

# YOUNG EUROPEAN MUSLIM

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## From the Editorial Team . . .

### Assalamu-Alaikum and Greetings!

Welcome to the eighth issue of the Young European Muslim Newsletter (YEM). We are a team of young people from the North of England whose ages range from 13 to 19. This newsletter is intended, not specifically for Young European Muslims, but for everyone throughout the world. We work together on a regular basis to design and produce a quarterly newsletter on 'Muslim issues' such as Islamophobia and Islamic festivals. We constantly seek feedback from our readers concerning the contents of this newsletter - Were there any parts you particularly enjoyed? Can we make any improvements? - Any form of feedback would be highly welcomed.

This issue is based on the highly emotive and occasionally distressing topic of Bullying which, according to reports such as (Batsche & Knoff, 1994), is not only a problem in Britain but a persistent problem in many educational institutions throughout the world today. We discuss and bring to attention many aspects of bullying which include advice for pupils, advice for parents, how to approach the school, racist bullying and taking legal action. Finally we have provided useful contact details for victims of bullying, parents and bullies.

## Bullying

According to studies by Batsche & Knoff, 1994; and Olweus, 1993, bullying in schools is a worldwide problem, the effects of which can last a lifetime. It causes misery for the bully's victims, and leaves a lasting impression on all those who witness repeated bullying incidents. Although most of the focus is centred on Great Britain, the problems associated with bullying have been noted and discussed wherever formal schooling environments exist.

In its truest form bullying comprises of series of repeated intentionally cruel incidents, involving the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. This, however, does not mean that in order for bullying to occur there must be repeated offenses. Bullying can consist of a single interaction. It consists of such behaviours as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be subtle, by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilise these more subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumours and enforcing social isolation. Whether the bullying is direct or indirect

the key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.



## Extent of the Problem

Various reports and studies that include Whitney & Smith, 1993) and Olweus, 1993, have established that approximately 15% of students are either bullied regularly or are initiators of bullying behaviour. Direct bullying seems to increase through the primary years, peak in the junior school, and decline during the high school years. However, while direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant. School size, racial composition, and school setting (rural, suburban, or urban) do not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying. Finally, boys engage in bullying behaviour and are victims of bullies more frequently than girls.

## Advice To Pupils

According to reports by Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993; there are certain patterns that characterise bullies and victims. Students who engage in bullying behaviours seem to have a need to feel powerful and in control. They appear to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others, seem to have little empathy for their

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victims, and often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way. Studies indicate that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where the children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems, and where parental involvement and warmth are frequently lacking. Students who regularly display bullying behaviours are generally defiant or oppositional toward adults; anti-social; and apt to break school rules. In contrast to prevailing myths, bullies appear to have little anxiety and to possess strong self-esteem. There is little evidence to support the contention that they victimise others because they feel bad about themselves.

### **Bullying includes**

- People calling you names
- Making things up to get you into trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking things away from you
- Damaging your belongings
- Stealing your money
- Taking your friends away from you
- Spreading rumours
- Threats and intimidation

Bullies can also frighten you so that you don't want to go to school, so that you pretend to be ill to avoid them. If you are being bullied, tell a friend, tell a teacher and tell your parents. It won't stop unless you do. It can be hard to do this so if you don't feel you can do it in person it might be easier to write a note to your parents explaining how you feel, or perhaps confide in someone outside the immediate family, like a grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin.

Your form tutor needs to know what is going on so try to find a time to tell him/her when it won't be noticeable. You could stay behind on the pretext of needing help with some work. If you don't feel you can do that, then go to the medical room and speak to the school nurse.

Try to stay in safe areas of the school at break and lunchtime where there are plenty of other people. Bullies don't like witnesses. If you are hurt at school, tell a teacher immediately and ask for it to be written down. Make sure you tell your parents.

On the school bus, try to sit near the driver, or if it's an ordinary bus, by other adults. If you have to walk and you're afraid of being harassed, then vary your route, try to leave home and school a bit later or a bit earlier. You can also try to walk with other people who live near you, even if they're older or younger. If you have a mobile phone, be careful who you give your number to. If you receive threatening phone calls or e-mails then tell your parents. It is a criminal offence to send offensive or threatening phone messages. If it continues, it can amount to harassment. The police can, and do, take action.

If you see anyone else being bullied at your school, please tell someone about it. But don't get into trouble with the bullies, do it discreetly by telling a teacher when you get an opportunity and won't be overheard. People who are being bullied need friends so if you can help someone who is so unhappy please do so.

Bullying is very upsetting and if you feel you can't cope, tell your parents and go to see your doctor. Many doctors are very sympathetic about the effects of bullying and yours may be able to write a note for the school explaining the effect that bullying is having on your health.

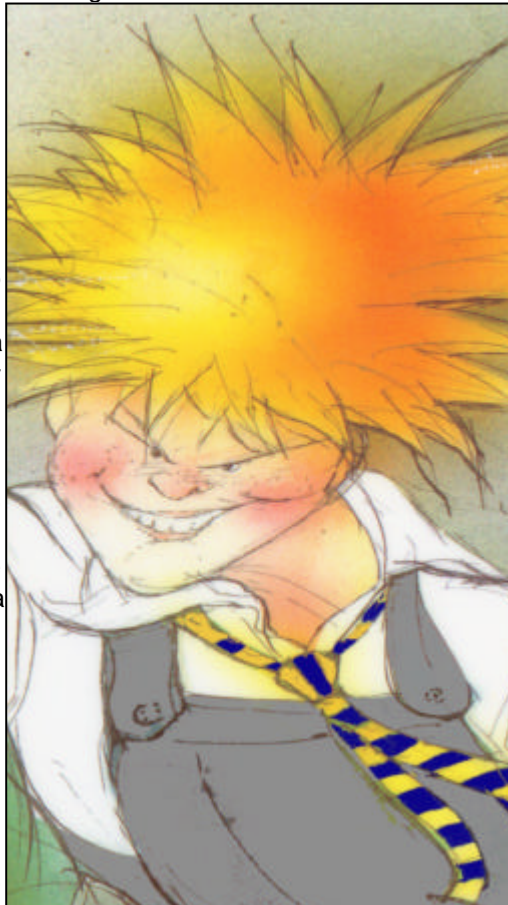
Being bullied can make you feel very lonely and you might think you haven't got any friends. You're probably not the only one being bullied who has to spend break and lunch hour on their own. Keep your eyes open. If you see someone else on their own try to start a conversation, about anything, schoolwork, if you think you know their brother or sister, if you think they might live near you, etc.

Sooner or later you'll find a genuine friend who likes you for yourself. Sometimes bullies will take your friends from you; perhaps your friends are afraid they'll also be bullied if they go around with you. It's always very upsetting when friends turn against you which is a good reason to try to become friends with as many different people as you can, even those in different years.

If people are making nasty remarks at you then it may be because they are jealous. Perhaps you're better looking than they are or work harder or perhaps the teachers like you better. One way of dealing with remarks is simply to say ..."yeah, whatever", each time so that you show them that it isn't having the effect of upsetting you in the way they think. Try to avoid eye contact with them so that they can't see how upset you are and you can't see their sneers.

The bullies will have worked out what actions to take to make you upset. They may make remarks about: Your weight; looks; the colour of your hair; your family; your schoolwork; if you are popular; if you work hard; if you have a disability; if you are a different religion; colour or culture; if you wear spectacles or a hearing aid; if you have dyslexia or dyspraxia or if you've been off school due to illness.

The website "<http://www.bullying.co.uk>" has received some e-mails from pupils who have stopped eating because they've been called "fat", or being called stupid because they have dyslexia. In one unfortunate incident a girl tried to burn her freckles off because of cruel remarks. The thing all these pupils had in common is that they were perfectly ordinary, nice people who had the misfortune to come up against a bully.



It is also possible that others who used to be your friends probably still like you, but they maybe worried that if they go around with you they'll be bullied as well. One thing you could do is have a word with each of them individually, at a time when nobody else is around, and just hear them out. You could try to get them into conversation about something like what they did at the weekend and then just say that you used to be friends with them and you're not sure why that has changed.

To have friends, you also need to be a friend and you can do that by trying to be as open and friendly as you can. This isn't always easy because sometimes the people you are nice to, aren't nice in return. However if you just ask someone if they had a nice weekend then it gives them the chance to say something pleasant and then you can try to continue the conversation. People love talking about themselves, so in time they will appreciate you because you'll come across as a good listener. They will enjoy your company and you will discover similar interests, which is the first step towards genuine friendship.

## Body Language

Think about the last time you walked into school. How did you feel? Confident and powerful? Or did you feel timid and worried? How do you think you looked to other people? Were you striding out purposefully with your head up, looking forward, or were you trying to make yourself look insignificant, hoping that the bullies would not spot you?



Body language tells us a lot about other people. If you're trying not to be noticed and looking at the ground, while darting into school it can make you more noticeable. You look defensive and vulnerable. If you step out boldly you send out a completely different message, one of confidence, as though you're the sort of person who might answer back if the bully tries a remark. You may not feel very confident but you'll certainly look it.

## Taking Time Off School

Sometimes, when you're unhappy you might want to stay at home to avoid the bullies because you're afraid of what they might do to you. Always tell your parents how upset you are so that they can help you. You need their support. Every day you go in to school is a triumph over the bullies because by being there you're showing them that you have every right to be there and that their behaviour has not upset you as they'd hoped.

The problem is, that if you start taking days off then you will fall behind with your work. This makes life even more stressful, as well as possibly affecting your exam results and your future. Taking time off school without being genuinely ill is considered to be an unauthorised absence or

truancy and your parents could end up being prosecuted for it.

Education departments have people who can help in this situation. They are Education Welfare Officers (Education Social Workers) and they can often make a big difference so that pupils can get back into school quickly and with the support they need.

## Advice To Parents

Finding out that your child is being bullied is a stressful and distressing experience. It's natural for a parent to feel anger and confusion. Some children are good at hiding their feelings and the first you may know of the problem is when your child suddenly doesn't want to go to school, or says they are ill when PE lessons are on the agenda.

Other signs can be:

- Coming home with cuts, bruises or torn clothes
- Asking for stolen possessions to be replaced
- 'Losing' dinner money
- Falling out with previously good friends
- Being moody and bad tempered
- Being quiet and withdrawn
- Wanting to avoid leaving the house
- Aggression with brothers and sisters
- Doing less well at schoolwork
- Insomnia
- Anxiety

The worst thing to do is to over-react and storm into school demanding action. According to the website "<http://www.bullying.co.uk>"

parents who have lost their temper have, on occasions, ended up banned from the premises or in trouble with the police. Don't forget that if you didn't know your child was being bullied then the school may not have realised it either. The class teacher or head of year isn't your child's constant companion and isn't a mind reader. If you think your young child is being bullied, but you're not sure, then ask a few simple questions:

- What did they do at school today?
- Did they do anything they liked?
- Did they do anything they didn't like?
- Who did they play with?
- What sort of games did they play?
- Did they enjoy them?
- Are they looking forward to going to school tomorrow?

For an older child you can ask:

- What did they do at lunchtime today?
- Is there anyone they'd like to invite home?
- Is there any lesson at school they don't like?
- Is there anyone at school they don't like and why?
- Are they looking forward to going to school tomorrow?

## How To Approach The School

In the first instance, at a primary or junior school, see the class teacher and explain your worries in a friendly non-confrontational way. Ask how your child is getting on with others in class and raise any issues of conflict with other children. Ask if the teacher has noticed that your child seems unhappy and isolated and is being excluded from games in the playground or regularly not having a partner to work with in class.

Ask the class teacher, or the head of year at secondary school, if he/she can keep an eye on the situation and let you know if they have any concerns. Ask what the teacher suggests would be the best way of sorting it out. At primary schools perhaps the supervisors could take a more active role in the playground by keeping an eye on your child, ensuring that pupils are not excluded from games.



Staff at secondary schools may not be aware that there are some areas of the school where pupils feel unsafe; the toilets often come into this category. By telling the head of year where the bullying is happening, supervision can be increased so that the bullies are caught red handed, meaning that your child cannot be accused of telling tales. At this stage it can be helpful to try to increase your child's circle of friends, by inviting a number of children home regularly, to forge stronger friendships.

If bullying continues:

Keep a diary of what your child says is happening Or get your child to keep his/her own diary Write a note to the class teacher or head of year, explaining that the problem is still unresolved . Ask for your letter to be put onto your child's school file, together with a note of action taken. Suggest that contact between the bully and your child is monitored and limited, perhaps by the bully moving to another table or set . That often does the trick, but if not, it's time to write to the head teacher, outlining everything that has gone on, including evidence from the diary to back up your complaint. Putting a complaint in writing is essential so that there is a record of your concern.

Schools have a duty of care, and allowing a child to be continually bullied when the school has been alerted to the problem, could be seen as a breach of that duty. In your letter to the head teacher ask what strategy the head can introduce to deal with the problem and how he/she will monitor it to make sure it is effective. Ask what action has been taken on earlier bullying complaints. Schools have a variety of sanctions they can use.

**These include:**

- A warning
- Calling the bully's parents in to school
- Detention
- Internal exclusion within school
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

If bullying is happening in the changing rooms, in the corridors or playground then ask for supervision to be increased. If the school says it does not have the resources then explain that you are not asking for all the children to receive increased supervision, only the bully. Ask for a copy of your complaint to the head teacher to be answered in writing and for a copy of it to be put onto your child's school file with a note of action taken.

If your child has been assaulted at school then make a complaint to the police. Police forces in the UK have school liaison officers who are experienced at dealing with school-related issues. The age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is 10 and if the attacker is younger than this then you will probably not find that the police will be able to do anything. However, they are often very good at warning bullies off in front of their parents. Attacks by older pupils may result in cautions or prosecution, particularly if injury is involved. It's important not to take matters into your own hands and to confront the bully's parents. This can lead to serious arguments.

If your child is very unhappy then take him/her to the doctor so that his/her distress can be recorded and if appropriate, medication or counselling can be started. A letter from your doctor to the school, stressing the effect bullying is having on your child's health can also be helpful.

Many children are staying away from school due to bullying. They are either too frightened to go in, or their parents are keeping them at home because they feel their complaints are not being handled properly. Parents risk prosecution if their children fail to go to school and are not being taught the curriculum at home. Children staying at home in these cases are regarded as truants or an unauthorised absence and under new legislation, parents or guardians may be prosecuted and end up in jail.

It is wise, when your child is so stressed by bullying, and so frightened that they cannot face school, to telephone the LEA (Local Education Authority) education welfare officer (sometimes called an education social worker) to explain the situation and to ask him/her to intervene with the school to get the bullying stopped. The education welfare officer's role is to ensure that children do attend school and they normally step in when a school alerts them that a child has been absent for a short period of

time but if you feel your child may stop going to school then ask their advice straight away.

Fortunately, most schools now take their responsibilities over bullying very seriously, all state schools are supposed to have bullying policies by law. Ask for a copy of that policy and see whether it contains anything to help you to resolve the problem. For instance, it may lay down a procedure to be followed over complaints and explain how those complaints will be treated. Make a note of the way in which your complaints have been dealt with and how they differ from the way they are supposed to be dealt with in the policy.

Sometimes, schools tell parents that their child is "a provocative victim". However, the DfES (Department for Education and Skills), in a circular entitled "Pupils with Problems", said that even a child considered to be such a victim should not be allowed to be bullied.

If the school asks you to go in to discuss the matter, then try to take a partner or friend with you. Make notes of the points you want to make beforehand and be firm and polite. Don't get into an argument. After each visit send a letter to the school outlining the points of the meeting and action you have been told they will be taking. Ask to see the school bullying policy if you haven't already seen it. If you weren't happy with what you were told at the meeting then say so in the letter. You have now done more than enough for the problem to be resolved, but unfortunately many parents still find that bullying continues.

The next step is to contact the chair of governors. You can get his/her name from the school office. Write to him/her at the school address. Explain the background and enclose any letters between you and the head. Ask for an immediate investigation. Make sure as many governors as possible are aware of your complaint. The governing body should treat your complaint seriously. When you complain to the chairman, send a copy of your complaint to your local Councillor and ask for a meeting with him/her. Political parties have representatives on school governing bodies and if your local Councillor is not one of them, he/she will have contacts that are.

Ask for a copy of your child's school record. The governors have a legal obligation to provide this within 15 school days, excluding weekends and holidays. This is also the time to start asking questions of other parents. Your child may not be the only bullying target and you may find other parents are keen to back you up in your complaint. If this doesn't work, the next step is for you to make a formal complaint to the LEA and ask for an investigation to be carried out and a report issued.

In fairness to LEAs, it should be said that where pupils are removed from one school to another due to bullying the LEA would not necessarily know about the problem unless parents tell them. They do not need to be involved in a school transfer unless there is an appeal for a place. Ask the LEA how many other complaints of bullying have been reported to them involving the same school. Ask if the LEAs education welfare officer (education social worker) has been involved. He/she has to visit pupils

whose parents have removed them and who are at home. This may prompt LEA officials into asking if the school has a problem and if there have been a series of complaints.

If you do not feel that your concerns have been properly investigated you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman - who cannot investigate the internal workings of schools but can look at the LEA's role in investigating your complaint. Also make sure you contact your MP.

Your final recourse is to the Secretary of State, at Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, where the Pupils and Parents Branch will deal with your complaint. Again, send a full set of documents. Officials can only order action to be taken if your child is still a pupil at the school. If, however, he/she has been removed, there is nothing the Secretary of State can do.

## Problems on the School Bus

This is something of a grey area. Sometimes schools act and sometimes they don't. It depends on the school. A High Court case several years ago established that schools were not liable for bullying carried out by pupils outside the school gates.

There are a number of ways of tackling this problem. It should help if the LEA provides the bus. It can also help if pupils can sit near the driver or sit by other adult passengers if it is an ordinary service bus.



Write to the school to make a complaint about bullying on the bus but also make a complaint to the LEA department that deals with school transport if this is one of their buses. Ask if the bully can have his/her pass withdrawn for a week or so, in the hope that the inconvenience to them and their parents will result in better behaviour. A parent could also make a complaint to the bus firm because if there is regular trouble on the bus, the firm may be pleased to have an opportunity to make a complaint to the school that could help to solve the issue.

## Moving Your Child to Another School

Transferring your child to another school may seem a tempting idea at the time, but think about it carefully.

You need to consider:

Could the problem be resolved with the input of the governors and LEA?

Will your child miss his/her friends?

How easily will your child fit into an established year group?

Does the new school use the same exam board?

Do the bullies also have friends at the new school?

Will the travel arrangements be more difficult?

If you still want to change school then you simply contact the new one, arrange to have a look around, and if you like it then you agree a start date between you.

Things are more complicated if the new school is full. In that case you will need to get an appeal form from the LEA. Religious and Church schools have their own appeal arrangements. Sometimes, if your reason for moving the child is good enough, and the school is not over-full, the LEA will simply agree to the child being transferred without an appeal.

Otherwise, the parents have to go before an appeal panel where the LEA has to make the case that the pupils already at the school will be more disadvantaged by having your child on roll than your child will be by not being given a place. Usually these schools are not just full, they are hugely over-full and parents can't expect that every appeal will be successful.

To give the best chance, it's helpful to have copies of letters to the head teacher, governors, LEA and from your doctor to show that you really have done all you can to try to sort the problem out.

## Education At Home

You can teach your child at home if you prefer and many parents do so successfully, often with the help of organisations with local support networks. Home educating parents are not required to teach the National Curriculum, have a timetable, or mark work done by their child, but the DfES says that LEAs should offer advice and support to parents on these issues.

The DfES recommends that parents keep samples of the child's work, record educational progress within a set period and have plans of work and outline educational objectives. Some LEAs are more helpful than others, but parents who are teaching their children at home inform that they enjoy doing so and find it beneficial.

There are a number of excellent groups advising parents thinking of this option. You can obtain their contact details at [http://www.bullying.co.uk/links/links\\_sites.htm](http://www.bullying.co.uk/links/links_sites.htm). For detailed advice and support on educating at home visit [www.home-education.org.uk](http://www.home-education.org.uk).

## Home Tuition by LEA

Unfortunately, some parents who remove their children from school due to bullying think they will be entitled to home tuition if the child is too afraid to go to school. This is not the case. LEA-funded home tuition is very scarce and usually reserved for pupils who are off school due to illness. The maximum a child is likely to get would be around five hours a week.

## Legal Action

Parents are increasingly enquiring about legal action, it should be a last resort. It is a tough and stressful path and you need to be determined, tenacious, and prepared for a long and unpleasant battle. There is no prospect of success unless you have ample evidence of physical or mental harm, backed up with letters to and from the school along with comprehensive medical reports.

However, the 2002 case of two north-east teenagers who lost their county court claim over bullying may affect future decisions on funding in bullying cases. The judge ruled that although both had been bullied, the school had done what it could to resolve the problem.



The general view is that legal action should be the very last resort and that any parent who thinks they want to pursue this should see a local solicitor for half an hour of free legal advice to see if there is any point in taking the matter further. If you do take legal action, the first step is that the solicitor reviews all your papers and sends off an application for funding. The child will have no income so there will be no contribution to pay. The parents' income is irrelevant. A decision on funding takes about a month. If you are turned down you can appeal. In the first instance aid of around £2,500 will be granted to take counsel's opinion. You then see a barrister, which is fairly informal. He will tell you whether or not he thinks you have a case, who is liable e.g. the LEA, head teacher, or governors, and then will issue a written opinion. If he thinks you have a case he will send his opinion to the funding agency that will grant you more money towards the case, up to the exchange of witness statements in court.

The next step is to gather more evidence. This is a fairly intrusive process, and probably very upsetting for a younger child. It isn't very pleasant for the parents either.

Your legal team will want a report from an educational psychologist and psychiatrist/ hospital to prove that your child has suffered harm. If they haven't suffered harm there is no case. The child's medical records will be sent to the psychiatrist if you are alleging mental harm. Armed with this information you see the barrister again to read through the particulars of the claim to be served at your local county court. This will detail specific bullying instances and specific instances of harm i.e. bruises, post traumatic stress disorder.

When the summons is served at the county court (a writ is only for High Court) it will probably include the medical report. It will fully detail what has happened to the child on various dates. The defence, either the LEA/head/governors, will instruct solicitors to act for them. You can expect as many as three extensions of deadline for the defence to be filed. This could take three months. The LEA is likely to deny virtually everything but this is only to be expected. The LEA will want its own psychologist/psychiatrist to see the child and will also want to see the medical and school records.

The next step is the exchange of witness statements and the court decides how the case should proceed. There could be a pre-trial review. It may be that, having read all the witness statements the LEA (or its insurance company) will decide the case is too costly to defend and will make an offer. If an offer is made, it could be a very small amount, but if the funding agency thinks it is an amount that someone would accept if they were paying for the case, it will withdraw funding. If the case goes to court there is likely to be enormous media interest as these cases are so rare.

## **Why Legal Action Should Be Avoided Unless Absolutely Necessary**

**THE COURT CASE IS LIKELY TO EXTEND INTO SEVERAL STRESSFUL AND UPSETTING DAYS IN WHICH THE CHILD'S SCHOOL LIFE IS RAKED OVER AND THEY MAY BE ACCUSED OF BRINGING THE BULLYING ON THEMSELVES. THEY, AND THE PARENTS, WILL HAVE TO RELIVE THE ORDEAL IN PUBLIC.**

## **What is Racist Bullying?**

Racist violence, Islamophobia and other religious types of abuse are closely related to, and sometimes difficult to distinguish from, bullying. This type of bullying, known as 'racist bullying', in schools can range from ill-considered remarks, which are not intended to be hurtful, to deliberate physical attacks causing serious injury. Racist bullying can be identified by the motivation of the bully, the language used, and/or by the fact that victims are singled out because of the colour of their skin, the way they talk, their ethnic grouping or by their religious or cultural practices.

In a western context, it is mainly people from black and ethnic minority communities who are subjected to racism. However, concern has also been expressed about prejudice against other groups including Muslims. In the West, the word "bigotry" is often used to describe the attitude of some sections of the population towards members of certain religious faiths e.g. those with Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or Jewish beliefs. This may also be the trigger for some incidents of bullying in schools.

## **Is Racist Bullying A Problem In Schools?**

Racist bullying in schools can be a problem in two ways:

Children who experience it have their education disrupted. They may be unable to concentrate on lessons because of feelings of fear or anger. Their self-confidence may be damaged and, as a result, they may never fulfil their potential.

Schools that ignore it, or deny its existence, give the wrong message to young people. The success of our multi-cultural society depends upon the children of today growing up to be adults who are prepared to speak out against racism.



## **What Can Schools Do?**

Many schools, particularly those in areas where there are large ethnic minority populations, have well-developed policies on multi-cultural and anti-racist education. They have clear procedures for dealing with racist incidents. The curriculum also covers the knowledge, skills and values that children need to tackle racism when they meet it. This will help them to develop into adults who respect different cultures. Nevertheless, there are also schools where there are few or no children from ethnic minorities and where little has been done to address racism. In such situations, while it may be true that there are few blatantly racist incidents, racist attitudes can flourish if left unchecked. As a first step schools may need to embark on an awareness raising exercise.

## Should Racist Bullying Be Treated Differently?

Racism is a very serious problem that has the potential to destroy communities. It deserves its own response in schools. We cannot assume that every school that has an anti-bullying policy will deal effectively with all the issues relating to racism. Racist bullying must be explicitly discussed in the classroom and there must be clear guidelines for dealing with incidents.

### In The Classroom

The work which schools do to tackle bullying can also be effective in reducing racism, Islamophobia and other related issues. Children can learn skills, such as assertiveness and compassion; they can acquire knowledge about relationships, rights and responsibilities; and they can develop values such as openness and respecting differences. However, this learning will only be effective if the context in which it can be used is specifically discussed. With regard to knowledge, they may not realise that some words that are in common use are perceived as being racist by black or Asian pupils unless this is openly discussed in the classroom.

### Consequences of Bullying : A Conclusion

As established by studies in Scandinavian countries (Olweus-1993), a strong correlation appears to exist between bullying other students during the school years and experiencing legal or criminal troubles as adults. In one study, 60% of those characterised as bullies in 9 to 12 year olds had at least one criminal conviction by age 24. Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviours into adulthood, negatively influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships.

Parents are often unaware of the bullying problem and talk about it with their children only to a limited extent. In a study carried out by "Oliver, Hoover, & Hazler, - 1994" student surveys reveal that a low percentage of students seem to believe that adults will help. Students feel that adult intervention is infrequent and ineffective, and that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies. Students report that teachers seldom or never talk to their classes about bullying. School personnel may view bullying as a harmless right of passage that is best ignored unless verbal and psychological intimidation crosses the line into physical assault or theft.

Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment.

### Useful Numbers

<b>Childline</b> Freepost 1111 London N1 0BR Free Helpline: 0800 1111	<b>Kidscape</b> 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH Tel: 0207 730 3300
<b>The Samaritans</b> Tel: 08457 90 90 90 Tel: 08457 90 91 92	<b>NSPCC</b> Tel: 0808 500 5000 Tel: 0800 056 0566
<b>Legal Advice</b> Tel: 0845 608 1122 Tel: 0845 609 6677 www.justask.org.uk	<b>Department for Education and Skills (DfES)</b> Tel: 0870 000 2288 www.dfes.gov.uk
<b>The Campaign For Racial Equality</b> (Head Office) Elliot House 10-12 Allington St. London SW1E 5EH Tel: 0207 828 7022	<b>Get Connected</b> Tel: 0800 096 0096
	<b>Parentline Plus</b> Tel: 0808 800 2222 Tel: 0800 783 6783
	<b>OFSTED</b> Tel: 020 7421 6800 www.ofsted.gov.uk

### A final word from the Editorial Team

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