ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE

BULLYING PREVENTION TOOL

A tool for the school and children's workforce

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU
Part of the family

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Evidence shows that the negative consequences of experiencing bullying can last well into adulthood. Those who are bullied are more likely to earn less money in their lives, access mental health services as adult, not be in a stable relationship and achieve fewer academic qualifications [1]. These outcomes get significantly worse for those people that have been severely bullied. It is vital therefore, that schools and other settings have a clear and effective bullying prevention strategy to lessen the chances of children and young people experiencing bullying.

Using our experience at the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), we have developed this framework to help develop your bullying prevention strategy and it constitutes of four main elements:

1) Understanding what bullying is and isn't
2) Promoting a respectful ethos
3) Celebrating that we are all different
4) Challenging derogatory and discriminatory

This resource will go through each of these four elements, and you will find some accompanying best practice examples and useful resources that aim to support your school or setting to develop your bullying prevention strategies.

Although we are focusing on bullying prevention for the purposes of this resource, we strongly recommend implementing these changes as part of a whole school approach [2] to anti-bullying to provide a solid foundation from which to embed developments and improvement in a systematic way. It is important that the whole school community including pupils, parents and carers and staff are listened to and have opportunities to influence strategies and approaches to prevent incidents of bullying.

It is also vital that you understand the levels of bullying taking place in your school or setting, who it's happening to and where it is taking place.

1 – https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/prevalence-and-impact-bullying/impact-bullying

2 – See here for further information on whole school/setting approaches to anti-bullying.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PREVENT BULLYING

A whole school approach helps to consider all the different aspects of school life and how prevention strategies can be put in place to make it safer for the pupils in your care. Think about all the different places and spaces that children occupy in your school community. There are lots of different strategies that can be used and, while they overlap, they generally fall into the following key types:

Classroom strategies

Delivered throughout the curriculum and in the classroom to educate students about bullying, including online bullying, and discuss anti-bullying work, for example in Relationships and Sex Education lessons.

Non-classroom strategies

Strategies to prevent bullying in the wider school grounds e.g. playground, home-to-school transport and online. This might include additional supervision in the playground, for example or by the toilet block or training provided to after school club staff / bus drivers.

Peer support strategies

Peer support strategies use the student peer group both to prevent and respond to bullying, such as having anti-bullying ambassadors for example or 'buddy' schemes.

Key ABA resources to support you:

- United Against Bullying – Free whole school anti-bullying programme
- Free CPD-certified online training (including a course on preventing bullying)
- Preventing bullying section of our website
- ABA's 3-step Response to Bullying framework

1. UNDERSTANDING WHAT BULLYING IS AND ISN'T

Having a good understanding of what bullying is and isn't across a school community will help you prevent bullying.

Do you use a shared definition of bullying?

It is vital to use a shared definition of bullying to ensure all members of the school or setting community – including all school staff, children and young people and their parents – fully understand what bullying is, and what it isn't.

Not having a clear definition increases the risk of misidentifying bullying or missing it entirely. Having a clear definition will ensure that bullying is identified correctly. It also helps children and young people to identify bullying and know when to get help, as well as setting a standard about how we are expected to treat each other and encourages pupils to think about the impact of their actions.

Working with our members, ABA has an agreed shared definition of bullying based on research from across the world over the last 30 years, which is:

> "Bullying is 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 online."

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:
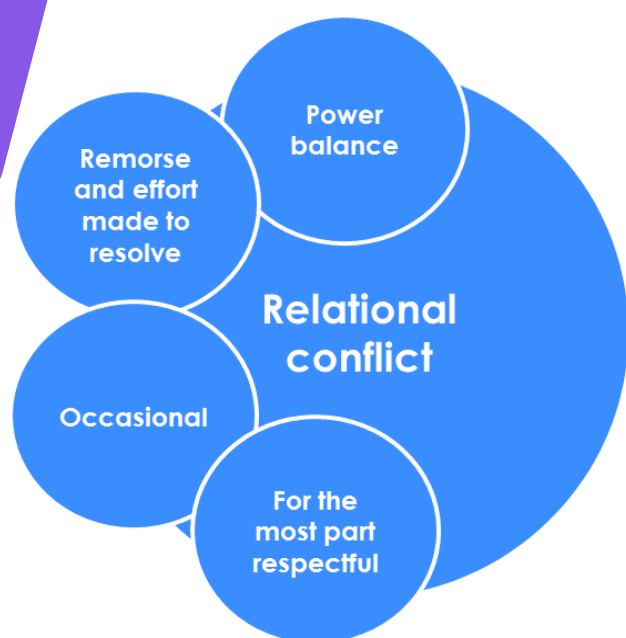
- For staff, we have a free online CPD training course: Is it bullying?
- For children and young people, we have developed resources you can use such as lesson and assembly plans
- For parents and carers, we have an Advice for Parents section on our website, and an information tool for parents and carers on our learning platform.
- Case study – Educating the school community on the definition of bullying
- Case study – Communicating the schools anti-bullying policy to parents and pupils

Does everyone in your school or setting understand the difference between relational conflict and bullying?

Understanding the difference between relational conflict and bullying is an important part of your bullying prevention strategy. Learning to understand and manage conflict is an important part of growing up and children and young people can be supported to manage conflict better, but bullying is not simply a 'falling out'.

Unlike bullying, relational conflict usually involves individuals and groups who are relatively similar in power and status. It is generally behaviour which happens occasionally, and offence might be accidental. In cases of relational conflict, there is also generally a willingness to make things right, to reflect on what went wrong and to try and plot a way forward.

Relational conflict
- Remorse and effort made to resolve
- Power balance
- Occasional
- For the most part respectful

Bullying
- Deliberate
- Repeated
- No remorse
- Imbalance of power

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Restorative approaches are one way to help children and young people manage conflict.
- We have worked with Restorative Thinking on an eLearning course for parents, carers and families on Restorative Thinking and Positive Relationships: preventing and managing conflict
- Case study: Supporting students to lead their own 'peer defender' program

Do your staff have a good understanding of the roles involved in bullying?

Traditionally, many professionals see bullying incidents involving only 'Bully' and 'Victim' roles. However, research shows that bullying is a group behaviour and there are often many roles involved in bullying incidents– see here for a short video explaining these roles and how they often interact.

These roles can have a significant influence on the outcomes of behaviours among children and young people, intentionally or otherwise. Understanding the different roles involved in bullying opens up opportunities for prevention and will support you to see where inroads can be made. Once you see these roles start to develop among pupils, you will be able to intervene at an early stage to help prevent these group behaviours turning in to bullying.

Therefore, it's vital that all staff at your school or setting understand these roles.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- The roles involved in bullying is also covered in our free online CPD training course: Is it bullying?
- See the template in Appendix 2 can support you to identify prevention strategies based around the roles involved in bullying.
- Watch this video from Vale School explaining how they've used the roles involved in bullying in their school and the impact the work had.
- Case study on Training staff to manage pupil behaviour
- Case study on Ensuring staff are well equipped and trained to effectively tackle bullying
- A resource that can help describe the roles involved in bullying to younger children: The incident at the school gate.

2. PROMOTING A KIND AND RESPECTFUL ETHOS

Research shows that schools and settings that promote and role model a respectful and kind ethos do better at preventing bullying.

Is there a culture of respect across your school community?

Respect is a vital part of a good bullying prevention strategy, and the staff and children at your school or setting should have a clear understanding of what respect is, why it is important to respect each other and ourselves, and it should be role-modelled throughout the school community.

Some schools do this in a number of ways, some will have agreed words that associate with how we act as a school community, some will ask pupils, parents and staff to sign a contract at the start of each year about how we agree to treat each other.

What is crucial to making sure this ethos is successful is that it is consistently role modelled by adults to ensure pupils can see it in action.

Some schools, particularly in key stage 1, will refer to 'friendships' and 'being a good friend' to help with their prevention strategy. While this is a useful tool to help children understand what a good friend does and doesn't do and a way of us helping to prevent 'false friendships' (where bullying takes place from pupils pretending to be a friend), promoting friendships should not formulate your ethos entirely on its own. This is because inevitably pupils will not be friends with everyone. There will be times when children really do not like each other or have arguments but we still want to ensure they know that all pupils must be treated with a basic level of respect in spite of how you feel about them, and that all pupils are equally valued and belong in school.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Co-create a set of principles about how we treat each other with children and young people heavily involved so they can take ownership.
  - This can be done as a whole school, or each created by individual classes or groups.
  - You could create posters or leaflets together sharing these principles.
- You could hold assemblies about what respect means and what it looks like, ensuring all staff and pupils understand.
- You can use the resources from Anti-Bullying Week 2018: Choose Respect – this includes school packs for primary and secondary schools, including lesson plans and activity ideas.

Do you promote kindness in your school/setting?

Acts of kindness have the potential to change the course of a conversation and break the cycle of bullying. Within your school or setting, kindness should be modelled, encouraged, and celebrated.

Discuss with pupils how you can be kind to someone that you don't get on with and how you can show kindness in subtle ways.

Challenge yourself to find out from pupils how kind and respectful you are as a school community. For example, you could have a survey during Anti-Bullying Week each year to help find out more.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Reward children and young people for their acts of kindness with certificates, stickers or other incentives.
- Create a 'kindness tree/wall' and add kind actions to it when they happen.
- Think about how you could use peer support programmes to encourage kindness and prevent bullying. Possible peer strategies to explore include:
  - buddy schemes
  - circle of friends
  - peer mentoring/mediation
  - bystander/defender training
- You can use the resources from Anti-Bullying Week 2021: One Kind Word. – this includes school packs for primary and secondary schools, including lesson plans and activity ideas.

Does the school have a clear ethos or set of values that is regularly referred to?

It is important that your school or setting has a clear ethos or set of values that all staff, children, parents and carers are familiar with. Remember, this ethos should apply not only to the children and young people you work with so they know their rights but also the whole school community.

As mentioned above, this could be through a school charter, motto or school contract for example. You could create displays around the school or setting showcasing these values. Remember that simply having words that are repeated will not be enough. They will need to be role modelled and repeated and discussed constantly around the school or setting.

Ensure the ethos is part of staff induction and pupil enrolment processes and use key times of the year to review how well implemented these values are and ask pupils how they feel about them.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Establish a whole school charter that outlines the ethos and expected behaviour of all members of the school community. For example, see guidance from Unicef on creating rights-based charters
  - Through signing up to a charter, everyone makes a personal commitment to respect others, promote inclusivity, and demonstrate kindness.
- DfE research into effective anti-bullying strategies found about staff role-modelling behaviour
  - Expect everyone to always uphold these values, including times of transition such as in corridors, in the playground, online and during home to school transport.
- In this video, Gold All Together School, Abbey Road Primary School talk about their child-led anti-bullying initiatives.
- Case study of a school who created a clear ethos led by student voice

Has the school created a sense of place and belonging in the school?

All children and young people in the school should be made to feel welcome and represented so that they can go to school feeling safe, supported and valued. Creating a sense of place and belonging is vital to fostering that safe and supportive environment where children can have positive experiences at school and make the most of the rich education they deserve without fear of being bullied.

Look over your curriculum and ensure that part of it includes teaching pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity. Make use of celebration or awareness events such as Black History Month, Pride Month, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month or Autism Awareness Week to educate members of your school community and acknowledge and celebrate a wide range of cultural and religious events.

> **'Belonging' is that sense of being somewhere you can be confident that you will fit in and be safe in your identity: a feeling of being at home in a place.**
>
> **(NEU, 2020)**

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Take a look at these resources from the NEU on belonging in school including case studies
- Take a look at this PSHE Association-accredited Belonging Toolkit from Coram Life Education
- Take our free online CPD training course on Bullying and Difference.

Do you take part in Anti-Bullying Week each year?

A great way to embed an ethos of kindness and respect is to make Anti-Bullying Week part of your regular annual activity. Anti-Bullying Week happens in the third week of November each year and is coordinated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA). We set themes and deliver free resources along with various resources/campaigning from our members. Ensure the whole school community is involved and encourage children and young people to come up with the activity ideas.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Find out more about how to get involved in Anti-Bullying Week on our website here.
- Take part in Odd Socks Day on the first day of Anti-Bullying Week to celebrate what makes us all unique.
- Read this case study on Using Anti-Bullying Week to educate pupils on anti-bullying

"

Anti-bullying week helps others realise the effect on a persons behaviour if they are the target, and also prevents bullying.

(Young person)

It's a great week for positive changes that desperately need to happen

(Teacher)

"

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3. CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

Bullying involves a power imbalance. And a clear power imbalance would be if someone felt less valued or included within the school environment. So, it's important that people across the school community don't feel this way and that we celebrate the differences in ALL students and staff.

ABA, with the Alliance for Inclusive Education and Changing Faces, have written our tops tips for celebrating difference in schools. If you want to ensure that difference is understood and experienced in ways that are positive for everyone, it's important to:

1. Celebrate the differences in **ALL pupils and staff**, so that pupils with differences that are less common, such as a disability or a disfigurement, don't feel especially different and are not singled out.

2. Ensure **all staff feel comfortable and confident** talking about all kinds of difference. Children will pick up on any discomfort. Create opportunities for staff to explore their ideas and discuss their feelings about difference and diversity. For example, if you have a young person in school who is trans, consider training or information for the staff team to ensure they are well equipped to create an inclusive environment for all pupils.

3. Allow children to **talk about things that they find different** so that they can explore their ideas and attitudes. Using statements (such as "we are all equal") without context and explanation can sometimes create the opposite effect and make people feel like they 'stand out' more. For example, you could talk about the history of disablism to share how the disability rights movement came about and show why it is important that people are given equal rights.

4. If a pupil has a difference that is not visible to others, for example, a hidden disability, special educational or additional support needs or undisclosed gender identity or sexual orientation, make sure you **work with them to discuss what information they want to share** with peers. It's vital that you avoid 'outing' them and avoid talking to other pupils about the young person's differences outside of the parameters they are comfortable with, even if they ask. Support the young person to define themselves and take the lead in their own lives.

5. Ensure all pupils have opportunities to develop a strong sense of all the things that **make them who they are**. Look for shared interests and commonalities that they share. For example, can they both talk and ask about pets, their favourite school subjects, spare time activities, music or favourite YouTube clips. It is important to enable those relationships so that everyone can get to know each other as whole people and not be labelled or stereotyped. This can help to develop a culture of acceptance and respect.

6. Some children may need **help to develop ways to communicate** information about themselves. For example, if someone communicates differently or finds it hard to express themselves. Some pupils may also be figuring things out for themselves so it's important to give them that space and support them to feel safe in sharing information about themselves.

7. At the same time, o**ther children might need to learn how to communicate** with a classmate who communicates in a different way or finds it hard to communicate. For example, the class/school may learn Makaton or British Sign Language.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Take a look at our <u>resources and top tips on celebrating difference in school</u>
- Case Study – <u>"We're All Different, And That's Great"</u>
- Resources from <u>Anti-Bullying Week 2017: All Different, All Equal</u>
- Case study – <u>Encouraging students to celebrate diversity and difference at school</u>
- <u>Primary classroom resources from EHRC, 'Who am I?'</u>
- Remember to consider online bullying too. <u>Childnet</u> have some guidance and <u>Ditch the Label</u> have lessons plans that can support you, for example.

4. CHALLENGING DEROGATORY AND DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

Challenging all derogatory and discriminatory language is an essential part of bullying prevention work. It's vital that schools challenge all derogatory and discriminatory language consistently, even if not in the context of a bullying incident (for example the consistent negative use of the word 'gay'), to avoid creating an unsafe environment that puts children at risk and makes bullying more likely to happen.

Repetitive use of disablist, racist, sexist or homophobic language, or language used to attack a person for their appearance, for example can have a long-lasting effect on the mental health and wellbeing of those on the receiving end.

Do ALL staff feel confident and knowledgeable to challenge derogatory and discriminatory language?

Staff at your school or setting should feel they are able to confidently challenge and talk about derogatory and discriminatory language. You may need to provide training or resources to your staff to ensure they feel equipped to manage these discussions in an effective way. Whilst incidents involving the use of discriminatory or derogatory language in schools may not be defined as bullying, it is still important to challenge it.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Resources and tips for tackling discriminatory bullying from ABA and EHRC
- Understanding the difference between banter and bullying
- Free online CPD training from ABA:
  - Bullying and the law
  - Bullying and special educational needs and disability
  - Challenging disablism in the classroom
  - Bullying and Difference
  - Bullying and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people
  - Sexual and sexist bullying
- Department for Education: Advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010

Do you educate your pupils on why such language is unacceptable?

You may want to start discussions with your pupils about certain words or phrases and what they mean or where they originate from, this can be used as a tool to educate and explain why such words are unacceptable and the impact they can have.

Sometimes it can be difficult to keep up to date with the terms and language that young people use, this is why it's important to involve children and young people themselves in your bullying prevention strategies. Involving young people in these activities creates buy in, and it is a great way to discuss attitudes and behaviours that exist in the school community.

Rather than suggesting to children what this language could be and inadvertently providing them with the derogatory language, ask them about the words they use and how this could impact others.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- See here for our resources on at risk groups.
- Primary classroom resources from EHRC on challenging stereotypes and discrimination
- The Diana Award have resources on Understanding Stereotypes
- Tools and information on Banter and bullying
- Guide focusing on Sexual and Sexist Bullying and effective anti-bullying practice
- 10 Tips to Tackle Disablist Language-based Bullying
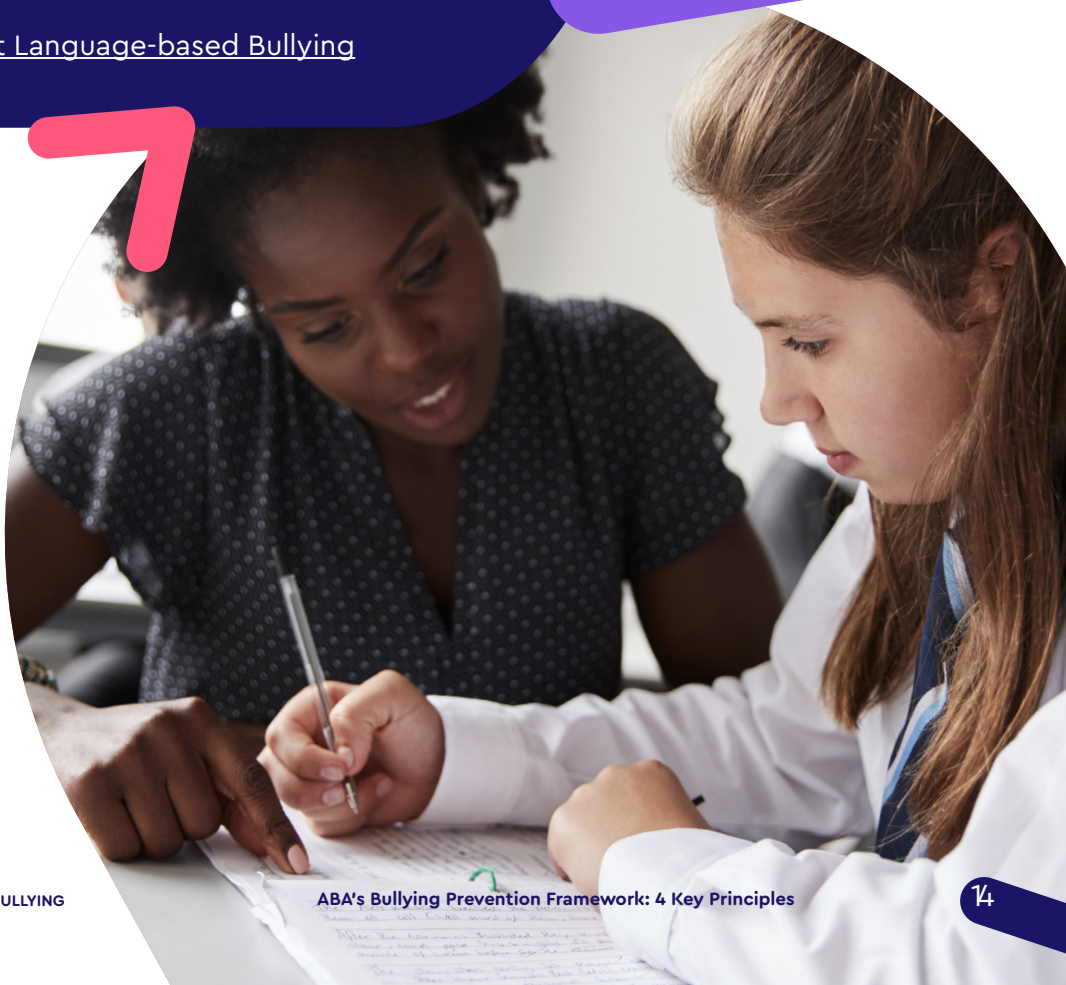
Do you record incidents of derogatory and discriminatory language being used and use the data to prevent bullying in your school?

It is really important to measure pupil and teacher experiences of derogatory and discriminatory language and to tackle its use, if identified. This is not just good practice, but also assists schools with meeting obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) - requires public bodies (including all schools) to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Under this duty, schools must challenge and prevent discriminatory language being used in your school.

Recording the incidents can help to:

- Get a clearer picture of what incidents are going on across the school and to understand patterns of behaviour and bullying 'hot spots'.
- It evidences your schools' actions and will help to keep children safe.
- It helps you to learn and review anti-bullying practice as a whole-school.

Here to help!

Some resources that might help you include:

- Guidance from EHRC on Using data to change school culture and How can schools use data to prevent and tackle bullying?
- Case study on Tackling Discriminatory Language
- Case study on dealing with incidents of discriminatory bullying
- ABA's 3-step response to bullying framework

APPENDIX 1: BULLYING PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

Use this template to support you to start planning your prevention strategies and how the work will be taken forward.

- **Step 1** - Fill in the 'Types of strategies' columns, ensuring there are activities listed in each empty box. NB: You may want to use Appendix 2 to help you identify opportunities for bullying prevention based on the roles involved in bullying.
- **Step 2** – Decide who is going to take the work forward, by when, and when it will be reviewed (final 3 columns).

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">P r e v e n t a t i v e   p r i n c i p l e s</th><th rowspan="2"></th><th colspan="4">Types of strategies</th><th colspan="3">Staff leading and time frame</th></tr>
<tr><th>Whole school (led by SLT)</th><th>Classroom</th><th>Non-classroom settings (e.g., transport, online and playground)</th><th>Peer support strategies</th><th>Staff lead</th><th>Date by</th><th>Review date</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. Promoting a respectful ethos</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2. Celebrating difference</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>3. Challenging discriminatory and derogatory language</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>4. Understanding what bullying is</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

You can download this as a word document template here.

APPENDIX 2: BULLYING AS A GROUP BEHAVIOUR

Use the template below to identify where you think there are opportunities for bullying prevention against each role involved in bullying.

A reminder of the roles involved in bullying:

Role	Purpose of the preventative work	What you could put in place
Target/s	E.g. help pupils understand that it's their right not to be bullied	E.g. run a session on rights in relation to bullying, make it clearer how to report bullying, etc.
Ringleader/s	E.g. help pupils understand the impact of bullying	E.g. run an activity with pupils to around empathy and kindness
Reinforcer/s		
Assistant/s		
Defender/s		
Outsiders/Bystanders		

You could use this to help you complete the bullying prevention framework.

You could also run this as an activity and ask pupils to help you fill it in.

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