



3. Practising inclusive education

3.8 Dealing with bullying

Introduction

Disabled children and young people are more likely than their peers to be bullied. Schools have an obligation to recognise, address and prevent all forms of bullying. What are some practical, realistic solutions schools can use to reduce this behaviour?

The prevalence of bullying in schools – and the disproportionate risk that disabled children and young people face to being bullied – are not new to those in the education community.

Nor is the understanding of the long-lasting impact bullying can have on young people's confidence, achievement and self-image – areas that are particularly sensitive for children and young people with spinal cord injuries.

Stopping bullying

Schools are adopting a range of approaches to prevent and tackle bullying, particularly that of disabled children and young people. Some approaches include:

- 1 General preventative training and awareness raising
- 2 Monitoring of bullying and SEN/disabilities and tailoring policies accordingly
- 3 Raising understanding and awareness of disability
- 4 Development of a whole-school ethos
- 5 Preventative and reactive small group work with peers to resolve bullying incidents
- 6 Individualised support and counselling
- 7 Confidence raising and skills training
- 8 Improvements to environments and contexts where bullying often occurs

Many strategies are not appropriate or adapted to suit disabled children or young people, so are ineffective at tackling the bullying they face. Research suggests that an integrated system of support is the most effective approach, and requires effective leadership, systems, policies and targeted training and support.

More information can be found on the [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) website.

Resources

The Anti-Bullying Alliance recently completed a comprehensive research and scoping project on the effectiveness of different interventions to halt bullying of disabled children and young people. Called 'Responding to Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities,' it has produced a number of reports and briefing papers for different audiences, as set out here:

- [Anti-bullying Alliance](#) – Overall briefing paper on bullying and children with SEN



My peers could have been more willing to understand; at times it was a bit hostile.

Laura, 18



I wasn't sure how my friends and teachers would react, whether they were going to blank me and brand me a freak.

Dean, 15



I was extremely scared about going back to school, not knowing what people were thinking.

Danielle, 17

- [Briefing paper](#) for head teachers and school staff
- Briefing paper for schools on the views and [experiences of parents, carers and families](#)
- Views and [experiences of children and young people](#) with SEN or disabilities
- Anti-Bullying Alliance – [Validating Practice Case Studies & Validating Practice Report](#)
- [Bullying and Teasing of Youth With Disabilities](#): Creating Positive School Environments for Effective Inclusion – report by National Centre on Secondary Education and Transition

Videos

- [Henry's story](#) – Story of a disabled teenage boy who is bullied
- [Schools world](#) – Primary school's efforts to stop bullying

Training

- [Inclusive Choice](#) – consultancy offering training on 'Bullying and the Equality Act'
- [Inclusive Solutions](#) – consultancy offering training on 'Peer Support as an Anti-Bullying Strategy'