

Text 18 BULLYING. NOT IN OUR SCHOOL

1. Do you think Czech Schools are fighting a looping battle against bullying?
2. What could be done to prevent bullying in schools, dormitories, workplaces?
3. Which of the following are typical cases of bullying?
 - a) repeated threats, intimidation, violence
 - b) social exclusion on a school trip
 - c) sending someone to Coventry
 - d) playing truant, bunking off, skiving (=not going to school, work, etc.)
 - e) name calling (fatty, specky-four-eyes, "Lara Croft," etc.)
 - f) being asked to carry a bag for someone
 - g) prodding someone in a queue
 - h) unsolicited e-mails or mobile phone sms used to threaten someone (cyber bullying)
 - i) turning a blind eye to taunting
 - j) stalking

- bullying = a general term applied to a patten of behaviour whereby one person with a lot of internal anger, resentment and aggression and lacking interpersonal skills chooses to vent their aggression on another person, chosen for their vulnerability with respect to the bully, using tactics of constant criticism, nitpicking, exclusion, isolation, teasing, etc, with verbal, psychological, emotional and (especially with children) physical violence.
- The bullying child will typically exhibit the "*denial – counterattack – feigning victimhood*" response to evade accountability, often with success
- Child bullies are adept at manipulating the perception of adults, especially adults who are inexperienced or who have a low emotional intelligence (EQ).
- Bully = a person who uses his or her strength or power to continually intimidate, frighten or hurt weaker people.
- Physical or psychological forms of bullying – immense differences – particularly in their effects.
- Physical bullying = a range from trivial attacks (jostling, prodding), more serious physical assaults (hair-pulling, punching, kicking) – this type is easier to deal with
- Prevent occurrences in the future
- Psychological bullying = often considered worse, i.e. can cause psychological damage which is much more deep-rooted than physical injury, and sometimes never heals; it includes name-calling, the issuing of threats, and general intimidation – in fact any kind of behaviour which brings about the habitual submission of the victim. It is less visible than physical bullying and, therefore, more difficult for teachers to recognise it and to confront
- Being sent to Coventry = 1) victim of a concerted campaign of bullying 2) over-sensitive, over-dramatic or looking for attention
- Victims of bullying = children regularly frightened into doing homework for their classmates, carrying their school-bags, buying then sweets, giving them money, etc.
- Name-calling = picking out a feature which makes a child different from the rest and drawing attention to it
- Social exclusion = a more dramatic form of psychological bullying and is particularly common among girls, for whom rejection by the group, particularly one's "best friends" is especially hard to take
- Reasons for bullying
- The fundamental questions = Why do some children tend to become victims of bullying? Why do some children tend to bully?
- Victims – in a way different to other children (another race, social class, they stammer, wear spectacles, have a hearing-aid, wear less fashionable clothes, or have an unusual hairstyle)
- The determining factor – bullied children tend to have low self-esteem and to suffer from depression, they often appear lonely or unhappy
- Why do bullies bully? What is the psychological state of a bully? Why do they prey on the weakest member of the class?
- Bullies are not to be envied – the average bully = not a happy or confident person, many are as prone to depression, and even more likely to have strong suicidal urges than those they bully.

Schools fail to deal with bullying

- Do not take bullying seriously
- Refusal to take actions against schools which fail to fulfil their legal obligation of duty of care
- 16 children commit suicide each year in the UK because of bullying

What to do with a bully?

- National curriculum – positive behaviour, teaching assertiveness skills, emotional and verbal self-defence
- Bully – taught to deal with their aggression, socially responsible manner with other children.
- The bullying child needs support, supervision, and mentoring, being helped to understand that violence is not acceptable
- If a child learns to bully, and gets away with it, there is a lot of evidence to suggest they leave school and carry on their bullying in the workplace

Who is to blame for bullying in schools?

- We all have collective responsibility, and bullying is the result of a number of factors