

Prejudice-Related Bullying

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined as an aggressive, intentional act or behaviour, that is carried out by a group or individual usually repeatedly and over time against another individual or group. This behaviour is characterised by a physical or psychological imbalance of power, and can include:

- Verbal bullying e.g. name calling, teasing, threatening
- Physical e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, inappropriate touching
- Relational e.g. ignoring, leaving out, spreading rumours
- Indirect e.g. stealing, damaging belongings, targeted graffiti
- Cyberbullying e.g. sending abusive texts or emails

Anyone can be bullied, but there are various risk factors which increase the likelihood of it happening. For children and young people, these include individual characteristics such as temperament, personality or aspects of physical appearance like weight, hair colour or wearing glasses.

Prejudice-Related Bullying

Prejudice-related bullying (also known as Identity-based bullying or bias bullying) refers to any form of bullying related to the characteristics considered unique to a child's identity, such as their race, religion, sexual orientation or physical appearance. These forms of bullying are not only targeted at an individual, but reflect negative attitudes towards a wider sub-community or group to whom that individual identifies with (or is believed to identify with).

Prejudice-related bullying can be separated into 9 characteristics unique to a child's identity, these are:

- **Race or ethnicity:** bullying directed towards an individual which relates to their skin colour, ethnicity, or national identity.
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller:** bullying of children which relates to them being members of a travelling community.
- **Asylum seekers and refugees:** bullying of children which relates to them being from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds.
- **Religion or belief:** bullying motivated by prejudice against an individual's perceived or actual religious or spiritual beliefs, affiliations and practices e.g. Islamophobia.

- **Learning disability/difficulty:** Bullying of children who have an impairment which affects the way they learn, understand, socialise and communicate (i.e. speech and language difficulties). It is likely that these children will have Special Educational Needs.
- **Disability:** Bullying of children who have a physical or mental impairment (apart from learning disabilities/difficulties). For example, mobility, visual or hearing impairments, epilepsy, diabetes or a progressive condition such as multiple sclerosis. It is likely that these children will have Special Educational Needs.
- **Sexual orientation:** bullying motivated by prejudice against children who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual. Also referred to as homophobic bullying.
- **Gender:** bullying based around sexist attitudes or sexually inappropriate behaviours, intended to either demean or humiliate an individual because of their sex.
- **Gender identity:** bullying directed towards children whose gender identity is seen as being different to typical gender norms. This is also referred to as transphobic bullying.

Prejudice-Related Bullying Definitions

Bullying related to race and ethnicity, including religion and belief:

Bullying which is related to a child's race or ethnicity is most commonly referred to as racist bullying. This term 'refers to a range of hurtful behaviours, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

While bullying of certain ethnic groups such as Roma, Travellers, Gypsies, and asylum seekers or refugees can be considered distinct. The same is true for faith-based bullying, which, although distinct, is often considered to be related to bullying based around race and ethnicity.

Bullying based on disability:

A range of hurtful behaviours, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of the presence of a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Disablist bullying can affect any child who is classed as having a disability, be it physical or mental, visible or non-visible. This term is also used to refer to bullying of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Bullying based on sexual orientation:

Bullying based on sexual orientation is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) people. It is also commonly referred to as homophobic bullying. Young people do not necessarily have to be gay, lesbian or bisexual themselves to experience homophobic bullying. This type of bullying may be directed towards young people perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual, young people who are different to stereotypical gender norms, and those who have gay friends or family.

Although homophobic bullying is distinct from sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying, it is related to these forms of bullying through underlying sexist attitudes.

Bullying based around gender:

Bullying specifically targeted at an individual's gender and based on sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes, this is more commonly referred to as sexist or sexual bullying.

Sexist bullying: Defined as bullying based on sexist attitudes that, when expressed, demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. These attitudes are commonly based around the assumption that women are subordinate to men, or are inferior. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Defined as bullying behaviour that has a specific sexual dimension or sexual dynamic and it may be physical, verbal or non-verbal/psychological. Behaviours may involve suggestive sexual comments or innuendo including offensive comments about sexual reputation; or using sexual language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate. It is also commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Bullying based on gender identity:

Bullying relating to gender identity is targeted at individuals who are not perceived to fit stereotypical 'normal' gender roles. This form of bullying is also referred to as transphobic bullying, reflecting a hatred or fear of those individuals who do not conform to society's gender expectations. An individual may also experience transphobic bullying as a result of perception that a parent, relative or other significant figure displays gender 'variance' or is transgender.

Gender identity reflects an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, or an identity between or outside the two. This is associated with socially constructed perceptions of gender roles; how a particular culture thinks an individual should look and behave according to their specific gender.