

CHANGING POLICY TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD BULLYING: INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

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 each year.

Policy recommendation:

Initial Teacher Training should include how to prevent and respond to bullying as a core element.

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.

Despite this, trainee teachers are not required to undergo anti-bullying training, leaving many unprepared to address even the basics of the issue. Research shows 42% of teachers feel unequipped to tackle bullying[1], and 40% of bullied young people say a trained, supportive teacher would have made a difference. Yet, 70% of teachers report inadequate support for handling mental health issues in schools[2].

Debunking the myths

Myth 1. "Teacher training does not have the resource or time to fit this in"

Investing in short training about what bullying is, who is effected and what works to address it can actually save resources in the long run by reducing incidents of bullying, which often lead to increased absenteeism, lower academic performance, and higher rates of children disengaging in education. The long-term benefits of a safer and more inclusive school environment can outweigh the initial costs.

Myth 2. "Trainee teachers will be overburdened"

Properly designed training programs can be integrated into existing professional development schedules and can provide teachers with tools to manage their classrooms more effectively, potentially reducing overall stress and improving their work environment.

Myth 3. "Anti-bullying programmes and training are not effective"

Research shows that well-implemented bullying prevention programmes and training can reduce bullying behaviours and increase confidence and skills of staff. The key is ensuring that training is comprehensive, evidence-based, and regularly updated to address new challenges and behaviours.



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Myth 4. "It is not the responsibility or role of teachers to stop bullying"

Teaching students involves more than just academic instruction. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is fundamental to education. Teachers trained in bullying prevention are better equipped to foster such environments, which is essential for effective teaching and learning.

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 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