

CHANGING POLICY TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD BULLYING: ANTI-BULLYING LEADS IN SCHOOL

A BRIEFING FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS - SEPTEMBER 2024

This briefing has been written by the Anti-Bullying Alliance to provide information for parliamentarians and policy makers about our agreed key policy recommendations. We believe this policy change could help us to prevent childhood bullying which affects millions of children in England each year.

Policy recommendation:

There should be a senior member of school staff (could be provided through the designated mental health leads in schools) responsible for a whole-school approach to promoting preventing and responding to bullying, as well as an appointed school governor who is responsible for a whole-school approach to bullying.

Why is this important?

Over 1 in 5 children report being bullied each year, affecting their mental health, education, and costing an estimated £11bn annually. This issue has lasting effects into adulthood disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups including children with SEND, those in poverty, and young carers.

There is evidence that a 'whole school approach' [1] where the whole school community, including the pupils, teachers, support staff; parents and board of governors, are involved in confronting the issue of bullying is the most effective approach to tackling bullying in school. This needs a coordinated approach by a senior designated member of staff [2].

Debunking the myths

Myth 1. "It's too expensive to appoint a lead member of staff"

While there may be costs associated with appointing a lead, the benefits of reduced bullying—such as improved student well-being, higher academic performance, and decreased absenteeism—can result in long-term savings. Additionally, this function could be included in existing roles such as pastoral support, designated safeguarding leads or mental health leads in school.

Myth 2. "Bullying prevention should be a shared responsibility"

While everyone in the school should be involved in bullying prevention, having a dedicated lead ensures accountability and a cohesive strategy. This individual can provide the necessary guidance and support to ensure that all staff members are effectively contributing to the effort. Our own anti-bullying programmes have shown that having this lead helps drive forward a whole-school strategy.

Myth 3. "It Adds Unnecessary Bureaucracy"

A lead member streamlines anti-bullying efforts rather than complicating them. By having a central figure to manage and coordinate activities, schools can reduce redundancy, improve efficiency, and ensure that best practices are consistently applied.



[1] Cambridge Education, 2005.

[2] You can watch a video case study from our United Against Bullying Programme on this topic [here](#).

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Myth 4. "Existing staff can handle bullying without a designated lead"

Without a designated lead, efforts to address bullying may be fragmented and less effective. A dedicated staff member can focus solely on this critical issue, bringing specialized knowledge and sustained attention to create a more effective and comprehensive approach.

Myth 5. "Staff, parents and pupils will rely solely on the lead, reducing their own initiative"

The lead member's role includes empowering and educating school staff, pupils and parents about bullying prevention. This individual can foster a culture of shared responsibility, ensuring that the whole school community actively participates in creating a safe environment.

How you can get involved

We hope this briefing has convinced you of our policy recommendation that Initial Teacher Training should include how to prevent and respond to bullying as a core element. Please do get involved in our work in the following ways:

- **APPG for Childhood Bullying:** The Anti-Bullying Alliance are hoping to support the process of re-establishing an APPG for Childhood Bullying. We'd greatly appreciate if you would be able to get involved. If you are interested, please contact us at: aba@ncb.org.uk
- **Table debates/questions:** Why not consider tabling a debate/questions about one of our aforementioned recommendations?
- **Get involved in Anti-Bullying Week 2024:** Choose Respect: Engage via your social channels. You could post a video in support of the week, or perhaps post a story about choosing respect/people who choose respect in your constituency. You can find out more how to get involved [here](#).

About the Anti-Bullying Alliance

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to achieve our vision to: stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. ABA is hosted by the National Children's Bureau (NCB)



Anti-Bullying Week: Our campaign reaches

8 million children in 80% of schools,

supported by celebs inc. Victoria Beckham & Anthony Joshua.

Odd Socks Day:



Over 5 million children and countless adults,

celebrating uniqueness & raising awareness by wearing odd socks.

Direct School Support: Tailored anti-bullying plans for



over 400 schools annually.

Training: Providing CPD to



20,000+ participants annually

equipping them with anti-bullying skills.

Your support will help us expand our reach & protect more young lives. Together, let's bring an end childhood bullying.

anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



Contact us

Please contact Martha Evans, Director of the Anti-Bullying Alliance aba@ncb.org.uk