011). Cyber bullying in ADHD and Asperger Syndrome populations. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, Volume 5, Issue 3, July–September, pp1201–1208.



## 21 Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders

---

- Montes G. and Halterman, J.S. (2007). Bullying among children with autism and the influence of comorbidity with ADHD: a population-based study. *Ambulatory Paediatrics*, Volume 7, Issue 3, May 2007, pp.253–257.
- Myles, B. and others (2000) *Asperger syndrome and sensory issues. Practical solutions for making sense of the world.* Autism Asperger Publishing Company: Kansas.
- The National Autistic Society (2013). What is Autism. Downloaded [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) 30/7/2013.
- Office of the Children's Commissioner, (2012). They never give up on you: Exclusions Inquiry [http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content\\_561](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_561)
- Reid, B. and Batten, A. (2006). *B is for bullied: the experiences of children with autism and their families.* London: National Autistic Society, 8pp.
- Rowley, E. and others (2012). The experience of friendship, victimization and bullying in children with an autism spectrum disorder: associations with child characteristics and school placement. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, Vol.6, Issue 3, July–September, pp1126–1134.
- Shtayermman, O. (2007). Peer victimisation in adolescents and young adults diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome: A link to depressive symptomology, anxiety symptomology and suicidal ideation. *Comprehensive Paediatric Nursing*. 30:87–107, 2007.
- Smith, P. K. (2004). Bullying: Recent Developments. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 9, 98–103.
- Sofronoff, K., Dark, E. and Stone, V. (2011). Social vulnerability and bullying in children with Asperger syndrome. *Autism*, vol. 15 no. 3, May, pp355–372.
- Sterzing, Paul R. and others (2012). Bullying involvement and autism spectrum disorders: prevalence and correlates of bullying involvement among adolescents with an autism spectrum disorder. *Archives of Paediatric & Adolescent Medicine*, November 2012, vol.166, no.11, pp.1058–1064.
- Stobart, A. (2009). *Bullying and autism spectrum disorders: a guide for school staff.* London: National Autistic Society.
- Wainscot, J. and others (2008). Relationship with peers and the use of the school environment of mainstream secondary school pupils with Asperger syndrome (high-functioning autism): a case-control study. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, Volume 8, no. 1, March, pp25–38.
- Wing, L. (1996). *The autistic spectrum.* London: Robinson.
- Zablotsky, B. and others (2013). The association between bullying and the psychological functioning of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics*, January, volume 34, no. 1, pp.1–8.
- Zablotsky, B. (2013b). Risk factors for bullying among children with autism spectrum disorders. *Autism* published on line 30 July 2013. DOI: 10.1177/1362361313477920 <http://aut.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/07/29/1362361313477920>

## Acknowledgements

- Patricks Sims
- Clare Beswick
- Caroline Hattersley
- Shane Samarasinghe
- Leo Capella
- NAS Young Campaigners and NAS Young Ambassadors