

# **Preventing school bullying of children with Special Educational Needs or Disability**



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais  
National Disability Authority

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**National Disability Authority**

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## Acronyms

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AfA	Achievement for all
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BATS	Burke Alternative to Suspensions
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (USA)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DCD	Development Co-ordination Disorder
DCSF	Department for children, schools and families was a department of the UK government, between 2007 and 2010
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DfE	Department for Education (UK)
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EIT	Early Intervention Team
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
EUNEC	European Network of Education Councils
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council (This has been replaced by QQI, see below)
GAD	Generalised Anxiety Disorder
GUI	Growing up in Ireland Survey
HBSC	Health behaviour in school-aged children
ID	Intellectual Disability
IEP	Individual education plan
ITC	Irish Teaching Council
JCSP	Junior Certificate School Programme
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
NABC	National Anti-Bullying Coalition

NABMSE	National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education
NAS	National Autistic Society
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Services
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NDA	National Disability Authority
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NEWB	National Education and Welfare Board (This is now part of TUSLA)
OBPP	Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SAD	Separation Anxiety Disorder
SCP	School Completion Programme
SEBD	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
SEAL	Social and emotional aspects learning (UK programme)
SEL	Social and emotional learning
SEN	Special educational needs
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
SENO	Special Education Needs Organiser
SESS	Special Education Support Services
SLI	Specific Language Impairment
SLTs	Speech and Language therapists
SLD	Specific Learning Disabilities
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SOP	Social Phobia
SPHE	Social, personal and health education
STR	Steps to Respect School Programme
TCM	Teacher Classroom Management
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency

## Terms of reference for the research

In this report, the acronym SEND refers to Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. The word ‘children’ is used in the report to indicate both children and young people in school.

The Anti-Bullying Working Group established by the Minister for Education and Skills launched the Report, ‘**Action Plan on Bullying**’, in January 2013<sup>1</sup>. The Action Plan specifies twelve actions, a timescale, and who leads out on each action. Number 10 in the Action Plan states:

- “Research on effective supports for children with special educational needs” will be conducted by the National Disability Authority and the Department of Education and Skills”
- “The working group welcomes the agreement of the National Disability Authority to conduct research on good practice and effective interventions in Irish schools for the prevention of bullying of children with special educational needs. This will support the dissemination of good practice across the school system.”<sup>2</sup>

In order to research effective anti-bullying supports for children with SEND, the NDA undertook the following:

- A literature review on anti-bullying supports for children with SEND
- Visits to primary, post primary and special schools in order to ascertain what strategies decreased bullying and, in particular, for children with SEND
- Obtained the views of educational practitioners and experts regarding bullying and children with SEND through one-to-one conversations and a round table forum

Based on the data gathered from this research, the report outlines factors that facilitate bullying behaviours. The report addresses how to approach the bullying of children, in particular, for children with SEND, who are more at risk of being bullied.

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<sup>1</sup> 2013 Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills, ‘Action Plan on Bullying’ [education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Number 10, page 111 of Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills, ‘Action Plan on Bullying’.

## **I. Methodology and report structure**

### **I.1 Literature Review**

The NDA conducted a literature review of both peer-reviewed and grey literature using a variety of sources including:

- Pubmed, Swetswise, WHO, EU Europa and Lenus Repository Databases
- Advanced search options on Google and Google scholar and other open access websites
- Hand search of journals in the NDA library and follow up of references in relevant journal articles
- The Directory of Open Access Journals
- Reports and articles on relevant Irish websites such as National Council for Special Education (NCSE), National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), TUSLA<sup>3</sup> (the former National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB) is now part of TUSLA) and other government departments and agencies

Key words used included bullying, intervention, disability, SEND, special needs, special educational needs, school, children, inclusion etc.

Search terms included, for example:

- Inclusion AND/(+)school AND/(+)bullying
- Intervention AND disability AND bullying
- Intervention AND special educational need AND bullying
- (Intervention AND disability AND bullying AND report) AND (child OR children)

The NDA carried out further literature searches based on findings from the initial searches.

### **I.2 School visits**

The purpose of the visits to the schools was to identify a range of good practice. Contacts in the Education Sector recommended schools that they considered could have good practice. The NDA sent letters to these schools in December 2013 and made follow-up phone calls in December 2013 and in January 2014. The

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<sup>3</sup> Tulsa Child and Family Agency [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

NDA arranged visits to the schools that responded to the letters and phone calls and that agreed to participate in the study between January and April 2014.

The NDA sent the same questions contained in the letter by email to the schools who agreed to participate before the visit. Appendix 4 contains the letter sent to schools prior to the visits and the questions asked of those interviewed during the school visits. Those interviewed also talked about whatever they wished to raise with the interviewer on the subject of behaviour and bullying in schools. Appendix 4 also contains a list of the type of schools visited.

The NDA visited thirteen primary, special and post primary schools between January and April 2014 (seven post primary, three primary and three special schools). Schools visited included rural, urban, all male, all female, co-educational, large, small and in areas experiencing high levels of social exclusion and otherwise.

The purpose of the school visits was to access examples of good practice. The NDA would have liked to visit more schools, particularly primary schools, but could not organise this within the timeframe for the research. The NDA did not attempt to visit a selection of typical schools but to visit some schools with good practice and to achieve this, selected schools based on recommendations from contacts within the sector.

The NDA interviewed the principal in all but one school (in which the principal was absent the day of the visit). In some schools, the Deputy Principal and the Principal were both present at the interview (counted as one interview). In some schools, the NDA interviewed other staff including the deputy principal, teachers involved in the anti-bullying policy or heading up the anti-bullying team, resource teachers, teacher heading up the Special Education Department, Special Needs Assistant and other teachers. The NDA conducted 23 interviews.

In addition, in April 2014, the NDA spoke to five parents/guardians of children with SEND by phone about the experiences of their children with SEND in school. The NDA also spoke to one parent in person who was teaching in one of the schools visited.

The NDA took notes during the interviews with teachers and parents/guardians and typed them up afterwards. From the data generated in the interviews, the NDA grouped, under various headings, the recurring themes and points on approaches to bullying, behaviour and to inclusion. The themes and points from the interviews are recorded in this section, section 3.

The school visits resulted in rich data on various aspects of school life. This is presented in the section on school visits under themes with quotes from those interviewed together with a summary of the theme.

### **1.3 Bilateral interviews and roundtable**

In 2013, the NDA conducted bilateral interviews with eight individuals from statutory agencies and organised a roundtable attended by nine statutory stakeholders. The agencies represented a number of statutory educational agencies as well as representatives from the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Equality Authority.

The issues raised and comments made were recorded and are summarised in the section on discussions with statutory stakeholders.

Some preliminary results from secondary data analysis by NDA of the **Growing up in Ireland** (GUI) survey on bullying and disability are included in the report. These results are in Appendix 11 in the form of a presentation made in the NDA in June 2014.

### **1.4 Limitations to the research**

The NDA did not interview children with SEND and interviewed only six parents/guardians of children with SEND. The thirteen schools visited are not a representative sample of schools. They are schools with reported possible good practice. The NDA visited all the schools that agreed to participate within the timeframe for the fieldwork.

There is a need for more consultation with children and parents/guardians. It would be useful to carry out further research on bullying behaviours among children with specific different SEND backgrounds and on their parents/guardians from different social classes and ethnicity.

### **1.5 Report Structure**

The report structure is as follows:

- Acronyms
- Terms of reference
- Methodology and report structure
- Executive Summary
- School visits
- Discussions with statutory stakeholders

- Literature Review
- Discussion and conclusions
- Appendices

## 2. Summary Report

### 2.1. Background

The Department of Education and Skills has taken an active role in understanding and combating bullying for many decades. Their goal is to empower schools to create school environments nationwide that are inclusive, friendly and safe for all children, including children with SEND and where bullying behaviours are not supported.

The Minister for Education and Skills tasked the Anti-Bullying Working Group with developing a plan to clarify the priorities to be addressed to combat bullying in schools. The National Disability Authority (NDA) has contributed to this work by investigating anti-bullying supports for children with Special Educational Needs and/or disability to support the dissemination of good practice across the school system.

In this report, the acronym SEND refers to Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. The report uses the word 'children' to indicate both children and young people in school.

In order to research effective anti-bullying supports for children with SEND, the NDA undertook the following:

- A literature review on bullying and anti-bullying interventions in schools, in particular for children with SEND
- Visits to primary, post primary and special schools that were suggested by contacts in the Education Sector as possibly demonstrating good practice
- Discussions with experts on how to tackle school bullying, including the bullying of children with SEND
- Post primary data analysis on bullying and disability from the **Growing up in Ireland Survey**

Drawing on the research data, the report outlines the conditions that decrease bullying behaviours for children generally and, in particular, for children with SEND. The report includes practical examples, such as:

- What some Irish schools are doing to decrease bullying behaviours
- An Irish school's bullying policy taken from one of the schools visited
- Key actions for school management and staff on including children with SEND in the school's anti-bullying policy from an American expert advisory group

- A selection of approaches a school might consider, in order to implement the immediate actions suggested by the Department of Education and Skills Working Group, in their 2013 **Action Plan on Bullying**

## **2.2. Overview of bullying and anti-bullying interventions**

Bullying occurs worldwide, in all contexts and at all ages. Bullying is a learned pattern of interaction and behaviour with serious short and long-term consequences for bullies, victims and bystanders. Cyber-bullying is a new method of bullying, and its consequences can be devastating. Bullying prevention programmes should always include cyber-bullying.

Peer and school factors interact with family, individual and community factors to determine whether bullying takes place or not, and whether it flourishes. Bullying prevention and intervention, therefore, needs to target individual, peer, school and community contexts.

There are effective whole school approaches to bullying prevention and intervention. These approaches include building a welcoming school environment where:

- Staff and children feel they belong and are interested in being at school and engaged in learning and in developing social, emotional and academic skills
- Peer-peer, peer-teacher and teacher-teacher interactions are positive and respectful
- All children can participate meaningfully in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities and friendship, kindness and empathy is actively facilitated and promoted among all children
- There is an atmosphere of trust as well as cooperation and collaboration in the classroom and in extracurricular activities
- School and teachers treat children as citizens who have rights and responsibilities and ensure that they play an active role in their social, emotional and academic learning and in eliminating bullying behaviours
- School is a learning environment where anyone can make a mistake or communicate and interact inappropriately. Mistakes and skill deficits are good opportunities to learn and change and to develop appropriate communication, interaction and social skills
- Individual needs including resilience and social and communication skills are acknowledged and addressed, taught formally and informally in the school
- Bullying policies and practices are well-defined and followed consistently by staff, parents/guardians and children

- Awareness of what bullying is and why children with SEND are more at risk is high on the school agenda and all staff, children and their parents/guardians are clear on what they are to do

### **Children with SEND and bullying behaviours**

Children with SEND, throughout the world, are more likely to 'be bullied'/victimised than children without SEND. If bullying is to be tackled effectively for all children, then, schools, teachers, educational professionals and parents/guardians need to be aware of how bullying behaviours emerge and why children with SEND are more at risk of 'being bullied' and, also, in some cases, more at risk, of bullying others. They need to understand the risk and protective factors for bullying behaviours, including the specific factors for children with SEND.

For children with SEND, isolation from peers is a major risk factor for 'being bullied'. Inclusive education is an important part of the solution to the isolation of children with SEND. Comments made by children with SEND in Ireland included that teachers could make children with SEND more included by responding to their needs and by having more group activities where they can work with other children.

For an ongoing process of inclusion, strong leadership is required from the school principal in the first instance. Some Irish research raised the question whether prospective principals should be required to demonstrate evidence of positive attitudes and commitment to inclusive education. Research shows that a process of school inclusion includes:

- Good transition planning
- Staff training in mixed ability teaching, in Special Education and in a range of teaching methodologies
- Addressing the needs and goals of children with SEND, including the development of social and communication skills and self-esteem and emotional wellbeing (For example, through the provision of adequate speech and language interventions and/or the setting up of extra-curricular activities to give a particular child or children with SEND an opportunity to develop an interest, have a role in the school and to interact and develop friendships with peers)
- Resilience/self-esteem programmes for children with emotional and behavioural issues and/or with ASD/Aspergers, together with their peers
- School leadership from the principal, when solutions are required and resources have to be found, to address the needs/goals of children with SEND
- Ongoing staff training on bullying awareness and the particular risks for children with SEND

- Effective supervision of children and of ‘hot spots’ for bullying throughout the day
- Teacher training on classroom management and positive behaviour approaches and interventions and mentoring and support around behaviour strategies for new graduate teachers

As outlined, inclusive processes decrease important risk factors for the bullying of children with SEND by decreasing their isolation and facilitating their social and academic incorporation into mainstream school life with their peers. Inclusive processes have a positive impact on school behaviour, relationships and communication and, therefore, decrease bullying behaviours for all children.

### **Research on anti-bullying interventions**

There is little large-scale research on bullying prevention for children with SEND, alone, or as an identified sub-category in specific anti-bullying interventions.

The research evidence shows that elements of anti-bullying interventions associated with effectiveness include:

- Intensity and duration of a programme (directly linked to effectiveness)
- Teacher training
- Parent training and information for parents/guardians
- Classroom management and classroom rules
- Cooperative group work between teachers and other professionals
- Improved playground supervision (strongly related to programme effectiveness)
- Authoritative (not authoritarian and not punitive) disciplinary methods
- Programmes with systematic monitoring of implementation

The more of the above elements an anti-bullying programme includes, the more effective and ‘whole school’ it is. Research shows that ‘whole school’ approaches are more effective in reducing the risk of being victimised/bullied, than single component interventions. The effectiveness of whole-school approaches fits in with the environmental and group nature of bullying. They decrease bullying behaviours among all children, including children with SEND. However, while these anti-bullying interventions benefit the majority of children, including many children with SEND, there are still children or groups of children with SEND that require individual or targeted adaptations or strategies (inclusive processes).

## **Whole school interventions**

It is important for educators and schools to note that effective anti-bullying interventions contain the same elements as other whole-school approaches including interventions for inclusion, mental health, health promotion, social and emotional learning and for early school leaving. This means that schools do not have to implement different interventions. A school can take a comprehensive and whole-school systemic approach that addresses the range of barriers to learning and development and inter-related school issues. These issues include, for example, bullying; early school leaving; mental health problems; social, emotional and/or academic exclusion; a lack of connection to school. “Rather than pursuing one more discrete program focused on a specific concern, it is essential to use each concern that rises to a high policy level, as an opportunity to catalyze and leverage systemic change. The aim should be to take another step towards transforming how schools go about ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed at school... to develop a comprehensive system of interventions for addressing the full range of barriers to learning and teaching and for re-engaging disconnected students”.

### **2.3. Tackling bullying behaviours for all children**

As outlined, the research findings highlight the major school elements that decrease bullying behaviours for everyone in the school community:

- Whole-school systemic approaches to school issues
- Establishing and maintaining inclusive processes
- Effective leadership from the principal including effective communication skills, and good systems of communication for staff, parents/guardians and children
- Pre-service and in-service teacher education and training around good classroom management; behaviour management; conflict resolution; diverse teaching methodologies; knowledge and expertise of special education and positive attitudes
- Clear school and classroom rules; good supervision during breaks and when changing classes etc; parent and teacher training and information on bullying behaviours including cyber-bullying
- Collaborative work between teachers and between teachers and other professionals

Based on the research evidence, the following key messages are emphasised:

- Bullying is a child protection issue. Schools are obliged to ensure that children are safe and treat each other with respect

- A school's anti-bullying policy should be for everyone in the school, staff, parents/guardians and children, including children with SEND. The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring the implementation of effective anti-bullying interventions, differentiated for children with SEND
- Understanding the group and social aspects to school bullying can help establish effective anti-bullying practices for children, including addressing the needs of children with SEND. Isolation from peers is the main risk factor for bullying for all children. Children with SEND are at higher risk of isolation. This can be addressed when acknowledged by parents/guardians, teachers and schools
- Effective anti-bullying interventions operate at the whole school level. These interventions involve parents/guardians and children and address school vision, organisation and culture, inclusive teaching methodologies. Other effective whole-school interventions include mental health, inclusion, health promotion, positive behavioural supports and social and emotional learning programmes. These interventions all address similar elements to those in effective anti-bullying interventions. They work at the community, school and classroom level, and address the same inter-related school issues
- The NCSE's **Inclusive Education Framework** is a whole school approach to support the inclusion of children with SEND and is a tool that is available for schools to use. The NCSE developed this framework to align with whole school evaluation and school self-evaluation processes to ensure that there is continuity between all initiatives. The themes in the NCSE's framework span a number of the principles that emerge from the evidence in this report, including leadership, communication, education and training and whole school approaches
- Leadership from the school principal is crucial in involving all stakeholders in whole school organisation including establishing and maintaining a process of inclusion for all children at school
- There are examples of good practice in Irish schools on how to create inclusive learning environments that decrease bullying behaviours for all children, including children with SEND. These approaches address issues of leadership, establish and maintain inclusive processes, address the needs of children with a range of emotional/mental/behavioural health problems and employ teachers with the requisite skills, as well as, up-skilling teachers through education and training in special education, classroom management etc
- In order to ensure that the needs of children with SEND are addressed in school policies and practices, including the bullying prevention policy, it is necessary to:

- Raise awareness among staff and parents/guardians that children with SEND are more likely to feel isolated, lonely, socially excluded and experience bullying more frequently. Awareness raising is key to affecting change
- Ensure that children with SEND are not isolated and have opportunities to interact, and to develop friendships with their peers. To this end, wherever possible, children with SEND should learn in mainstream classes where teachers use appropriate methodologies for all children including group work. Where indicated, staff can set up inclusive extracurricular activities that address the interests of children with SEND. Staff should actively promote their participation in extra-curricular activities and use peer mentoring. SNAs should actively promote the independence and interaction of children with SEND with their peers in the classroom and during breaks. The school should allocate SNAs to classrooms rather than to individual children wherever possible. Children with SEND can be taught friendship skills including, for example, how to enter a group, cooperate in a group, develop and show empathy
- Address the communication needs of children with SEND adequately
- Focus on skills development for children with SEND – this can include building up their self-esteem and resilience, together with their peers, through the development and use of appropriate programmes
- Establish school and classroom environments that address the needs of all children, including effective teaching and learning practices for all children, and ensuring positive child-teacher and peer-peer interactions for children with SEND
- Supports for children with SEND need to match the level of need. Within-class support can be supplemented with intensive support for some students with significant needs where indicated. Collaborative work between the principal and special education co-ordinator and liaison between teachers and parents/guardians can be effective
- Examine the use of suspension and, in particular, multiple suspensions, which should set off warning bells for the principal and staff, signalling that a) access to resources are needed in order to provide a more effective educational response to the communication and behavioural issues that have arisen and that b) a review of the placement should be undertaken
- Placement of children with SEND in special classes should incorporate a review process, inclusion measures etc, from the start

Based on the literature review and empirical research, the following five guiding principles underpin a framework for schools to ensure that their school becomes a place where staff and children are happy and safe and that the school

environment is conducive to learning and to developing good relationships with others. These principles can guide a whole school approach to the prevention of bullying behaviours as well as inter-related issues such as inclusion, mental health problems, truancy, and early school leaving.

The principles are:

- Principle 1: A rights-based approach to protect children from bullying to govern and underpin principles and practices
- Principle 2: Systemic interventions
- Principle 3: Inclusive processes
- Principle 4: Education and training
- Principle 5: Leadership training and communication

### **Principle 1: Rights-based approach to the protection of children from bullying**

The prevention of bullying forms an integral part of the national guidelines for protecting children in Ireland. Connecting bullying prevention with human rights, and the core values that underpin them, may help principals, staff and parents/guardians develop an adequate vision for the school and for each child. The core values are dignity, equality, autonomy and solidarity and dignity is the anchor norm of human rights. “By listening to children’s views and perspectives and being informed by their experience, we gain a better understanding of the hidden face of violence and its root causes; we learn about the different ways in which boys and girls perceive violence and suffer its impact, and we enhance our ability to shape strategies to address persisting risks”.

Ireland has ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, and has signed, and is committed to ratifying the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

Children need to be empowered to be active agents for positive change in schools. Staff can promote this in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities. Active citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities, as taught in the Junior Certificate course of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), can be introduced in all parts of the curriculum,. Early education in human rights and democracy are fundamental and, when used, can create positive school environments and prevent violence in schools.

Building empathy among children, facilitating friendships for every child in the school, developing their social responsibility and raising their awareness about appropriate communication and interactions is as crucial as among the adults within the school community.

Inclusive processes require leadership and commitment from the board of management, principal, teachers and other school staff, in the first place, so that both children and parents/guardians also engage and become leaders in inclusion. Inclusion of children with SEND in all aspects of school life has benefits for all children, including the typically developing child, in fostering understanding, collaboration, patience, and appreciation of diversity.

### **Principle 2: Systemic interventions**

Systemic interventions involve coherent, ‘whole-school’, substantive and holistic approaches to facilitate the development of everyone in the school community. Parents/guardians, children, and community entities need to be actively involved in these interventions. Systemic interventions use universal (for all), targeted (for some) and individual strategies to address the inter-related school issues which include bullying behaviours; exclusion and isolation; early school leaving; mental health issues; and failure to develop in school.

#### **Universal prevention strategies include:**

- Creating a vision for the school as a place where all staff and children are happy, safe and where each person can learn and develop socially, emotionally and academically
- Promoting a collaborative and cooperative supportive environment among both children and staff
- Developing school-wide standards for attitudes and behaviour
- Implementing a unified school-wide communication policy that contributes to school-wide consistent positive communication, interactions and behaviour and a positive school climate and culture conducive to learning (A warm and supportive relationship between teachers and children is one of the most powerful instruments to keep children at risk, engaged with school)
- Using the school curriculum including History, English, Religion and other subjects, as well as SPHE, to raise awareness of bullying behaviours and how to tackle them among teachers and children
- Maintaining a process of inclusion which includes differentiating policies and practice to meet the needs of children with SEND; school-level planning around the development of special education expertise and improved teaching and assessment
- Paying attention to the Built Environment: In the UK, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has published guidelines around the design of school grounds and advises that provision must be made for differing children’s needs, whether this is age or ability related. The DfES argues for the creation of specific identifiable spaces where children can feel secure

- Developing alternatives to suspension, such as, counselling, skills development, parental involvement, review of Individual Education Plans, in school service, such as, cleaning up with staff etc and, also, improving teachers classroom management and conflict resolution skills
- Undertaking outreach work to support children and their families

### **Targeted and individual preventive strategies**

- Speech and language support services for children's language development
- Language, social and communication skills interventions
- The provision of coping skills and self-esteem interventions for children at risk of isolation and bullying behaviours
- Mentoring and counselling children through particular challenges that they are experiencing at home and/or at school and doing this at the earliest possible stage
- Early referral of children with emotional and mental health issues to counsellors, psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and play/art therapists
- Extracurricular activities organised for particular children with SEND, so that, they can develop their interests and have opportunities for peer interactions and friendship

### **Continuity of care**

- Developing a system that ensures appropriate advice on placements for children with SEND, in the first instance, and mechanisms to re-evaluate the suitability of school placements
- Building a school system, that is capable of addressing the needs and goals of individual children with SEND and responding to their changing educational, behavioural and emotional needs, by providing a continuity of supports across age ranges, depending on changing levels of need
- An interdisciplinary team-based approach to children with complex needs and, in particular, for children with intensive on-going needs
- At a European level, there is ongoing consideration of implementing a community based inter-disciplinary team model working in schools, homes and community on a wider basis than is currently the case. These teams can address mental health, behaviour, bullying, early school leaving and family issues at individual, family, school and community level

### **Involving parents/guardians, children and community**

- Encourage parents/guardians to be involved in the education of their children, to give feedback to teachers and schools on issues in the home that might be

affecting their children; to work with teachers on the individual education plans for their children; to participate in school committees; and in the development and evaluation of school policies and practices

- Enlist parents/guardians of children with SEND to sit on or contribute to the work of school committees, so that committees are aware of and address specific challenges facing some children with SEND
- Obtain feedback from children with SEND and their parents/guardians on school policies, including, anti-bullying assessment, planning and implementation activities
- Obtain feedback on Social Personal and Health Education and other aspects of the curriculum from children, including children with SEND
- In Nova Scotia, Canada, as part of the provinces anti-bullying strategy, coaching services via the phone, help families to manage behavioural or anxiety issues in their children at the pre-school stage. Cell phone companies distribute educational materials on responsible cell phone use to customers entering a new contract, including information on how to decrease cyber-bullying. In Ireland, there are many examples of community-school work. There is a Home School Community Liaison Scheme. There has been a Garda Schools Programme since 1991, initially in primary schools, and later in post-primary schools. Community based agencies and schools run programmes such as the **Incredible Years Basic Parent Training Programme** and the **Teacher Classroom Management Programme**. The purpose of such programmes is to help parents/guardians and teachers manage and decrease early childhood behavioural difficulties

### **Principle 3: Inclusive processes**

A unified approach to diversity and inclusion operating at the school and the wider education system could usefully reinforce one another.

### **Department of Education and Skills and related Statutory Agencies**

- Research highlights the importance of inclusion processes and these should continue to be emphasised by the Department of Education and Skills and related Agencies to underpin inclusive processes in schools
- Re-clarifying what inclusion involves and how to implement and maintain fully inclusive school processes could be helpful. Monitoring specified aspects of inclusion in whole school evaluations etc could give impetus to the process
- Think tank forums around various aspects of school education to stimulate debate and inform policy and practice, for example:
  - How might schools engage with community and with families and address the home issues that translate into school issues?

- How might principals and staff gain the necessary skills to include all children with SEND in an effective manner?
- The Revised National Curriculum (1999) states that children's social and emotional development significantly influences their success in learning. How might schools address more systemically the social and emotional development of children?
- From September 2014, the professional diploma in education (PDE) for post-primary teaching is now two years. What opportunities does this offer to address the current skills deficit in conflict management, behaviour management and in diverse teaching methodologies and special education?

### **Schools**

- Principal and staff committed to an inclusive process and using a tool such as 'The National Council for Special Education's Inclusive Schools Framework' to attain a truly effective and inclusive education for all children
- Staff collaboration and cooperation around inclusive processes
- All school staff having collective responsibility for the full inclusion of children with SEND into the mainstream life of the school
- Designing, developing and delivering a curriculum that children with SEND can access and using Individual Education Plans to address needs and aspirations of children with SEND
- Developing classroom management and practice that are inclusive and that address social and emotional, as well as, academic needs:
  - Engage with the experiences of children and not just their behaviours
  - Develop positive approaches to learning and behaviour that are not authoritarian, punitive, fear-based or blame-oriented
  - Develop positive classroom environments. Positive attitudes are as important, as knowledge and skills, for good inclusive practices by teachers
  - Develop classroom management skills. There is correlation between classroom management and whether or not bullying takes place
  - Develop diversity awareness training for teachers
  - Develop a wide range of language development strategies in class
- Having Special Needs Coordinators in schools that work closely with the Principal

### **Principle 4: Education and Training**

Staff development is a priority in preventing bullying and inappropriate behaviours and in providing counselling for those who may encounter bullying.

- Research has shown that the role of the teacher is a critical determinant in the success of inclusive education. The provision of teacher pre-service and in-service education and training is required around special education; inclusive methodologies; classroom management; conflict resolution; and reflective practice. Research indicates that positive attitudes to children with SEND are, as important, as knowledge and skills and are prerequisites for good inclusive practice. Thus, education and training should continue to reinforce:
  - Taking an individual and child-centred approach to all children including children with SEND as they are not a homogeneous group and their requirements vary considerably
  - Having basic knowledge and understanding of the learning styles and needs of children with SEND
  - Providing individualised programmes, support and instruction for children with specific needs and becoming increasingly equipped to provide diverse children with high quality relevant teaching that engages and motivates
  - Developing the ability to use reflective practice to improve their classroom management practices

### Leadership training

- Internationally, the importance of leadership from the principal in attaining inclusive processes is well recognised. A key recommendation of an Australian report on belonging and connection in school for children with SEND was leadership training for principals
- Leadership training modules for principals and other school leaders should cover the full inclusion of children with disability into the mainstream academic and social life of the school. Modules should cover practice examples of how to embed the elements of belonging and connection in school practice. The Australian report recommended that the **UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and the **National Disability Strategy** should be added to the training program on the **Disability Standards for Education for school leaders** to add a social context to this training
- Those in leadership positions may also benefit from training in leadership styles that promote the psychological well-being of colleagues

The Teaching Council has embarked on a period of consultation end of 2014-2015 for the development of a national framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and this provides an opportunity to highlight the skills that CPD can address, such as:

- Peer coaching and mentoring to promote reflective practices

- Teaching methodologies as well as curriculum content
- Special Education, for example, understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder
- How to develop children's social and emotional and communication skills

CPD is currently not mandatory except for newly qualified teachers who have to engage in a minimum of 10 of a possible 12 workshops with the National Induction Programme for Teachers before their registration can be completed with the Teaching Council. It will become mandatory when Section 39 of the Teaching Council Bill is enacted. The expected timeframe for this is 2016.

Also as part of the implementation of the Department of Education and Skills Action Plan on Bullying and following the review of the Teacher Education Support Service, a phased programme of continuing professional development (CPD) has been developed to support schools in relation to the Action Plan and the Anti-Bullying Procedures. The phases are:

**Phase 1:** Course providers included 'Bullying and Emotional Health and Well Being' as a theme in summer courses and 1,417 teachers attended summer courses in 2013. In 2014, course providers prioritised this theme again in summer courses.

**Phase 2:** Workshops for teachers have been held in education centres and will continue: 96 workshops (61 for primary and 35 for post primary) have been held in education centres throughout the country. An Irish and English version is available online.

**Phase 3:** A seminar in November 2014 was held to raise awareness. It covered intervention strategies and the development of a positive school climate which is central to SPHE and which also ties in with the philosophy of the Action Plan.

Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) is planning to develop a toolkit for teachers.

### **Principle 5: Leadership and communication**

Bullying is a problem of communication and interaction. Communication is a central aspect of good leadership. The principal has a crucial role in the school in leading out on:

- Establishing clear school processes for effective communication of problems, expectations and solutions and ensuring that they are followed
- Making certain that communication, behaviour and anti-bullying policies are used as working documents and evaluated and updated periodically

- Initiating change management to establish, revise and maintain whole school planning and practices
- Providing mentoring and training of staff on collaborative practice and collective responsibility
- Promoting positive attitudes, pro-social behaviour, emotional well being and excellent communication among all stakeholders including teachers, SNAs, parents/guardians, children and school visitors
- Driving a process of inclusion for all children
- Ensuring that staff have a positive attitude to children with SEND and a vision translated into clear goals on how to effectively include all children with SEND into the mainstream social and academic life of the school
- Developing some basic knowledge/expertise in Special Education in order to be able to plan, at the school level, how to develop the required expertise in Special Education among staff
- Developing a strategy on how the school will access the resources required to effectively include a child/ children with SEND in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities
- Providing strong leadership and creativity when solutions are required to address the needs and goals of children with SEND

In summary, the international literature, good practice documented from Irish schools, and the experience and opinions of educators, show that schools can minimise bullying behaviours and facilitate the development of all children regardless of their educational and disability status. Leadership, further changes in pre-service and in-service education and training and the implementation of whole-school interventions or processes are required.

Schools can implement a whole school process that is inclusive and health promoting and inimical to bullying behaviours. This process creates a positive social and learning environment and a safer physical environment. The process decreases isolation, a major risk factor for the bullying of children with SEND, and facilitates a sense of belonging and friendship among children by:

- Developing children's empathy and civic spirit, their sense of responsibility for each other and for the school and their ability to collaborate and cooperate with one another
- Engaging all children in extracurricular activities
- Modelling and encouraging positive interactions and communication
- Developing children's resilience and social and communication skills

- Using peer support and enlisting the help of Special Needs Assistants to promote the independence of children with SEND and constantly facilitate peer interactions
- Listening to and actively engaging with children with SEND and their parents/guardians to ensure that the school is using appropriate individualised approaches to meet their needs. For this, schools need a robust system whereby children with SEND and their parents/guardians regularly communicate with the school re their school experience and any issues that have arisen with regards inclusion and bullying

### **3. School Visits**

#### **3.1. Overview of anti-bullying practices in schools**

The methodology used for the school visits is contained in Section 1 of this report, pages 7-9. Appendix 1 contains a document on bullying that a post-primary school uses with staff and children. Appendix 4 contains the letter sent to schools prior to the visits, the questions asked of those interviewed and some details on the types of schools visited. Appendix 5 contains some observations from school visits that may warrant further research.

In the school visits, principals and teachers described specific anti-bullying practices. They also spoke about general measures taken at school, classroom and individual level to reduce bullying behaviours. This section contains some of the quotes from interviews on what schools are doing to reduce bullying behaviours including for children with SEND.

Quotes are grouped under various headings. The quotes are generally direct quotes, although some quotes are edited to reduce repetition and volume of text but without altering the content. The quotes will be of interest to schools, teachers and other educators, as they reflect current learning and practice in some primary, post primary and special schools in Ireland.

The schools visited are aware of the importance of ongoing awareness raising and education and training among staff, children and parents/guardians on bullying and how to respond to it. They have strategies in place to keep awareness around bullying high such as posters, anti-bullying weeks, transition year programmes, training for parents/guardians etc.

Some schools have a separate anti-bullying policy while in other schools, it forms a part of the behaviour policy. Schools carry out periodic surveys on bullying in addition to conducting surveys in particular classes or years when there is a possible bullying incident. When a bullying incident occurs, schools use various approaches to investigate and deal with it. However, the schools are increasingly emphasising positive behaviours and giving children an opportunity to learn from an incident, see it as an important educational opportunity to improve their social skills and interactions with others and move on.

Many schools engage children in formulating class and school rules each year with the focus on positive interactions, communication, friendship, empathy and a culture of helping and including everyone. Some schools stressed the importance of staff training around appropriate strategies to prevent and manage bullying and positive communication and behaviour management strategies. Teachers need to know how to reinforce positive behaviours and not negative ones.

In some schools, the principal or deputy principal or both are involved in investigating and dealing with a possible or actual bullying incident. In other schools, an anti-bullying team deals with incidents and the principal or deputy principal are not involved, unless bullying behaviours continue.

Teachers spoke about the importance of establishing a communication system for children, so that children can alert teachers to what is happening and can learn to articulate what is happening to them. Schools are also involving children more in formulating policies and practices such as Transition Year students educating other students through drama, role play etc.

A principal made the point that when schools establish inclusive processes, there is a decrease in negative behaviours: “Deal with unwanted behaviour by delivering inclusion. This involves cultivating good relationships and promoting friendships in school. Do this by creating and maintaining a happy school culture and climate, organising friendship weeks and having a wide range of extra-curricular activities that can draw every child into school life. Therefore, the approach to unwanted comments, teasing etc is, first, to deliver positive relationships with the help of teachers that know the children in question. For example, the resource teacher can play games with mixed groups, including the children in question. Dodge ball is a game that many are able to play because the ball is big and soft and it doesn’t require great coordination to play it. The reality is that lifelong friendships develop between students with and without SEND, once the opportunities to interact are there in the school. This year, four past pupils came back to talk to the sixth class pupils. They were friends in school and they remain friends several years on and one of these students has Down’s syndrome.”

School leadership from the principal was seen as crucial in establishing whole school inclusive processes and in keeping an awareness of bullying high on the agenda and having clear policies and practices that are implemented and followed by staff and children.

### **3.2. Quotes on anti-bullying practices**

#### **Developing anti-bullying policies**

- “The school has learned that involving children in developing school policies and plans is very helpful and leads to more effective policies and plans so we periodically evaluate and update the anti-bullying and behaviour policies with input from both children and parents/guardians”
- “Our new anti-bullying policy is based on education, trust, information, cultivating positive behaviours, and on awareness-raising among stakeholders in the school, starting with the staff. A lot of work was required with teachers to get them to try this approach. The previous disciplinary policy was not successful, even though staff faithfully implemented it. With this new

approach, bullying behaviours have decreased and the school environment is better. Surveys show that a majority of children are ready to report bullying. They believe that if they report it, the school will deal with it”

- “The anti-bullying policy is one part of a whole set of live policies. It links into so many other policies that all have to work together - rights, code of behaviour, dignity in the workplace and the equality policy. It is part of the code of behaviour”
- “In this school, the anti-bullying policy and the Code of Behaviour are closely linked. In our opinion, the Code of Behaviour is vital. We reviewed the Code of Behaviour in 2012 and “tweaked” the philosophy of mutual respect. Good relationships in school are crucial and the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy should reflect this. We explain the rules in the Code of Behaviour to everyone. The children’s journals contain the code and both children and parents/guardians sign up to the code of behaviour at the start of the year. The Code contains basic rules around relationships. Children are involved in creating rules around behaviour in the classroom and school and they and their parents/guardians must sign the Code.”
- “Our new approach has built up a culture of trust, and the parents/guardians buy into the anti-bullying policy and support it. In this climate of trust, the principal or deputy principal gets a verbal commitment from the child not to repeat unwanted behaviours. This works very well in the vast majority of instances”
- “There is an anti-bullying team. A member of this team intervenes discretely with both the bully and the bullied without involving the principal, deputy principal, class teacher, parents/guardians or school board. A member of the anti-bullying team explains the impact of the behaviour and, why it is unacceptable. The staff member obtains a written commitment that the child will not repeat the behaviour. No one else is involved unless the bullying behaviour continues. The staff organise that the children involved in the incident are, for example, sent on a message and someone from the bullying team accepts the message and then has the session discretely with the child in question”
- “When an incident comes to the attention of the staff, we do a survey of the year group. There are questions on the survey that everyone can answer: Why is bullying not acceptable in the school? Why is bullying bad? Have you seen bullying? Who is the bully? Who is the victim? The students sign and date the survey. The anti-bullying team collect the surveys and the Deputy Principal and Principal study them. It is interesting because not only will there be information on the incident you are investigating but you will also find other incidents described. Children will name the same bully and victim so that is

helpful. Sometimes, in answer to the question who is the bully, the child in question answers, “me”, and signs it”

- “It is important to have the right venue for surveys on bullying. For example, we use the library as it is big and the students can be spaced sufficiently to have privacy. Recently we did a survey with 5<sup>th</sup> years in their classrooms. The girl that reported the incident did not write anything down. The survey did not work at all because the classrooms did not have the necessary space and privacy and, without that, there was not enough trust”

### **Keeping the focus on education and learning**

- “We take a “no blame approach” to inappropriate behaviour in the first instance. We assume that an incident has resulted largely out of ignorance about the impact of the child’s behaviour on others. This is an educational approach and gives each child the opportunity to learn and to do the right thing. It is important to ensure that children are aware of the impact of particular behaviours and that they get the opportunity to correct a bad decision that, perhaps, they will only make once in a lifetime”
- “Some children can misinterpret what is bullying. CCTV cameras and SNAs who witness “the incident” can give another angle on things. Children with ASD, in a particular mood, may say that everyone is bullying them even if someone just addresses them with a simple hello. It is important to educate them on what is and is not bullying. It is also crucial that they learn to recognise when they are getting worked up and to be able to communicate that to staff and to use relaxation techniques etc before they get into a crisis”
- “Children need to understand what bullying is. Wanting a friend can be the cause of apparent bullying. Children with and without SEND need to be taught that not everyone has to be their friend, although, everyone has to be respectful and polite towards them”
- “Teaching all children personal awareness is important: “You love Jaffa cakes but you cannot eat someone else’s!”
- “Name behaviours but never label persons! Deal with inappropriate behaviour when it happens but discretely and positively. Otherwise, children, particularly some children with SEND, for example, children with ASD and learning difficulties, will not remember the incident and can miss the point entirely”
- “Some children with SEND need to be taught practical skills around emotions, respect, how to behave etc. They need to learn the sequence of how to behave and how to respond. Some children need to learn anger mechanisms and to be up skilled with calming down mechanisms, for example, they can be taught to stop when a “password” is used by their teacher, for example, “blow out the candles” or “smell the strawberries” – this reminds them to

stop and take control of themselves and no one else knows or notices or bothers”

- “Children with and without SEND have to be taught to respond appropriately to inappropriate behaviour. This is particularly true of children with SEND who are vulnerable to bullying behaviours. While they do not like particular behaviours, they may not have the skills to say no, stop and to look for help. So, they have to develop these skills along with self-esteem”
- “Recently, issues arose between two pupils with Learning Disability in the same class. Staff from the School Completion Programme met and worked with each child and then met with both students together. They clarified boundaries and both children then signed a contract agreeing not to disturb one another again. This seems to have worked to date”

### **Tackle issues such as excessive teasing etc. as early as possible**

Teachers talked about the importance of tackling issues before they escalate into bullying behaviours.

- “There is a need to get to the root of things when issues first arise. The counsellors, the chaplain, the SNAs etc all play a part in working with children to help them find ways to cope with situations they are in. The role of the play therapist can be more important than a counsellor in the primary school: When children are negative or something is going on, a play therapist can help identify with them the issues they have and help them to move on”
- “When individuals in first year are not settling, the first year teachers have two meetings to decide on the best behavioural strategies and what kind of training the children require. Teachers unite and are consistent in promoting positive discipline, promoting positive regard and explaining clearly, what the immediate consequences for negative behaviours will be. This approach doesn’t allow more serious issues to develop”

### **Anti-bullying charter, anti-bullying week, workshops and posters (post primary schools)**

- “Tutors read out the Anti-bullying Charter at the beginning of the year in all classes. This charter is up-dated regularly”
- “We have a yearly anti-bullying week every November. During the anti-bullying week, students, taking the Transition Year Drama Module, conduct workshops on bullying. These are powerful. One workshop had a play on hassling in the corridor, the play stopped and the audience were asked: How should this end?”
- “Keeping awareness of bullying behaviours up throughout the year is important. This can be done with, for example, visuals such as posters that

are visible throughout the school, bullying weeks, drama that includes a bullying/behaviour theme etc”

- “We hold workshops on bullying for staff and for parents/guardians of first years which address cyber-bullying as well as bullying. Cyber-bullying education is important for first year children and parents/guardians. It can come as a shock to both children and their parents/guardians that the IP addresses of their computers are traceable etc”
- “With regards to cyber-bullying, we have had a local expert work with children in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. The same person works with their parents/guardians as well. The reactions and results have been positive”

### **Anti-bullying resources used by schools**

Resources used by schools, may be of interest to other schools and individuals, and include:

- Material from the **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre** (CEOP), which is part of the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) and CEOP has a ThinkUKnow website with resources including videos ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk))
- **GET WITH IT** Bookmarkers from the Office for Internet Safety in Ireland with Top Tips for Safer Internet Use including **ThinkB4U Post, ThinkB4U Upload, ThinkB4UChat** ([www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie))
- A series of guides from the Office of Internet Safety and other entities: Guides for parents/guardians and others include, for example, **‘Get with it! A guide to cyber-bullying’**; **‘Get with it! A parents/guardians’ guide to social networking websites’**; **‘Get with it! A parents/guardians’ guide to filtering technologies’**; **‘Get with it! A parents/guardians’ guide to new media technologies’** ([www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie))
- Booklets obtained from the Wexford Education Network such as the booklet entitled, **‘Stop it! Steps to address Bullying’**, are for young people, adults and organisations. These are given to all first years and their families in one particular school ([www.wld.ie/programmes/wexford-education-network](http://www.wld.ie/programmes/wexford-education-network))
- Becky’s story ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cGSIwLxUyY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cGSIwLxUyY)) and other materials on YouTube

Recent additional resources from the Department of Education and Skills include:

- **New Procedures for schools**

<http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Bullying/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-in-Schools.html>

- **Information on Internet Safety and cyberbullying: UP2US**

<http://www.webwise.ie/Up2UsPack.shtm>

- **Stand Up! Awareness Week Against Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in second level schools**

<http://www.belongto.org/campaign.aspx>

**Cultivate positive interactions**

- “Staff and students must maintain a standard of behaviour in the school. As it is impossible to micro-manage the thousands of potential interactions and relationships in a school, one has to provide the “scaffolding” that will support the desired school culture and climate.” For example, our scaffolding includes:
  - The goal that every single child in the school is happy, develops and learns
  - Every child has a base mainstream class where he/she starts the day
  - Every child is welcomed to school every day
  - Classes are distributed in a mixed random way and timetabling is done to integrate all the children
  - There is always good yard and pre-class supervision
  - Children have breaks together
  - A lot of attention is given to the development of the social skills of every child as well as to the child’s academic skills
  - The school provides lots of extracurricular activities and clubs
  - Cultivating friendships through friendship weeks, buddy strategies and clubs
  - Creativity to access the required resources is an important part of school leadership. This school fundraises for a Speech and Language Therapist for the school; the school has trainee teachers from abroad working in the school; the school divided a classroom in order to set up an Occupational Therapist’s (OT) office and gave it to an OT for free in return for seeing children in the school”
- “Members of staff are aware that it is essential for them to learn to model the rules that are outlined in the Code of Behaviour, in their relationships with each other and with children and parents/guardians”
- “The beginning of each year is an important time to give aspirations, set goals and raise expectations. Constantly tell children you are proud of them and that they can reach goals and standards. This makes life different for every child. As the principal, I specify my rule at the beginning of the year. It is to tell the truth! I tell the children in each class: “I will always like you even though, at times, I might not like your behaviour. Never be afraid, because everyone makes mistakes and we learn a lot from our mistakes. When we do

something wrong and tell the truth, we can work out what to do and how to behave the next time”

- “At the start of the year, teachers, in each class, spend time formulating class rules. It could take an hour or more. It depends on the class. It should not be timetable-driven because it is important to get it right. It is important to do this exercise in the first week. The children come up with the rules and discuss how they are going to be lived. This exercise helps them to take ownership of their learning and behaviour. If there is an incident, the children discuss it including which rules were broken. The children also talk about breaking the rules at home, for example, “I fought with my mum at the weekend and so I broke rule number 3”. Therefore, the children learn to observe a code of behaviour, not only in school, but at home as well
- “If management stay in the office they may begin to see only problems. Members of management should be out in the corridors, visiting classes, and engaging with staff and children, and participating in school life, during the week. Taking a proactive positive approach and tackling issues as they arise with good humour are an important part of maintaining a positive school environment. If 99% of staff and children are happy and 1% unhappy, the approach should be to resist being overwhelmed by particular negative incidents!”
- “Cultivating trust, communication, cooperation and collaboration among staff is essential so that they work together around:
  - “A shared understanding of what bullying is”
  - “A consistent and unified approach to unwanted behaviour”
  - “An open and effective communication and sharing strategy around behaviour and bullying and a consistent approach to communication about children who have issues”
  - “Keeping a positive focus is crucial. The school must find and use ways to create a positive school environment. The most important development with regards “growing” wanted behaviours has been an open and highly effective communication and sharing strategy among staff. This has led to consistency and to effective behavioural interventions. It has also made supervision at breaks and lunchtime more effective, easier and educational” (Special School)

A school holds positivity weeks during the year (primary school)

- “During this week, names are put in a tub and everyone takes a name out of tub in the morning. Each child tries to be positive towards that person whose name he/she drew during the day. Before school finishes everyone guesses

who their positive classmate was. Often the naturally positive children get many votes. It really helps children to work at being positive towards others”

Another school uses a letterbox (primary school)

- “This is in imitation of the golden volunteer box used in the 2012 Olympics in London where letters were “posted” about volunteers who had gone beyond the ordinary in their volunteering work. These heroic efforts were publicised and celebrated. Anyone in the school can put a letter in the golden box about something good that someone had done that has made a difference, was inspiring etc. The principal reads the letters and rings the parents/guardians with good news about their child’s behaviour/initiative/deed”

A school is moving away from negative labels and behaviours by focusing on the school as a place of opportunity for all (post-primary school)

- “Staff members are involved in an ongoing and whole school effort to find ways to engage students in school life and to find strategies to increase attendance, retention and to improve attainment. “The school has widened its range of extra-curricular activities. Six or seven past pupils from the area are now teachers in the school. They are good role models for the children. Mixed ability teaching, cooperative learning and peer learning are serving the school well. Friendships develop in the school between high academic achievers and the opposite. “This year two children with SEND in 2<sup>nd</sup> year went to the principal and said: “We need help with our concentration because we realise we are not able to concentrate in maths class”. Self-knowledge, self-awareness and ability to identify needs are essential in order for students to make progress. The numbers attending third level education have increased from 3% in 2000 to more than 60% in 2013. Retention has improved and now stands at 97%. DEIS makes a huge difference because we have breakfast clubs and receive after school food, as well as, support from a range of services including School Completion Programme (SCP), Home Liaison etc. There is no stigma attached to the breakfast clubs or others school services. Teachers never refer to the school or to the area as disadvantaged. Recently, at a third level fair, a lecturer said to students from the school, “You are from a disadvantaged school”, and a student replied, “No, not correct! We are from a school where everyone has opportunities”

#### **Establish good communication systems in schools:**

- “The school uses a secure ABC Box (A Better Community Box) where children can communicate that there is an issue. Children can slip something into it – an issue, a request, a question. For example, children with SEND know that they can simply initial a piece of paper without writing anything more and that the teacher will know that there is an issue and respond privately to them” (primary school)

- The SNAs work at break times and keep an eye on vulnerable students. They find out quickly who the isolated ones are. They make suggestions. For example, they set up a homework club at lunchtime with a particularly vulnerable student managing it. This worked really well. Although the club was set up for him, there are many others who are benefiting from the homework club” (post-primary school)
- “Junior and Senior Infants have after-yard chats and they learn to use this time when they need to. At the beginning, they bring everything to it. However, their attitudes change and they learn to speak up when they need to work something out. Older children are set-up with email accounts. They email homework and they also use e-mail to talk about incidents or to flag an issue with staff” (primary school)

### **Involving parents/guardians in anti-bullying and positive behaviour practices**

Teachers spoke about how important it is to work with the parents/guardians and how, at times, it can be difficult to engage the parents/guardians. Sometimes, the attendance of parents/guardians at events organised for them is low. Issues arising in school can often have their roots in events at home. Thus, it is important to be aware of what is happening at home and to talk to parents/guardians as soon as possible.

- “We work with parents/guardians to help them around the behaviours of their children and their own behaviours, for example, to be inclusive of new parents/guardians. Parents/guardians can form cliques and groups and exclude parents/guardians. Parents/guardians need education. Sometimes they give in to children on everything”
- “Parents/guardians can get hung up on bullying, for example, “my child wasn’t invited to a party and is being bullied”. We investigated such an incident and found that the family invited only four children from the class, because they were short of money. Sometimes you have to take bullying out of the equation, stay calm, encourage the parents/guardians to talk, encourage positivity and educate them”
- “Parents/guardians have to be encouraged to attend meetings including those around bullying/cyber-bullying. We had a session for parents/guardians of children in 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class and only ten parents/guardians turned up. The parents/guardians that turn up are often ones whose child or sibling may have had experience of bullying or bad behaviour. We stress to parents/guardians that when there is bullying all the children are affected”

In a girl’s post-primary school (DEIS), mother and daughter days were organised for first years to improve relationships at home:

- “The idea is to promote positive parent-child experiences, break moulds and raise the self-esteem of the parent as well as the child. We access a range of supports, particularly when parental support is lacking. In addition to resource teachers, SNAs, guidance counsellor, art therapist etc in the school, we have input from Home School Liaison, NBSS, TUSLA and School Completion Programmes, Parents/guardians Plus Programme run by HSE (although only 3 parents/guardians took this up) Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) targeted and individualised programmes”
- “Many times when problems arise, there is something going on at home, probably this is true 90% of the time. It can be separation, depression, attempted suicide. The child can be repeating a pattern, learned at home, for example, clinging on to others. Sometimes a parent or both parents/guardians are relying on a child for support. This is too much for them and they start acting out in school. We ask parents/guardians to let us know if there is something happening at home that is affecting the child. When a child becomes negative, we discuss it with the parents/guardians immediately. The principal will meet with parents/guardians at weekends if necessary. There is a need for more community parenting support”
- “When there is an issue with a child with SEND, we work with and teach the parents/guardians as well as the child. Parents/guardians need to expect and to demand the same behaviour from the child with SEND as from a child without SEND. Teach the parents/guardians how to set up a schedule. It may be necessary to have a psychologist work with the parents/guardians. We have children who can be smearing at home but there is no issue in school. A child can have sleep and other problems until parents/guardians learn how to work with the child”
- “Behavioural issues can arise when parental support is lacking. It can be hard to get to school if a 12 year old has to get himself/herself up, make all the decisions etc with problems all around at home. The same names are coming up in primary and in post-primary school. There are situations that are difficult and sometimes children need to be taken into care. Home liaison in primary and post-primary school is important. Many parents/guardians in this area are very young. They want a life without too much responsibility and have not been prepared to support their children. Some might be in Spain when their children are doing exams. Sometimes children are out very late with their parents/guardians at weekends. The parents/guardians can be friends with their children but may not be able to support them with structures and boundaries. Sometimes the children are supporting their parents/guardians. All these factors affect their behaviour in school and schools and teachers need to be aware of these factors and help the situation when they can”

- “It can be hard to get across to parents/guardians what is and is not bullying. Being pushed over once off is not bullying. Parents/guardians can tell the child to hit back. The school focuses on the behaviour. Sometimes, we explain to the children that when their parents/guardians were growing up there were different approaches and now schools take another approach. In effect we educate the children to educate their parents/guardians”
- “In our school we are planning to set up a parent sharing skills group”

### **3.3. Quotes on Leadership**

Principals, deputy principals, other staff and parents/guardians spoke about the importance of leadership. Some principals described inheriting a legacy of innovative and instructional leadership, which they fought to maintain. Others described how strategic leadership from a new principal transformed the school.

- “When the Principal and Deputy Principal actively support the anti-bullying programmes this gives leadership and maintains the culture. The principal and deputy principal lead the way for staff and children to work at creating a culture that is actively open, kind, respectful, happy and caring for all. There has to be a deliberate focus on creating a happy school for everyone but not a holiday school” (primary school)
- “Leadership that believes in teamwork is required. There is no such thing as hierarchical teamwork. A whole variety of people serves the children’s varied needs. No one has a monopoly on value. Value is determined by what a child needs. There should not be any discipline that stands on its professional boundaries. The bus driver, the secretary, the cook, the caretaker, the gardener, the SNA, the class teacher, the principal might be the most important person for a child at a particular moment” (special school)
- “Pay attention to the quality of school leadership as it affects everything that happens in the school and impacts on outcomes for staff and children. Innovative and open leadership is effective as it takes the pro-active and positive approach of, “let us find a solution” ” (special school)
- “Ensure that staff, including management staff, moves on from where they are at, that they always learn on the job and lifting their game, improving their leadership skills, pairing up with other schools in order to learn, engaging in projects with the university etc. If you are not developing, you are going backwards. Relevant CPD is essential” (Post-primary school)
- “The characteristics of a principal with leadership skills include the following:
  - Has a vision for children, staff and school including a vision of relationships and social life in the school - a vision of a school where staff and students

are happy and challenged to constantly develop, where there is trust and everyone feels safe and secure

- Gives importance to social-emotional wellbeing and learning as well as academic learning among both staff and students
- Outlines what needs to be changed and what the priorities are. Can make a plan, communicate it, look for support for it and implement it
- A pro-active approach that addresses the needs and goals of all children including children with SEND
- Knows stakeholders and knows how to motivate
- Excellent communication skills with staff, parents/guardians and children
- Establishes a school communication system that is clear and works
- Teamwork skills and good listening skills
- Has an open door policy and is open to staff and their ideas - seeks out the opinions of others and takes them on board or explains why opinions weren't taken on board
- Good humour and a willingness to admit mistakes and learn; has no problem saying "I got that wrong and I'll learn from it"
- Acknowledges and addresses staff issues promptly
- Promotes staff development and learns and engenders learning; is supportive of in-house training and encourages teachers to undertake relevant studies including special education studies
- Empowers teachers to be leaders and creates leaders within the school
- Stays positive (negativity spreads like a cancer)
- Is honest and not defensive and does not patch over
- Is not office-bound
- Gives clear and consistent leadership"

### **3.4. Quotes on resilience and a resilience programme**

Some staff spoke about the need to understand the underlying cause of particular behaviours:

- "Children with SEND can have very poor self-esteem and be unhappy in school. This can arise when they do not fit in and have not been included and/or their needs have not been met. In these situations, they are increasingly isolated. These scenarios usually precede a child being moved from a school. Thus, sometimes, the first thing that is required in a new school is for the staff to build up the self-esteem of the child in different ways. Soon the behaviour issues stop because the child is happy. Low self-esteem in children with SEND can be associated with a higher incidence of being bullied

and also of them bullying others and having inappropriate behaviours” (special school)

- “It is important to have mechanisms to support crises involving children with SEND in mainstream schools and to put in place a formal system of review of placement” (special school)

The following example of a resilience and self-esteem programme, developed over the last three years, is from a post primary school. The school is happy with the programme and consider that it has been effective. This is how they described the programme and its development:

- “The building resilience programme has been running for 3 years and 20% of the children attending it have SEND. It is a six-week programme centred on a particular peer group. The programme is for anyone who needs it. When we announce that we are going to run a programme at assembly for a particular year children can express their interest. The last time a programme was announced, 23 children identified themselves as wanting it. The programme builds awareness, confidence, coping self-plan, knowledge of strengths and thinking more positively”
- “At the beginning we ran resilience programmes for children with ASD but now we run the programme for children with and without ASD. It makes sense that pupils with ASD develop social skills alongside their peers. Children with Asperger’s and ASD can give others good advice. You can see they have already developed strategies and it is good for them to see that others have similar dilemmas. It helps them to manage their feelings further. The programme is excellent. Everyone learns. It shows commonalities among everyone”
- “Year heads and the guidance counsellor can decide to run a programme whenever they consider it necessary. Groups can form in a class that have a negative influence and there is a need to break the negative dynamic. This year there was a group in 4<sup>th</sup> year with bullying behaviours. The year head invited the group to the programme. They were receptive to it and we decided to run the programme based on them wanting to do it. In this programme, they were able to explore thoughts, feelings and behaviour. It was very helpful and behaviours changed”
- “It is a modified **FRIENDS** programme.<sup>4</sup> We changed the programme to focus on practical activities and to make it less wordy. It involves creating a safe space. There are ice-breaker activities. Children are taught to chat and to read social cues. There is an evaluation at the beginning and the end of the

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<sup>4</sup> See page 190, Appendix 6, for information on the FRIENDS programme

programme. At the beginning, students are asked: Why did you come? We started the programme with help from a psychologist. This was a good idea as there is a learning process involved. It is tricky to do this with younger children, for example, students in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Six periods of resource time are allocated to this and pupils are pulled out of class for 4 doubles. It is worth it. Teachers see the difference and the feedback from year heads is positive. However, it can take some time to see the impact of the programme”

### **Other approaches/plans to resilience and self-esteem (post-primary schools)**

- “This school has tried out the **Breathe Programme** which has a focus on well being and self-awareness with an element of resilience in it. There was a night with the parents/guardians and it was a good experience. ‘Breathe’ is a joint partnership between the Cork Education and Training Board and The Gaiety School of Acting. It is a response to the increasing suicide trend and is a programme to promote positive mental health and improving links between teachers, parents/guardians and teenagers. It sees the school community as an extension of the family unit and the aim is to help the family be healthy”
- “We had community nurses run a programme for transition year students on mental health and well being”

### **3.5. Quotes on inclusive processes including transitioning planning**

#### **A base mainstream class (primary school)**

- “All children go to their base mainstream class at 9am. Between 9am and 9.20am staff welcome each child to school, they say a prayer and there is conversation. The system of the base class should be taken into post-primary schools. There should be integration for at least two classes. Here, children go to mainstream class for art, drama, history, PE and some for geography too. SNAs accompany those with pouches (medications). Younger pupils with SEND are buddied. The buddy will come to collect for music, art, PE etc. Older pupils go from mainstream class to special class and back on their own. Teachers learn to integrate on the job. They have had to get training themselves. The school gets training for the SNAs as the school believes that they need on-going training as well as on the job training. Some pupils have significant medical issues and SNAs have taken on the responsibility of giving emergency medicine.”

#### **Training SNAs (special school)**

Staff pointed out that SNAs can come from caring backgrounds and/or “it can also be a personality or personal thing”.

- “Some SNAs have to be stopped “caring” and doing everything for the children! They have to be taught how to support children to be independent. In a particular special school, the SNAs are responsible for going to the principal and saying they are not needed in a particular situation so that they can be redeployed elsewhere. The content of training courses for SNAs needs a practical formal element: how to release the child, how to support the child and how to empower the child. SNAs have to be taught to count to 20 while waiting for a response from a child! Some children with SEND are slower to grasp, to react and to do. They have to hear it, process it, think of response, and respond. It takes them longer! If one keeps talking, they get completely lost”

### **Classroom methodologies**

#### **Lollipop sticks and traffic light cups (post-primary school)**

- “Lollipop sticks and traffic light cups are used in the following way. Instead of children putting their hands up to ask questions, a random method of choosing is used. Lollipop sticks with the children’s names written on them. The teacher picks out a lollipop stick when he/she wants to ask a question. This random selection system keeps everyone engaged. Sometimes 2 sticks are taken out at a time”
- “The ‘traffic light’ cups are painted red, amber and green. Children put the appropriate cup on their desk to inform the teacher whether they understand what they have been taught (green), whether they are uncertain (amber), or whether they have not a clue (red)”

#### **Assessment for Learning (AfL)**

- “There are many children with SEND in this post-primary school. There are no special classes; no streaming; and children are not taken out of class. The school’s mixed ability policy is strong and the approach is mixed ability teaching for all. The school is a recognised Assessment for Learning (AfL) School. AfL is child centred and has a positive effect on children. The objective of AfL is to enhance learning and children are the primary learners! The underpinning understanding is that every child can improve, that assessment can measure progress and that feedback should be based on assessment. AfL focuses on child assessment including peer and self assessment, quality questioning, learning objectives, sharing learning, active participation and feedback. Assessment is used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies and by children to adjust their learning strategies. AfL is mixed ability teaching. Many classrooms are set up for group work including the language classes. All children take higher level in 7 out of 11 Junior Cert subjects. Some of the teachers in the school have worked abroad and some have had experience with AfL working in New Zealand, where all school

teaching is AfL. Our school is paired up with other similar schools through a university” (post-primary school)

### **Using the curriculum to tackle bullying (special school)**

- “For children with learning difficulties or ASD, the teachers break down the SPHE curriculum and Stay Safe programmes to focus on essential skills. They prioritise and practice the basics. Stay Safe contains appropriate material that is important. Teachers keep the sheets used with children with SEND and build on them over 5 to 6 years. The children go deeper all the time, learning more and adding on. Teachers decide on a Stay Safe Teaching and Working Strategy and put it on the agenda. With children who take FETAC courses there is a personal safety component in Level 1 and Level 2 FETAC in the Senior Cycle” (Note: FETAC has been replaced by QQI (Quality Qualifications Ireland))<sup>5</sup>

### **Plan transitioning for children with SEND**

Many schools and teachers spoke about the importance of transition programmes for all children and they considered that they were particularly important for children with SEND.

#### **Post-primary school 1:**

- “We do a lot of work before the students come. It is labour intensive but it pays off. We go to primary schools and meet the parents/guardians and the child. We find out what the social interests of the child are. Based on this information we channel children into areas of interest to them. This is important as often they shine in specialised areas, for example, drama, coding, robotics. It is important to encourage children with SEND to sign up for particular clubs even if this takes time in some instances. The SEND Department plans and explains the curriculum to the child and the family. There is a coordination team where three staff members explore resource needs and check with resource teachers if they have the supports that the child needs. Once the child comes to school, the SNAs are very important. As our focus is to intercept issues at early and subtle stages and nip them in the bud, the SNAs give feedback and this is fed back all the time to the coordination team etc. There is close collaboration between the SPHE coordinator and the ASD team. We have never used “a Velcro model” where one SNA is assigned to a particular child.

#### **Post-primary School 2:**

- The transition process from primary to post-primary school influences the academic future of the student as well as their social development. We have

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Agencies/Quality-and-Qualifications-Ireland-QQI-.html>

developed and implemented an Intensive “Mol an Óige” Induction Programme for 1st Years. The programme gives first years the skills and supports to develop a sense of belonging. This gives them security and happiness. If a child does not feel secure and happy, this will hinder their learning. The programme is delivered with input from school management, teachers, National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) and School Completion Programme (SCP) staff. It starts with children before they come to post-primary school. The programme continues throughout the year and into 2nd and 3rd year. The programme begins in April/May each year with a Transfer programme in partnership with the local Youth Service. Then the new students have a two-day orientation within the school before the start of the school year. This allows them time to become acquainted with the layout of the school and addresses one of the major fears of “getting lost”, prior to the return of the other students. Then, for the first two weeks of school, students engage in creative, structured and fun classes and workshops. These activities help them become familiar with the school.

- “Objectives of the programme include:
  - To help students develop a sense of belonging within the school
  - To ensure that students are organised and “ready to learn” and excited about it”

A teacher had quotes from the students:

- “I learned a lot from **Mol an Óige**. Without it, I would be late for class. I would get lost and I would not know the teachers. It has helped me settle into the school. The staff and other students are kind and you feel welcome.” (A student from a local NS)
- “I have learned to include people, make friends and join in things that are going.” (Another student, from a different NS)

### School 3

- “**Tús Maith** is a positive start programme for Sixth Class students transitioning from primary school to post-primary school. We have established the programme with two feeder primary schools and our plan is to expand this programme to two other primary schools in the area. We are going to have the first year students evaluate the programme this year. We send profile forms to primary schools with sample timetables and journals to facilitate transition planning. In February, we administer a cognitive ability test and English as an Additional Language (EAL) test to sixth class students. We meet with primary schools to plan general and specific support of students with SEND. Post-primary school staff meets with parents/guardians of pupils with SEND and apply for resources and supports. We invite students with SEND to set up individual visits to the school. We select mentors from first

year from those who apply to be mentors the following year. These mentors start a series of workshops for Sixth Class students in the feeder primary schools. Communication regarding curricular content between primary school teachers and first year teachers begins. The student profile forms are returned to the school. Subject options are finalised and CAT scores are reviewed to ensure that students make choices that suit their learning needs. In May, the students are invited in their new class groups to Welcome Workshops to meet their new tutors and classmates while their parents/guardians attend an information meeting. Student mentors run the workshops with the new students. Teachers from the post-primary school visit fifth and sixth classes in primary schools, and vice versa, and observe how students learn.

### **3.6. Quotes on children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Aspergers**

In several post primary and primary schools, staff thought that children with ASD or Aspergers were among the children with SEND most likely to be bullied:

- “Children more at risk of bullying are not children with severe disabilities or those with obvious needs. For example, a child with ASD who is doing ok academically but not socially is at high risk”
- “Pupils with ASD and Aspergers can come across as eccentric. Their disabilities are subtle and not easily detected. They may not be going to any special classes so there are no obvious markers that they are having, perhaps very considerable, difficulties. They can receive negative attention when they lose their temper, leave a game or activity, inadvertently disrupting it etc. The other pupils may not understand such a pupil and they may simply regard the pupil as a spoilsport or someone to be “slagged off” about their obsessions etc. These pupils can be on their own at breaks”
- “There are no permanent special classes in the school. With regards pupils with disabilities and special education needs and bullying, there have not been any more incidents with students with SEND apart from students with Aspergers. In the case of these students, there may be no diagnosis and the student may simply appear annoying and anti-social etc. Other students can be upset by their behaviour”
- “It can be a challenge for children with Aspergers and ASD to be accepted in mainstream school life. They do want to be included but they have to find the way that suits them and others. They do not get emotional but they do need human interaction. They are on the fringe of groups. They need to drawn into the group and the group needs to allow them to leave. Just as children need to cope with rough players on sports teams, children need to cope with players with Aspergers. Everyone needs to learn to cope – children with and

without Aspergers. Teachers need to work to keep everything on an even keel. They also need to help children with Aspergers to develop support networks. The school can encourage their peers to support them in post-primary school. The school can find out what post-primary school the child is going to go to, and then find out who else is going to go to that post-primary school and work at developing a social network with those children”

- “A child with Aspergers was very angry and upset with everyone. He was on his own. His name came up 38 times in a class survey on bullying. His parents/guardians did not accept that he had any problems. He was angry and upset with everything and everyone. The anti-bullying team, the year head, the school council and the year prefects came together and came up with their own solutions around how to include, to support and to befriend this pupil. The parents/guardians agreed. This has worked well and the student is blossoming. Such action is imperative. We remember cases in the past where students left the school after having been isolated all the time”
- “The school organised two presentations to children in 6<sup>th</sup> class where there was a pupil with Aspergers not getting on in the class. The results were excellent. Education and information are more important in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class than fear over labelling. It is acknowledging reality. Staff got permission from the parents/guardians for this. The resource teacher gave the presentations. Prior to the presentations there were 4 to 8 hours of meetings with parents/guardians, the principal, the vice principal, the SNAS, the mainstream teachers, the classroom assistants and with the 2 resource teachers in the school. The first presentation/class was a general awareness raising presentation about all kinds of learning difficulties including social difficulties. It was about raising awareness, helping children admire what a child is achieving, to understand that they are overcoming learning and social difficulties. It also addressed misunderstandings that exist around children with Aspergers. This is important because children do not know that some things are beyond the capacity of a particular student and are unaware of the challenges the student is facing. The second presentation was about Aspergers and the reason for “odd behaviours”. There was a focus on maturity: Be aware! Be understanding! It is not their fault! Forgive! Do not be patronising! Do your best to help out! Be mature! Keep them included when you can! Do not get upset if they walk away! The school offered to give a presentation to the post-primary school but the post-primary school would not take it on. The parents/guardians could have pushed it and it could have made a difference. We understand that the student is not doing well”
- “We spoke with parents/guardians and got verbal agreement about talking to class-mates. We discussed what they were going to talk about and whether the pupil in question should be there or not”

- “Where younger students are teasing a student with Aspergers we have asked classmates to accompany him in the corridor as a friend etc, perhaps a well built student, and that puts an end to the name calling by younger students”
- “A child with ASD is allowed to come in late as he gets very anxious with the crowds of children arriving, the noise etc. The reason why he is allowed to do this is explained to the other students in a matter-of-fact manner”
- “It can be challenging to teach appropriate behaviour to a child with Asperger’s. One cannot use disability to excuse bad behaviour. Everyone needs to distinguish bad behaviour versus disability. Behaviour can always be modified. A resource teacher works one-on-one with a child with Asperger’s or with a few classmates teaches. The teachers teaches appropriate behaviour and coping strategies using social stories and games”

## **4. Discussions with statutory stakeholders**

### **4.1. Main points from the interviews and roundtable**

The NDA conducted bilateral interviews with eight individuals from statutory agencies and organised a roundtable attended by nine statutory stakeholders in 2013. Those participating included representatives from the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Statutory agencies represented included the Equality Authority, the National Behavioural Support Unit, the National Educational Psychological Service, the National Council for Special Education and Social, Personal and Health Education.

Those interviewed considered that many of the issues around bullying are the same whether or not a child has SEND and that children with SEND do experience all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying.

All the issues raised in this section come from individuals from statutory agencies.

#### **Points made in the 1-to-1 interview sessions:**

Schools should pay particular attention to the bullying of children with SEND because children with SEND are more likely to be bullied. Children with SEND are more likely to be targets of bullying because:

- They may be less likely to have friends particularly children with communication issues
- They may be more vulnerable if their disabilities contribute to them not understanding “social cues”
- They may be isolated or lonely
- The manner in which they are supported in schools may contribute to excluding them
- It was pointed out that there is variation in the level of bullying across classes /teachers within schools

Whole school approaches have a greater impact on reducing bullying and, in particular, the bullying of children with SEND. Whole school approaches include:

- Putting appropriate policy and structures in place
- Planning and supporting transition processes
- Creating a sense of connectedness and belonging in the school
- Continuous professional development for **all** staff to ensure that they have an understanding of SEND

Specific anti-bullying interventions related to SEND include:

- Focus on SEND and bullying as part of Social, Personal and Health Education and Civic, Social and Political Education in schools
- Engage with parents/guardians of children with SEND
- Teach resilience skills
- Work on child's communication skills
- Adopt a coaching approach to teaching
- Operate safe places / safe zones in schools
- Ensure that children with SEND don't drop out of school activities / extra-curricular activities

**Points from discussion at the roundtable included:**

**Adapting policies and procedures and ensuring follow through**

Some schools have well developed policies around bullying embedded in whole-school policies and approaches. However, these generic policies do not address the needs of children with SEND. In Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for principals and teachers, how children with SEND are to be supported within schools policies, including the anti-bullying policy needs to be considered.

Other schools have good policy and practice in terms of supporting children with SEND but may not see tackling bullying as a responsibility of the SEND team. If schools are to operate a whole-school approach to bullying and if teachers and resource teachers are going to engage with children with SEND and their parents/guardians this will take time and will have implications for how resource hours are used.

In addition to policy and practice in supporting children with special educational needs, many schools have behaviour management plans and mental health guidelines. Therefore, there is not a need for a separate SEND anti-bullying policy, but there is a need to ensure that all the policies in place are inclusive of children with SEND. Tackling SEND bullying is probably best be done by tailoring mainstream policies through coordination of support and embedding specific strands to address the needs of children with SEND, such as:

- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Resilience skills

It is also important that the various policies are joined-up and coherent with one another and that the various school services work together.

Suggested elements of an approach that would deal with bullying of children with SEND included:

- Ethos - addressing inclusion in the school's ethos
- Leadership –within a school this can have a significant impact both bullying and on the inclusion of children with SEND
- Attitude – dealing with negative attitudes towards SEND among staff and children
- Whole school approach to inclusion – taking a whole school approach to the full inclusion of children with disability / SEN in all aspects of school life
- Differentiation of bullying policy – schools bullying policy and procedures should note that children SEND are more likely to be bullied and suggest ways the school will address this
- Teachers – being skilled and confident at differentiating the curriculum so that children have the opportunity to learn with their peers
- Communication, conflict resolution and resilience skills – skills to deal with conflict and cope within the school environment should be part of children Individual Education Plan and resources should be deployed to support this as appropriate
- Class room management – teachers and principals deal with unacceptable behaviour including where their perpetrators have a disability which may contribute to their behaviour
- Parents/guardians - Teachers and principals need the skills and language to engage with parents/guardians of children with SEND
- Teacher training – teachers need more training around SEND and more generally around support the social and emotional development of children

It was noted that elements of some of the above are present in some schools but there is a need to integrate these different elements within schools. It was suggested that if good practice in relation to the above was captured and disseminated and elements of the above were implemented in schools that it may provide a model for dealing bullying of children with SEND. Such a model should be developed, piloted and evaluated. It was suggested that capturing Irish practice examples would be most beneficial. Also, if there was a way of including the voices of children with disabilities in some case studies that would be interesting.

Leadership development among children can play a role in ensuring that children with SEND are not isolated or bullied in schools through buddy-type schemes. These can be based on support for a child with SEND from one peer for a whole year or where someone is partnered with different people for different activities.

In developing these schemes, thought should be given to how natural supports for the child with SEND can best be developed and maintained.

While many schools have good policy and procedures around bullying, the follow through on policies can be weak.<sup>6</sup> School management is responsible for the follow through on anti-bullying as per the 1993 Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools.<sup>7</sup> Also, schools may need support to implement the guidelines. Training to support this for parents/guardians, boards of management and teachers is being introduced. It was suggested that the Schools Inspectorate might usefully have a greater role in examining the follow through in relation to bullying policies and procedures and whether they have been adapted for children with SEND.

## **4.2. Issues in relation to special classes**

Some schools have special classes catering for children with a range of SEND. Unfortunately, in some of these schools there can be an acceptance of behaviour in these classes, which would not be acceptable in mainstream classes. In some cases this tolerated “poor behaviour” can in fact be the bullying of other children within the special class. There seems to be very little work being done in relation to peer dynamics in special classes. Principals of schools with special classes need to challenge the view that certain special classes will inevitably have poor behaviour.

Where schools have special classes, there is a need for schools to take responsibility for addressing behaviour in those classes to ensure that children are not bullied. Other children learn negative lessons around their power to dominate classes and bully peers when this is not addressed. Where children with SEND have a disability which contributes to their behaviour in class, where this behaviour manifests itself as bullying it needs to be named and addressed.

In relation to special classes, but also more generally, there is a need to examine more closely how children with SEND can become isolated in mainstream schools. When the barriers for children with SEND to full participation in school life are identified they must then be addressed. Some suggestions for reducing the

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<sup>6</sup> The roundtable was held before the publication of the Department of Education and Skills 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, [education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [education.ie/en/Parents/guardians/Information/Complaints-Bullying-Child-Protection-Discrimination/Guidelines-on-countering-bullying-behaviour-in-primary-and-post-primary-schools.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Parents/guardians/Information/Complaints-Bullying-Child-Protection-Discrimination/Guidelines-on-countering-bullying-behaviour-in-primary-and-post-primary-schools.pdf)

isolation from mainstream school life for children in special classes was to have some reverse inclusion classes or alternatively only group children into a special class for certain core subjects.

### **4.3. Differentiating training/policies**

While training for teachers for the Social, Personal and Health Education programme does mention that children with SEND are more likely to be bullied it doesn't specifically address how to deal with SEND bullying.

Teachers discuss SEND bullying raise during Social, Personal and Health Education programme training. Issues raised include, for example, how best to tackle:

- The isolation of some children with SEND in schools
- The poor language and communication skills and low-self esteem making some children with SEND which make them more vulnerable to bullying
- The lack of “cognitive machinery” to deal with conflict that some children with SEND suffer from

Training around anti-bullying approaches can be differentiated to tackle these issues.

Some teachers do not see belonging and connectedness of children or indeed the wider issue of children's social and emotional needs as part of their role as a teacher. It is unsurprising, therefore, that they do not see the isolation of children with SEND as a matter for them as teachers.

Teachers need to develop “soft” counselling skills. Some teachers are good at this but training in this area is required. It is national policy that teachers have responsibility for the social, emotional and academic development of the children they teach. There is a need for continuing professional development of teachers around addressing the social and emotional needs of children as well as their academic needs. However, such training programmes need to be evidence based. It was suggested that social and emotional development needed more attention in both initial teacher training as well as in continuing professional development. It was also suggested that there is a need for specific training for principals on their responsibilities for the social and emotional development of their children.

In addition to the above, there needs to be training for all school staff around disability in general and specific training for teachers around developing the language / communication skills and around social and emotional needs of children with SEND.

There is also a need for training to ensure that all teachers are comfortable in discussing children with SEND with parents/guardians. Many teachers say that because their knowledge is limited they fear that in engaging with parents/guardians they will say the wrong thing.

Teachers also need training and ongoing support around dealing with bullying and dealing with challenging / threatening behaviour. Again, it was emphasised that schools have resource hours which could be deployed to work with children on these issues but typically schools don't use resource hours for this purpose. In addition to schools' SEND teams, guidance councillors and Social, Personal and Health Education teachers need to be involved in schools' anti-bullying work for children with SEND.

There was a consensus that anti-bullying policy and practices needed to be differentiated for children with SEND. A question arose as to how this differentiation should be achieved. In response, it was suggested that there are examples of good practice in Ireland. Some schools have good whole-school approaches to anti-bullying, some schools are doing really well in terms of gathering information on children with SEND, and some schools are supporting children with SEND to fully participate in school life well. While all of this might not be happening in any one school, pulling those threads together is key to what an anti-bullying approach, differentiated for children with SEND, would involve.

Some schools have good structures developed to support children with SEND. For example, a team consisting of the year head, guidance councillor and resource teacher meet weekly to discuss issues for all children with SEND in a particular year and assign follow up actions.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) are producing guidance on Care Team approaches which look at the inter-professional working around the care needs of a child.

#### **4.4. IEPs and school-level data in tackling bullying of children with SEND**

The absence of a statutory Individualised Education Plan is unfortunate but Individualised Education Plans should be central to working with children with SEND around bullying. Schools should be working with their local Special Education Needs Co-ordinator, with the National Educational Psychological Service and the National Educational Welfare Board as appropriate to ensure that Individualised Education Plans deal with bullying.

The issue of transitions for children with SEND was raised.<sup>8</sup> Teachers / schools typically get some information on children with SEND entering their school / class. However, this is often not helpful in understanding the child's learning needs or his and/or her social and emotional needs.

It was noted that many schools do not have any basic data on the numbers of children with SEND that drop out, or the numbers of children with SEND who don't participate in any extra-curricular activities. Therefore, schools lack the basic information to address whether children with SEND feel a connectedness with the school community or not.

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<sup>8</sup>There is now a new circular on transitioning. [http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045\\_2014.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045_2014.pdf) From 2014/15, schools will be required to use the Education Passport materials. These include the standard 6<sup>th</sup> Class Report Card Template for completion by schools, the My Profile sheet for completion by pupils in primary schools before being shared with their parents/guardians/guardians and The My Child's Profile sheet for completion by parents/guardians/guardians. This should be sent with the My Profile sheet to parents/guardians/guardians by the end of the second week of June. Parents/guardians may complete the My Child's Profile should they wish to do so. The NCCA has developed materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools and these materials are presented under the title of Education Passport and are available at [ncca.ie/transfer](http://ncca.ie/transfer)

## **5. Literature Review Part I: Understanding bullying and children with SEND**

### **5.1. The experiences of children with SEND in Ireland**

Research on bullying and inclusion of children with SEND in Ireland<sup>9</sup> sought out children's perspectives.<sup>10</sup> Recommendations based on these perspectives included:

- Establish formal and informal approaches to access, listen to and give due weight to the voice of children in the life of the school
- Establish clear and effective anti-bullying policies in all schools and establish related educational programmes on relations in school based on a respect for all forms of diversity
- Look for child feedback as part of monitoring the effectiveness of policies and develop flexible and creative ways to facilitate the participation of all children in the development of policy and practice that impact on their lives at all levels of the school system<sup>11</sup>

In this empirical research in 3 primary and 3 post-primary schools, the most common theme to emerge when children were asked “what makes them feel included in school” was “playing games together” (63 references) and the social aspect of play, before school, after school and at break times. When children were asked “how they might make each other feel included”, responses referred to doing things together (54 references) such as “playing together” or “working together” and “not leaving people out.” The high status given to “playing games together” raises the question of how to include children who have difficulties or a lack of interest in playing games and in social interaction. Children considered that having friends for playing, talking, and listening was also important for inclusion. One theme that occurred across the schools (15 references) was the

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<sup>9</sup> Page xviii Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O' Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills. [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Six case studies were completed in three primary and three post-primary schools. Data included 312 questionnaires, 72 child interviews and 10 child day-long observations, documents and child drawings

<sup>11</sup> Page xviii Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O' Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills. [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

need for the principal to communicate with the students and listen to their voices. Children considered that a positive school environment also made them feel included. When children were asked how teachers could help to make children feel included, older primary students were specific in their responses and suggested that teachers could help by “making sure that every child understands their work” and “constantly encouraging students and not picking the same student for every question.” Post-primary students suggested that teachers could “bring more variation into class,” “do more group work or class activities that everyone gets to know people.” The merits of team-teaching were also recognised.<sup>12</sup>

In Northern Ireland, a survey was conducted on 936 children with SEND from 145 primary and 36 post primary schools.<sup>13</sup> The findings were as follows:

- The incidence of bullying was related to the SEND classification of children and was associated with children who had social, emotional and behavioural problems. This difference was apparent at KS2, KS3 and KS4<sup>14</sup>
- Children who had been bullied at the three levels of KS 2, 3 and 4 reported a range of perceptions as to why bullying had happened to them and 2 reasons were common across the three age groups: a perception that they were not liked or were “different” or that the bullying was related to their disability
- Children who had experienced bullying at primary KS2 level were more likely to report that they were unhappy at school and less likely to spend time with their classmates at break or lunchtime. These differences were not so apparent at KS3 and KS4 level. Younger KS2 children (5% of them) internalised the reasons for bullying, blaming themselves. This reaction was not apparent in older groups
- The overall incidence of bullying decreased at each stage of the school experience; 58% of KS2 children (8-11 years) reported that they had

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<sup>12</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O'Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills. [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Education and Library Boards, Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (2010) It's good to listen: Experiences of children with special educational needs. [staffcom.org.uk/pdfs/ItsGoodtoListen.pdf](http://staffcom.org.uk/pdfs/ItsGoodtoListen.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> In Northern Ireland KS2 stands for Key Stage 2 and is applied to children aged 8-11 years in years 5, 6 and 7. KS3, Key Stage 3 applies to children in the first three years of secondary education, years 8, 9 and 10 when children are aged 11-14 years and KS4 refers to years 11 and 12 when children are aged between 14 and 16 years.

experienced bullying behaviour compared to 55% of KS3 children (11-14 years) and 45% of KS4 children (14-16 years)<sup>15</sup>

- It is of note that a high proportion of the children at the three levels had a positive attitude to school with 74% to 80% saying they were very happy or quite happy at school. High percentages of children at the three levels (KS 2, 3, 4) reported that they spent time with their classmates at break and lunchtime (a possible indicator of inclusion)

When they were asked what they would change about school:

- At KS2 level, 18 children spoke about bullying as a major issue. They would like to see particular children leave the school and to have less fighting in school. One child would like that bullies be put in detention rather than being told off
- At KS3 level bullying was a major issue for 11 children while 12 children referred to the behaviour of their fellow children, for example, “no fighting”, “to make everyone friendly and show some respect to me and to the teachers”
- At KS 4 level no one mentioned bullying
- Four children spoke about wanting to make more friends, for example: “Have someone to hang around with instead of my sister”
- Three children wanted to change their own behaviour: “How I react to things that happen” and “The way I act in school”

A report from the Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO) in Ireland<sup>16</sup> was based on consultation with 300 children and young adults on school bullying.<sup>17</sup> The consultation was undertaken because more than 40% of complaints annually to the OCO by parents/guardians, children and professionals relate to education and bullying. The report concluded that responsibility for tackling bullying needs to be shared among children, parents/guardians and carers and professionals working across the education system, as well as, by society more generally.<sup>18</sup> This

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<sup>15</sup> Education and Library Boards, Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (2010) It’s good to listen: Experiences of children with special educational needs. [staffcom.org.uk/pdfs/ItsGoodtoListen.pdf](http://staffcom.org.uk/pdfs/ItsGoodtoListen.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> The OCO has a statutory obligation to consult with children on issues that are of concern to them and issues related to their rights and welfare.

<sup>17</sup> The Ombudsman for Children’s Office (2012) Dealing with Bullying in Schools: a consultation with children & young people. [oco.ie/assets/files/OCO-Bullying-Report-2012.pdf](http://oco.ie/assets/files/OCO-Bullying-Report-2012.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

report was used to inform the **Action Plan on Bullying** produced by the Department of Education and Skills.

## 5.2. Children with SEND and school bullying

The majority of studies on bullying of children with SEND show an increase in their victimisation (being bullied) when compared to peers without SEND.<sup>19</sup>

In Ireland, the HBSC surveys<sup>20</sup> of both 2006 and 2010, showed that 24% of children aged between 9 and 18 years reported having been bullied and more children with SEND reported being bullied. Similarly, in the other European countries participating in the HBSC surveys, more children with SEND reported being bullied.<sup>21</sup>

In England, data from the **Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)**, which began in 2004, showed that bullying was commoner among

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Rose, CA., Espelage, DL., Monda, ALE. (2009) 'Bullying and victimisation rates among children in general and special education: a comparative analysis', *Educational Psychology*, 29 (7), 761-776

2) McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Peppin Vaughan, R. (2010) Literature review: responding to bullying among children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. [anti-bullyingalliance.org/media/13555/SEND\\_bullying\\_Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org/media/13555/SEND_bullying_Literature_Review.pdf)

3) Cummings, JG., Pepler, DJ., Mishna, F., Craig, WM. (2006). Bullying and victimisation among children with exceptionalities. *Exceptionality Education Canada*, 16, 193-222

4) Twyman, KA., Saylor, CF., Saia, D., Macias, MM., Taylor, LA., Spratt, E. (2010). Bullying and ostracism experiences in children with special health care needs. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 31, 1-8

5) Van Cleave, J., Davis, MM. (2006). Bullying and peer victimisation among children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics*, 118, e1212-e1219 as cited by Campbell, W., Missiuna, C (2011) *Bullying Risk in Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature* [www.canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/resources/bullying\\_risk\\_children\\_disabilities\\_references](http://www.canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/resources/bullying_risk_children_disabilities_references)

<sup>20</sup> Health Behaviour in School Children (HBSC) is a cross national research study in collaboration with WHO Europe which started in 1982 and is conducted every 4 years. The 2006 Ireland dataset comprised 10,334 children between the ages of 9 – 18 years –from 5<sup>th</sup> class in primary school to 5<sup>th</sup> year in post-primary school. The 2010 HBSC Ireland study comprises 16,060 schoolchildren from 3<sup>rd</sup> class in primary school to 5<sup>th</sup> year in post-primary school.

See, for example, Nic Gabhainn, S., Molcho, M., Gallois, A. & Kelly, C. (2007). HBSC Ireland: bullying and disability among Irish Schoolchildren. Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway. [nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/hbsc\\_ireland\\_short\\_report\\_bullying\\_and\\_disability.pdf](http://nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/hbsc_ireland_short_report_bullying_and_disability.pdf)

Sullivan, L. Molcho, M. (2013). HBSC Ireland 2010: emotional and physical symptoms and bullying. Short report for Hugh Magee, Department of Health. Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway. [nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/2012\\_sr\\_ls\\_bullying\\_and\\_symptoms.pdf](http://nuigalway.ie/hbsc/documents/2012_sr_ls_bullying_and_symptoms.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> *ibid* – in the 2006 HBSC data

children with SEND: Young people with SEND were more likely to report all types of bullying at all ages, and were particularly likely to report having been forced to hand over their money or possessions.<sup>22</sup>

Bullying of children with SEND has been reported at higher rates regardless of type of SEND. For example, higher rates of being bullied have been reported for children with:

- Intellectual disabilities<sup>23</sup>
- Emotional and behaviour disorders<sup>24</sup>
- Aspergers's Syndrome<sup>25</sup>
- Autism<sup>26</sup>
- Cerebral Palsy<sup>27</sup>
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)<sup>28</sup>
- Communication issues: Specific Language Impairment (SLI)<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Department for Education (2010) Characteristics of bullying victims in schools. [natcen.ac.uk/media/660097/cd869400-39d4-4583-9eee-98d98d8bcb04.pdf](http://natcen.ac.uk/media/660097/cd869400-39d4-4583-9eee-98d98d8bcb04.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> McGrath, L., Jones, RSP., Hastings, RP. (2010) Outcomes of anti-bullying intervention for adults with intellectual disabilities, *Research in Developmental Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 31, 376-380

Reiter, S., Lapidot-Lefler, N. (2007). Bullying among special education children with intellectual disabilities: Differences in social adjustment and social skills. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 45, 174-181

<sup>24</sup> Frances, J., Potter, J. (2010). Differences and inclusion: Beyond disfigurement-The impact of splitting on children' social experience of inclusive education. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 15, 49-61

<sup>25</sup> Biggs, MG., Simpson, C., Gauss, MD. (2010). Using a tem approach to address bullying of children with Asperser's syndrome in activity-based settings. *Children & Schools*, 32 (3), 135-142

<sup>26</sup> Bejerot, S., Mörtberg, E. (2009) Do autistic traits play a role in the bullying of obsessive compulsive disorder and social phobia sufferers? *Psychopathology*, 42, 170-176

<sup>27</sup> Nadeau, L., Tessier, R. (2006). Social adjustment of children with cerebral palsy in mainstream classes: peer perception. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 48, 331-337

<sup>28</sup> Campbell, WN., Missiuna, C., Vaillancourt, T. (2012) Peer victimization and depression in children with and without motor coordination difficulties. *Psychology in the Schools*, 49 (4), 328-341

<sup>29</sup> Conti-Ramsden, G., Botting, N. (2004). Social difficulties and victimization in children with SLI at 11 years of age. *Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research*, 47, 145-161

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)<sup>30</sup>

An American study examined bullying among 484 children in 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms.<sup>31</sup> There were 41 children with mild disabilities, 74 academically gifted children and 369 general education children. Teachers rated children with mild disabilities significantly higher for being bullied by peers. Peers and teachers were also more likely to perceive children with disabilities as being bullies. Associating with aggressive or perceived popular peers also increased the likelihood of being perceived as a bully.

Another American study with 7,331 middle school children and 14,315 high-school children<sup>32</sup> showed that children with disabilities had higher rates of victimisation, aggression and bullying, when compared with their peers enrolled in general education curriculum. This study showed that more restrictive education placements elicited higher rates of fighting, bullying and victimisation. While victimisation was less among older children than among younger children during the middle and high school years, children with disabilities reported higher rates of bullying, fighting, and victimization throughout their educational career.<sup>33</sup>

Research on children in special education in many countries, including Ireland, has found that they are more likely to be victims and to bully others when compared to their general education counterparts.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Holmberg, K., Hjern, A. (2008). Bullying and attention-deficit- hyperactivity disorder in 10-year-olds in a Swedish community. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 50(2), 134-138

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<sup>31</sup> Estell, DB., Farmer, TW., Irvin, MJ., Crowther, A., Akos, P., Boudah, DJ. (2009). Children with exceptionalities and the peer group context of bullying and victimisation in late elementary school *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 18, 136-150

<sup>32</sup> Rose, CA., Espelage, DL, Monda-Amaya, LE. (2009) Bullying and victimisation rates among children in general and special education: a comparative analysis. *Educational Psychology*, 29 (7), 761-776

<sup>33</sup> Rose, CA., Houston, S (2013) The Bullying Dynamic: Direct and Indirect Involvement of Children with Disabilities, Presentation. [col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/file/view/2013\\_CEC](http://col.wiki.educ.msu.edu/file/view/2013_CEC)

<sup>34</sup> O'Moore, AM., Hillery, B (1989) Bullying in Dublin schools. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 10, 426-441

A 2013 literature review on school belongingness and inclusion concludes that children with SEND regardless of age or gender:<sup>35</sup>

- Generally, experience more bullying than other children
- Children especially boys attending special schools report a higher rate of in-school bullying and more bullying outside of school by children from mainstream schools and neighbourhood peers
- Although, all children with disability experience more bullying than peers without disability, the type of disability children have, appears to affect the prevalence or 'risk.' In general, those with pronounced intellectual or social difficulties were less socially accepted by peers and less able to make friends<sup>36</sup>

Further information on the bullying risk for children with different conditions can be found in Appendix 5.

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<sup>35</sup> Robinson, S., Truscott, J. (2014) *Belonging and Connection of School Children with Disability*, Children with Disability Australia [cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers](http://cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers)

<sup>36</sup> Bossaert, G., Colpin, H., Pijl, S.J., Petry, K. (2012). Loneliness among children with special educational needs in mainstream seventh grade. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 33(6), 1888–1897

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### 5.3. Understanding bullying

In order to decrease the bullying of children with SEND, it is essential to understand bullying generally as well as the specifics for children with SEND.

Bullying is a complex social issue. It needs to be addressed with determination, courage and leadership. Tolerance of bullying or its classification as a rite of passage is disconcerting because of its serious consequences.<sup>37</sup> It should not be ignored or downplayed.<sup>38</sup> It is learned behaviour, detrimental to the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of bullies, victims and bystanders.<sup>39</sup>

Bullying occurs worldwide, in all contexts and at all ages.<sup>40</sup> It has been studied in kindergartens.<sup>41</sup> School bullying is found among both children and adolescents and research has demonstrated that it occurs in similar structural forms throughout the world.<sup>42</sup> Familial, peer-level, school-level, individual and community factors interact and influence whether bullying takes place in schools and communities and whether it grows.<sup>43</sup> Some neighbourhood, home, and school environments,

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<sup>37</sup> Rose, CA., Monda-Amaya, LE., Espelage, DL (2011) Bullying Perpetration and Victimization in Special Education: A Review of the Literature, 114-130

<sup>38</sup> Berlin, R., Ruscitti, DJ (2011) Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention: A collaborative effort of the DuPage County Regional Office of Education and State's Attorney's Office [dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Berlin, R., Ruscitti, DJ (2011) Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention: A collaborative effort of the DuPage County Regional Office of Education and State's Attorney's Office [dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Smith, PK., Brain, P. (2000) Bullying in schools: Lessons from two decades of research. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 26, 1–9. [behaviorpedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Smith-Brain-2000.pdf](http://behaviorpedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Smith-Brain-2000.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Perren SI, Alsaker FD (2006) Social behavior and peer relationships of victims, bully-victims, and bullies in kindergarten. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 2006 Jan;47(1):45-57.

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<sup>42</sup> A 1999 study demonstrated school bullying in similar forms in 16 European countries, the USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand and provided indications of similar bullying in the rest of the world. See Smith PK, Morita Y, Junger-Tas J, Olweus D, Catalano R, Slee P, editors. 1999. *The nature of school bullying: a cross-national perspective*. London and New York: Routledge as cited by Smith, P. K. and Brain, P. (2000), *Bullying in schools: Lessons from two decades of research*. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 26: 1–9. [www.behaviorpedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Smith-Brain-2000.pdf](http://www.behaviorpedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Smith-Brain-2000.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Ragozzino, K. & O'Brien, M.U. (2009). *Social and emotional learning and bullying prevention*. Chicago: CASEL. [www.casel.org/downloads/2009\\_bullyingbrief.pdf](http://www.casel.org/downloads/2009_bullyingbrief.pdf) as cited by School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA (2011) *A Centre Policy and Practice Brief*:

as well as the internet, seem to be breeding grounds for aggressive behaviour and for developing bullies and groups of bullies. For example, participation in gangs, cliques, and other peer groups that endorses aggressive behaviour; living in an abusive family; exposure to corporal punishment at school; opportunities and incentives to aggress against others at school.<sup>44</sup>

### **Defining bullying**

While there is no universally agreed definition of bullying, most definitions contain three key elements<sup>45</sup>:

- Intention to harm
- Power imbalance between bully(ies) and victim(s)
- Repetition

One definition that contains these elements is: a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor + a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim<sup>46</sup>.

The 2013 **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools**, produced by the Department of Education and Skills, include the following types of bullying behaviour in their definition of bullying:<sup>47</sup>

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyberbullying which is the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly the internet and mobile phones, deliberately to bully someone else
- Homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with SEND

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Embedding Bullying Interventions into a Comprehensive System of Child and Learning Supports  
[smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA (2011) A Center Policy and Practice Brief: Embedding Bullying Interventions into a Comprehensive System of Child and Learning Supports [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Olweus, D. (1993) *Bullying at school: what we know and what we can do* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell

<sup>46</sup> Rigby, K (2002) *New perspectives on bullying*. London: Jessica Kingsley as quoted by Rigby in *Defining bullying: a new look at an old concept* [kenrigby.net/02a-Defining-bullying-a-new-look](http://kenrigby.net/02a-Defining-bullying-a-new-look)

<sup>47</sup> Department of Education and Skills (2013), *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, [education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf)

Children involved in bullying are sometimes divided into victims, bullies, bully/victims and bystanders. Appendix 6 contains some information on these classifications as used in research. However, it is of note that the literature increasingly suggests not labelling a student as a bully or victim. Instead, call it bullying and/or victim behaviour that the student is exhibiting.<sup>48</sup>

### Effects of bullying

Bullying has short and long-term adverse effects on bullies, those who are bullied (victims) and also on child-bystanders. The effects of being bullied and bullying can be more severe in children with SEND.<sup>49</sup> Effects include:

- Low self-esteem, loneliness, anxiety and depression<sup>50</sup>
- Eating disorders<sup>51 52</sup>
- Complaints such as sleep problems, tiredness, abdominal pain, bed-wetting<sup>53</sup>
- Increased school drop-out rates, increased suicide ideation and negative impact on academic achievement<sup>54,55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Olweus, D. on A Research Definition of Bullying [cobbk12.org/preventionintervention/Bully/Definition%20of%20Bullying.pdf](http://cobbk12.org/preventionintervention/Bully/Definition%20of%20Bullying.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> This has been called the double jeopardy effect. See Mishna, F. (2003) 'Learning Disabilities and Bullying: Double Jeopardy', *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 336-347.

<sup>50</sup> TtofiMM, Farrington DP, Loe F, et al. (2011) Do the victims of school bullies tend to become depressed later in life? A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies, *Journal Aggress Confl Peace Res*, 3(2):63–73

Kaukiainen, A., Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Tamminen, M., Vauras, M., Mäki, H. and Poskiparta, E. (2002) Learning difficulties, social intelligence and self-concept: Connections to bully-victim problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43 (3), 269-278

Unnever, JD. and Cornell, DG. (2003) Bullying, self-control and ADHD, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 129-147

Rigby, K (2000) Effects of peer victimisation in schools and perceived social support on adolescent well-being, *Journal of Adolescence*, 23, 57-68

<sup>51</sup> Fekkes M, Pijpers FI, Verloove-Vanhorick SP. (2004) Bullying behaviour and associations with psychosomatic complaints and depression in victims. *J Pediatr*, 144 (1):17–22

<sup>52</sup> Sansone, RA., Sansone, LA (2008) Bully Victims: Psychological and Somatic Aftermaths *Psychiatry (Edgmont)*, 5(6): 62–64. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2695751/](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2695751/)

<sup>53</sup> Due P, Holstein BE, Lynch J, et al. (2005) Bullying and symptoms among school-aged children: international comparative cross sectional study in 28 countries. *Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Bullying Working Group European Journal Public Health*, 15 (2), 128–132

<sup>54</sup> National Association of School Psychologists in Position Statement on Bullying Prevention and intervention in schools (2012) [nasponline.org/about\\_nasp/positionpapers/BullyingPrevention.pdf](http://nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/BullyingPrevention.pdf)

- Boys who are bullied are four more times more likely to be suicidal than those not bullied while frequently bullied girls are eight more times likely to be suicidal<sup>56</sup>
- Childhood assaults, suicides and homicides have been linked to bullying<sup>57</sup>
- Being bullied can escalate to more serious forms of violence<sup>58</sup> and high rates of being bullied have been shown to precede overt acts of school violence<sup>59</sup>

The serious side effects that children who are bullied often suffer can last long into their future. Bystanders (observers of bullying) may feel fearful; powerless to act; guilty for not acting; or tempted to participate.<sup>60</sup>

Bullying impacts on the school's learning environment. A single incident of bullying can evoke a climate of fear and intimidation not only in the victim, but in other children as well".<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Olweus, D. (1993) *Bullying at school*. Cambridge: Blackwell

Kochenderfer, R., Ladd, GW. (1996) Peer victimisation: Cause or consequence of school maladjustment? *Child Development*, 67, 1305–1317

Fried, S., Fried, P. (1996) *Bullies and victims: Helping your child through the schoolyard battlefield*. New York: M. Evans

<sup>56</sup> Hawker, DSJ., Boulton, MJ. (2000). Twenty years' research on peer victimisation and psychological maladjustment: A meta-analysis review of cross-sectional studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41(4), 441–445.

<sup>57</sup> Vossekuil B, Fein R, Reddy M, et al. (2002) *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education. [secretsservice.gov/ntac/ssi\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://secretsservice.gov/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Friedley, JN (2011) *An In-depth Analysis of School Bullying Prevention Programmes: A summary paper presented to the Faculty of the Adler Graduate School in partial fulfilment for the Degree of Master of Arts in Adlerian Counselling and Psychotherapy*. [alfredadler.edu/sites/default/files/Friedley%20MP%202011.pdf](http://alfredadler.edu/sites/default/files/Friedley%20MP%202011.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> Lawson, M. (2005) Theoretical foundation. In K. Sexton-Radek (Ed.), *Violence in schools: Issues, consequences, and expressions* (pp. 3–34). Westport, CT: Praeger

Midlarsky, E., Klain, HM. (2005) A history of violence in the schools In F. Denmark, H. H. Krauss, R. W. Wesner, E. Midlarsky, & U. P. Gielen (Eds.), *Violence in schools: Cross-national and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 37–57). New York: Springer

Walker, HM., Colvin, G., Ramsey, E. (1995) *Antisocial behaviour in school: Strategies and best practices*, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole

<sup>60</sup> How Bullying Affects Children [violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying\\_effects.page](https://violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying_effects.page)

<sup>61</sup> P.5, Friedley, JN (2011) *An In-depth Analysis of School Bullying Prevention Programmes Summary Paper presented to The Faculty of the Adler Graduate School In Partial Fulfilment of*

In Ireland, research in DEIS<sup>62</sup> primary and post-primary schools in Ballyfermot<sup>63</sup> and Dublin 8,<sup>64</sup> observed an explicit link between children's account of being bullied and their non-attendance at schools.<sup>65</sup> It is of note, that there are significant differences in SEND prevalence between children from working class backgrounds and their middle class counterparts. Children from economically inactive households have particularly high rates of SEND. In DEIS schools the outcomes of such prevalence patterns are evident where there are more pupils with SEND<sup>66</sup> and, in particular, in Urban Band 1 DEIS schools.<sup>67</sup>

Children attending schools in areas experiencing high levels of social exclusion are more likely to be identified with behavioural problems, and less likely to be identified with learning disabilities, than children with similar characteristics attending other schools.<sup>68</sup> It may be that behavioural issues take precedence over learning difficulties in these schools and suggests a culture of containment rather than of academic progress.<sup>69</sup>

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the Requirements for The Degree of Master of Arts in Adlerian Counselling and Psychotherapy with Emphasis in School Counselling. [alfredadler.edu/sites/default/files/Friedley](http://alfredadler.edu/sites/default/files/Friedley)

<sup>62</sup> DEIS stands for Delivering Equality Of Opportunity In Schools

<sup>63</sup> Downes, P. (2004)Voices of Children: St. Raphael's Primary School, Ballyfermot

Downes, P. (2004) Psychological Support Services for Ballyfermot: Present and Future

Downes, P. (2004) Psychological support services for Ballyfermot: Present and future. Commissioned Research Report for URBAN, Ballyfermot

<sup>64</sup> Downes, P., Maunsell, C. (2007). Count us in:Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin: An integrated response. Dublin: Commissioned by the South Inner City Community Development Association.

<sup>65</sup> 2012 submission by Paul Downes to Bullying Forum Consultation-A Focus on Bullying and Early School Leaving Prevention [education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp\\_anti\\_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti\\_bully\\_sub\\_academic\\_educational\\_disadvantage\\_st\\_patricks\\_college.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp_anti_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti_bully_sub_academic_educational_disadvantage_st_patricks_college.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools = DEIS

<sup>67</sup> Banks, J., McCoy, S (2011) A Study on the Prevalence of Special Educational Needs conducted by ESRI for the NCSE: NCSE, Trim, Meath [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Prevalence\\_of\\_SEN\\_10\\_09\\_12.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Prevalence_of_SEN_10_09_12.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> McCoy, S., Banks, J., Shevlin, M (2012) School matters: how context influences the identification of different types of special educational needs, Irish Educational Studies, 31 (2), 119-138

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*

Within schools, bullying can occur in some classes more than in others.<sup>70</sup> In Ireland, research in DEIS primary schools in the Blanchardstown area of Dublin showed variation in the levels of bullying across 6<sup>th</sup> classes<sup>71</sup> within schools.<sup>72</sup> Individual class teachers in primary schools play a key role regarding within-class bullying<sup>73</sup> and implementing effective preventive approaches to bullying within a class. However, this may not have any impact on what happens in other classes.<sup>74</sup>

## **Factors that interact and facilitate the emergence of bullying behaviours**

### **The family level**

Family interaction patterns influence peer interaction patterns. Studies show that the most sensitive period in brain development is from the prenatal period to 5 years. Children have to learn to think socially before they can act socially. By the time they reach school age, they have formed habits in the way they respond emotionally and interact with peers and adults. These habits influence their ability to form relationships.<sup>75</sup> Children who are both victims and bully others at school are more likely to bully and/or be victimized (bullied) by their siblings. Parents/guardians of children who bully others are more likely to lack emotional warmth and be overly permissive, while parents/guardians of victimized children are more likely to be restrictive, controlling, and over-involved.<sup>76</sup>

To overcome learned negative relating habits, Governments and schools increasingly recognise the need to help parents/guardians' access effective

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<sup>70</sup> James, A (2010) Research Brief on School Bullying  
[nspcc.org.uk/inform/research/briefings/school\\_bullying\\_pdf\\_wdf73502.pdf](http://nspcc.org.uk/inform/research/briefings/school_bullying_pdf_wdf73502.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Children in 6<sup>th</sup> class, the last class in primary schools in Ireland, are generally 12 years of age

<sup>72</sup> Downes, P., Maunsell, C., Ivers, J (2006) A Holistic Approach to Early school leaving and school retention in the Blanchardstown area. Blanchardstown Area Partnership.  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/blanchardstownreportreprint2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/blanchardstownreportreprint2010.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> Downes, P. (2004a) Psychological Support Services for Ballyfermot: Present and Future. Urban Ballyfermot. [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/BallyfermotReport.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/BallyfermotReport.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> Downes, P., Maunsell, C., Ivers, J (2006) A Holistic Approach to Early school leaving and school retention in Blanchardstown. the Blanchardstown Area Partnership

<sup>75</sup> 2013 Nova Scotia Anti-bullying Action Plan, Speak Up: An Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying. [antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/RI240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf](http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/RI240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Ragozzino, K. & O'Brien, M.U. (2009). Social and emotional learning and bullying prevention. Chicago: CASEL. [www.casel.org/downloads/2009\\_bullyingbrief.pdf](http://www.casel.org/downloads/2009_bullyingbrief.pdf) as cited by School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA (2011) A Centre Policy and Practice Brief: Embedding Bullying Interventions into a Comprehensive System of Child and Learning Supports [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf)

behaviour support that is family-friendly, positive, organized and consistent for small children with behaviour problems.<sup>77</sup> In this regard, Nova Scotia's 2013 Task Force Report on Bullying and Cyberbullying called **“Respectful and Responsible Relationships: There's no app for that”** includes a telephone coaching service for families to help them manage small children with behavioural issues.<sup>78</sup>

Parents/guardians of children with SEND can facilitate greater school success by being involved in their education, encouraging them and having high and reasonable expectations for their education and future career. Children, whose parents/guardians remain involved in their education, tend to:<sup>79</sup>

- Make better transitions
- Display positive attitudes to school
- Maintain the quality of their work
- Develop realistic plans for their future
- Have higher graduation rates
- Advance to higher/further education

### **Individual level factors including resilience and self-concept/self-esteem**

#### **Resilience**

Resilience may be understood as the capacity of a child to deal effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to rebound from disappointments, mistakes, trauma, and adversity, to develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to interact comfortably with others, and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity.<sup>80</sup>

Research in Australia identified characteristics of victims who were resilient to school bullying. There were 867 participants who were assessed on levels of

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<sup>77</sup> 2013 Nova Scotia Anti-bullying Action Plan, Speak Up: An Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying. [antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf](http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> 2013 Nova Scotia Anti-bullying Action Plan, Speak Up: An Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying. [antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf](http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> NCSET (2006) Promoting Effective Parent Involvement in Secondary Education and Transition – citing a range of research sources [www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=3135](http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=3135)

<sup>80</sup> Brooks, R. Goldstein, S. (2001). Raising resilient children: Fostering strength, hope, and optimism in your child. New York: Contemporary Books

victimisation and well-being using a number of questionnaires.<sup>81</sup> Students were categorised as resilient or non-resilient victims or as healthy or poor-health non-victims. On examining the relationship between children and the factors linked to resilience, victims of bullying varied in their response to bullying:

- Some succumbed to the negative effects of being bullied
- Some functioned at acceptable levels
- Some reported high levels of general wellbeing despite repeated victimisation

The difference between victims who showed typical negative effects of bullying and those who demonstrated resilience appears to relate to a set of skills and attitudes that provides victims with a buffer against negative consequences associated with being a victim. These skills and attitudes include:

- Being optimistic
- Using productive coping strategies
- Having a healthy self-esteem and self-concept
- Possessing social skills
- Perceiving a high level of social support in one's life

Parents/guardians, teachers and others can work at developing skills and attitudes that increase resilience to difficulties. In the classroom, resilience research shows that successful development of skills and attitudes happens at the level of relationships, beliefs and expectations, and willingness to share power, rather than at the level of programmes.<sup>82</sup> Children can also develop skills and attitudes that increase their resilience through participation in cognitive-behavioural group-based intervention programmes.<sup>83</sup>

### **Self-concept and self-esteem**

Self-concept refers to a person's perceptions of adequacy in academic and non-academic domains, for example, social, behavioural, and athletic domains,<sup>84</sup> while

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<sup>81</sup> Wade, E., (2007) Resilient victims of school bullying: psychosocial correlates of positive outcomes, PhD Thesis, School of Health Sciences, RMIT University.  
[researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:6389](http://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:6389)

<sup>82</sup> Chapter 1 Positive relationships in Supporting Positive behaviour in Manitoba Classrooms.  
[edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key\\_element1.pdf](http://edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key_element1.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Wade, E., (2007) Resilient victims of school bullying: psychosocial correlates of positive outcomes, PhD Thesis, School of Health Sciences, RMIT University.  
[researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:6389](http://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:6389)

<sup>84</sup> Manning, MA (2007) Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Adolescents  
[nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf](http://nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf)

self-esteem is a person's overall evaluation of him- or herself, including feelings of general happiness and satisfaction.<sup>85</sup> Self-concept is a psychological construct with several dimensions. It attempts to capture what people think about themselves.<sup>86</sup> It encompasses a person's awareness of their characteristics and attributes as well as their evaluation of these characteristics in relation to others.<sup>87</sup>

A child's self-concept at school is affected by the image that teachers, parents/guardians and peers have of the child.<sup>88</sup> Research has demonstrated that teachers have a strong influence on the self-concept of children and that enhancement or diminution of the learner's self-concept start with teacher-child interactions.<sup>89</sup> Recognising this is extremely important for the successful integration of children with SEND into the classroom and school.<sup>90</sup>

Factors that influence the self-concept of children with SEND include:<sup>91</sup>

- Severity of SEND
- Age of onset of SEND
- Acceptance of SEND by parents/guardians

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<sup>85</sup> Harter, S. (1999) The construction of the self: A developmental perspective. New York: Guilford Press as cited by Manning, MA (2007) Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Adolescents [nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf](http://nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Harter S. (1985) Manual for the Self-Perception Profile for Children. Denver, CO: University of Denver

<sup>87</sup> Shields NI, Murdoch A, Loy Y, Dodd KJ, Taylor NF (2006) A systematic review of the self-concept of children with cerebral palsy compared with children without disability. *Dev Med Child Neurol*, 48(2), 151-7

<sup>88</sup> Burns, RB. (1982) Self-concept development and education, London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Cugmas, Z. (1992) Pričakovanja v zvezi s šolsko uspešnostjo, ki jih na začetku šolskega leta izražajo prvošolke in prvošolci ter njihovi starši, *Sodobna pedagogika*, 43 (5-6), 272-285

Harter, S. (1986) Processes underlying the construction, maintenance, and enrichment of the self-concept in children, in: J. Suls & A. Greenwald (Eds.) *Psychological perspectives on the self* (vol. 3, 137-181) London: Lawrence Erlbaum

as cited by Schmidt, M., Čagran, B (2008) Self-concept of children in inclusive settings, *International Journal of Special Education*, 23 (1), 8-17

<sup>89</sup> Schweinhart, LJ., Weikart, DP., Larner, MB. (1986) Consequences of three pre-school curriculum models, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 1, 15-45

<sup>90</sup> Schmidt, M., Čagran, B (2008) Self-concept of children in inclusive settings, *International Journal of Special Education*, 23 (1), 8-17

<sup>91</sup> Schmidt, M., Čagran, B (2008) Self-concept of children in inclusive settings, *International Journal of Special Education*, 23 (1), 8-17

- Education placement and special support
- Labelling
- Group adherence

Children often display a decline in self-concept during elementary school and the transition to middle level and then their self-concept gradually grows again as they transition from middle level to high school.<sup>92</sup>

Many aggressive children express adequate self-concept.<sup>93</sup> Research shows that bullies can have high social and athletic concepts, whereas, victims can have a negative self-concept, which makes them an easy target for bullies.<sup>94</sup> A victim's self-concept may be negative before bullying occurs and becomes more negative after being bullied.<sup>95</sup>

Children who reinforce bullies and have negative social and athletic competencies are most likely to become bully/victims because they hope that reinforcing the bullies will protect them from being bullied themselves.<sup>96</sup> Bullies seem to suffer least from a negative self-concept, while bully/victims seem to have the most negative self-concept.<sup>97</sup>

A review of research on the self-concept of children with cerebral palsy, compared to children without a disability,<sup>98</sup> showed that adolescent females with cerebral palsy have a lower self-concept than females without disability in the areas of physical appearance; social acceptance; athletic competence; and

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<sup>92</sup> Manning, MA (2007) Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Adolescents [nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf](http://nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Baumeister, RF., Campbell, JD., Krueger, JI., Vohs, KD. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4, 1–44. as cited by Manning, MA (2007) Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Adolescents [nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf](http://nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> Roeleveld, Wieke The relationship between bullying and the self-concept of children. [socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17](http://socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17)

<sup>95</sup> Roeleveld, Wieke The relationship between bullying and the self-concept of children. [socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17](http://socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17)

<sup>96</sup> Roeleveld, Wieke The relationship between bullying and the self-concept of children. [socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17](http://socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17)

<sup>97</sup> Roeleveld, Wieke The relationship between bullying and the self-concept of children. [socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17](http://socialcosmos.library.uu.nl/index.php/sc/article/viewFile/20/17)

<sup>98</sup> Shields NI, Murdoch A, Loy Y, Dodd KJ, Taylor NF (2006) A systematic review of the self-concept of children with cerebral palsy compared with children without disability *Dev Med Child Neurol.* 48(2),151-7

scholastic competence. There was insufficient evidence to conclude that children with cerebral palsy, in general, have a lower global self-concept compared with those without disability.

Research has suggested that adults with mild intellectual disabilities have a lower self-concept than typically developing adults or adults with more severe disabilities<sup>99</sup> Children with mild intellectual disabilities can also exhibit positive relationships between their academic progress and the way that they feel about themselves.<sup>100</sup> Research has shown that victims of bullying, who have learning difficulties, can display characteristics that indicate insecurity, low self-esteem, submissiveness, passivity and anxious disposition.<sup>101</sup>

Research recognises the need to measure more carefully the effectiveness of education for students with SEND. It suggests that this may be done across three domains:<sup>102</sup>

1.1 Gains in self esteem

1.2 Improvements in social relationships

1.3 Educational attainment

### **The peer level**

Peer relations are critical for all aspects of children's development<sup>103</sup> and are strong predictors of adult adjustment.<sup>104</sup> Aspects of peer relations include:

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<sup>99</sup> Harter, S. (1990) Issues in the assessment of the self-concept of children and adolescents, In AM. La Greca (Ed.), *Through the eyes of the child: Obtaining self-reports from children and adolescents* (pp.292-325). Boston: Allyn & Bacon

<sup>100</sup> Donohue, DK (2008) *Self-concept in Children with Intellectual Disabilities*, Psychology Thesis, Georgia State University, [scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent](http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent)

<sup>101</sup> Luciano, S., Savage, RS (2007) Bullying risk in children with learning difficulties in inclusive educational settings, *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 22 (1) pp.14-31

<sup>102</sup> Cologon, K. (2013) *Inclusion in education: towards equality for children with disability*. Melbourne, Children with Disability Australia [cda.org.au/\\_literature.../Issues\\_Paper\\_on\\_Inclusion](http://cda.org.au/_literature.../Issues_Paper_on_Inclusion)

<sup>103</sup> Mishna, F. (2003) 'Learning Disabilities and Bullying: Double Jeopardy', *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 336-347 citing Boivin, M., Hymel, S., Bukowski, WM. (1995) The roles of social withdrawal, peer rejection, and victimisation by peers in predicting loneliness and depressed mood in childhood. *Development and Psychopathology*, 7, 765-785

Parker, JG., Asher, SR. (1987) Peer relations and later personal adjustment: Are low-accepted children at risk? *Psychological Bulletin*, 102, 357-389 and other studies

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, citing Hartup, WW (1996) The company they keep: friendships and their developmental significance. *Child Dev*, 67(1), 1-13

- Accepted by peers/popular with them (popularity refers to status in the group)
- Friendship (refers to a close, intimate, mutual relationship where two friends influence one another)
- Rejected by peers/isolated
- Peer victimised
- Lonely

Social theories describe why bullying increases during late childhood and early adolescence at the peer group level. There is some research evidence to support each of these social theories which postulate that:<sup>105</sup>

- Children use bullying as a strategy for moving higher in the social pecking order, particularly when patterns of social hierarchy are being established, for example, during the transition from elementary school to the middle grades
- People tend to spend time and form friendships with those who are similar to them in certain key ways
- Children tend to hang out with others who bully at the same frequency and, among these groups, bullying increases over time
- As children enter middle school, their attraction to peers that are aggressive can increase

Frederickson et al <sup>106</sup>used the belonging scale to assess peer group inclusion, including social behaviour, bullying and feelings of belonging at school for children with SEND. Their research showed that children with SEND who had transferred from a special school to mainstream schools felt an equal sense of belonging to their non-disabled peers, but that children with SEND who were already in mainstream schools had a less strong sense of belonging. This difference may be due to children reporting feeling less supported, less included by their peers, and less likely to be accepted for work and play activities by peers.

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<sup>105</sup> Ragozzino, K. & O'Brien, M.U. (2009). Social and emotional learning and bullying prevention. Chicago: CASEL. [www.casel.org/downloads/2009\\_bullyingbrief.pdf](http://www.casel.org/downloads/2009_bullyingbrief.pdf) as cited by School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA (2011) A Centre Policy and Practice Brief: Embedding Bullying Interventions into a Comprehensive System of Child and Learning Supports [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> Frederickson, N., Simmonds, E., Evans, L., Soulsby, C. (2007). Assessing the social and affective outcomes of inclusion. *British Journal of Special Education*, 34(2), 105–115 as cited by Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) *Belonging and Connection of School Children with Disability*, Children with Disability Australia. [cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers](http://cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers)

Both existing and transferring children with SEND reported higher levels of peer bullying than children without SEND.

Once a group rejects an individual, the group tends to retain a perception of the individual as rejected. Consequently, rejected children who change may still have trouble being accepted.<sup>107</sup> It is important therefore that schools prevent the rejection of children. Increased peer social support and acceptance decreases the vulnerability of children with SEND to bullying.<sup>108</sup>

### **The role of peers and the peer group in bullying**

Bullying behaviour is reinforced by peers and can be seen as acceptable and normative within the peer group.<sup>109</sup> Peer witnesses are present in most bullying incidents. Thus, the peer group has an important role in bullying.<sup>110, 111</sup>

In early adolescence, the function and importance of the peer group change<sup>112</sup>. There is increased reliance on peers for social support and increased pressure to

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<sup>107</sup> Mishna, F. (2003) 'Learning Disabilities and Bullying: Double Jeopardy', *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 336-347

<sup>108</sup> Rose CA et al (2013) Bullying and Middle School Children With and Without Specific Learning Disabilities: An Examination of Social-Ecological Predictors, *Journal of Learning Disability Advance online publication* doi:10.1177/0022219413496279

<sup>109</sup> Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Bjorkqvist, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process; Participant roles and their relations to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22, 1-15

Salmivalli, C., Voeten, M. (2004). Connections between attitudes, group norms and behavior associated with bullying in schools. *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 28, 246-258

<sup>110</sup> Craig, WM., Pepler, D J. (1997) Observations of bullying and victimisation in the school yard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13, 41-59

<sup>111</sup> Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process: Participant roles in their relations to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22(1), 1-15

Craig, WM., Pepler, D J. (1997). Observations of bullying and victimisation in the school yard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13, 41-59. as cited by Espelage, DL (2002)

<sup>112</sup> Dornbusch, S. M. (1989). The sociology of adolescence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15, 233-259

Crockett, L., Losoff, M., Petersen, AC. (1984). Perceptions of the peer group and friendship in early adolescence, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 4(2), 155-181

as cited by Espelage, DL (2002) Bullying in Early Adolescence: The Role of the Peer Group on the Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative Website  
[ecap.crc.illinois.edu/eecearchive/digests/2002/espelage02.html](http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/eecearchive/digests/2002/espelage02.html)

attain social status.<sup>113</sup> Research showed a peak in prioritising status enhancement in early adolescence, with one third of study participants choosing status enhancement over friendship, and 74–79% considering status more important than rule adherence.<sup>114</sup> If bullying is driven by status goals, it should be more common during periods in life where status is considered important such as in adolescence and an increase in bullying during adolescence has been found in several studies.<sup>115</sup>

Salimvalli (2010) reviewed the literature on bullying and the peer group. Bullying is more than a hurtful relationship between bully and victim. It resembles a social role in a group. It brings persistent social consequences which get worse over time. Children not directly involved can react in ways which reward the bullies and which discourage and humiliate the victims. Bullies are dominant and exert influence on a wide group of classmates including those who would like to help the victims. A child's empathy is influenced by group contexts. Some classroom contexts inhibit highly empathic children from helping vulnerable peers. Children who belong to bullying cliques increase their bullying behaviours over time, possibly by reciprocally rewarding and reinforcing each others' behaviour. Other children may imitate the bullies' behaviour because they wish to be accepted by them or to be included in their group. Thus, children in a class have different roles in the bullying process, and are driven by diverse emotions, attitudes and motivations.<sup>116</sup>

Research in the USA showed that bullying enhanced within-group status and popularity among children making the transition through the first year of middle school.<sup>117</sup> Another USA research study found that bullies as a group enjoyed a strong friendship network. However, the relationship between bullying and

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<sup>113</sup> Corsaro, WA., Eder, D. (1990). Children's peer cultures. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 16, 197-220 as cited by Espelage, DL (2002) *Bullying in Early Adolescence: The Role of the Peer Group on the Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative Website* [ecap.crc.illinois.edu/eeearchive/digests/2002/espelage02.html](http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/eeearchive/digests/2002/espelage02.html)

<sup>114</sup> LaFontana, K., Cillessen, A. (2009). Developmental changes in the priority of perceived status in childhood and adolescence. *Social Development*. doi:10.1111/j. 1467-9507.2008.00522.x Published online January 2009 as cited by Salmivalli, C. (2010) *Bullying and the peer group: A review*. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 15, 112–120

<sup>115</sup> Salmivalli, C. (2010) *Bullying and the peer group: A review*. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 15, 112–120, citing many others

<sup>116</sup> Salmivalli, C. (2010) *Bullying and the peer group: A review*. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 15, 112–120

<sup>117</sup> Pellegrini, AD., Bartini, M., Brooks, F. (1999). School bullies, victims, and aggressive victims. Factors relating to group affiliation and victimisation in early adolescence. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91(2), 216-224

popularity differed across grades and for males and females.<sup>118</sup> Strong correlation, present between bullying and popularity among sixth-grade males (age 11/12 years), dropped for seventh-grade males (13/14 years) and was not present for eighth-grade males (13/14 years).<sup>119</sup> The number of friends was related to physical, verbal and relational bullying but not to cyberbullying. In research in Canada, peers were involved in 85% of bullying episodes.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, in Finland, research among sixth-graders (aged 12/13yrs) showed that the majority participated in the bullying process and their various roles were related to social status within their respective classrooms.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, research highlights the powerful effect of peers and peer norms on bullying attitudes and behaviours. “Although many bullying prevention programmes address the role of the bystander, they do not address the fact that, in many peer groups, bullying might be the norm. This is an oversight and is likely one reason why bullying prevention programmes have yielded less-than encouraging outcomes.”<sup>122</sup>

#### **5.4. Understanding why children with SEND are bullied more**

While any child can bully or be bullied, child with SEND are more susceptible due to “characteristics that place them on either side of the bullying issue, be it as a bully or victim of bullying”<sup>123</sup> Children with SEND are more likely to have risk factors for victimisation and bullying which include peer rejection, finding social

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<sup>118</sup> Espelage, DL., Holt, MK. (2001). Bullying and victimisation during early adolescence: Peer influences and psychosocial correlates (pp. 123-142). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*

<sup>120</sup> Craig, WM., Pepler, DJ. (1997) Observations of bullying and victimisation in the school yard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13, 41-59

<sup>121</sup> Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process: Participant roles in their relations to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22(1), 1-15

Craig, WM., Pepler, DJ. (1997). Observations of bullying and victimisation in the school yard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13, 41-59

<sup>122</sup> P. 40 in Swearer Napolitano, Susan M.; Espelage, Dorothy L.; Vaillancourt, Tracy; and Hymel, Shelley (2010) "What Can Be Done About School Bullying? Linking Research to Educational Practice" (2010) *Educational Researcher*, 39 (1), 38-47

<sup>123</sup> Page 1, Taylor, J. (2012, February) The bully questions. *New Times for Division for Learning Disabilities*. 30 (1), 1-2, 5 as cited by Malian, IM (2012) in *Bully versus Bullied: A Qualitative Study of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings*, *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, 10 (2), p1-24. [corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article](http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article)

situations challenging and experiencing loneliness.<sup>124</sup> A lack of inclusion for children with SEND can exacerbate peer isolation, limited friendships, loneliness, social difficulties and thereby increases their risk of being rejected and bullied.<sup>125</sup> They are disproportionately likely to encounter peer rejection and victimisation.<sup>126</sup>

Some children with SEND are less skilled at social activities that are important in developing peer relationships, including knowing how to join peer groups, negotiate with peers, resolve conflicts and take part in group activities. Other children with SEND may behave in ways that are viewed by their peers as disruptive and aggressive and such behavioural difficulties may trigger peer victimisation and social exclusion. Children with SEND who have trouble participating in recreational activities can also become isolated from their peers.<sup>127</sup>

Some children with SEND can display more bullying and/or aggressive behaviours (physical, verbal) than children without SEND.<sup>128</sup> Over time, children with SEND who have been bullied may develop aggressive characteristics as a strategy to combat victimization suggesting that these children become provocative victims.<sup>129</sup> Overall, researchers have documented that between 15%<sup>130</sup> and 42%<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Scheithauer, H., Hayer, T., Petermann, F., Jugert, G. (2006) Physical, verbal and relational forms of bullying among German children: age trends, gender differences, and correlates. *Aggressive Behavior*, 32, 261-275

Schafer, M., Korn, S., Brodbeck, FC., Wolke, D. and Schulz, H. (2005) Bullying roles in changing contexts: The stability of victim and bully roles from primary to post-primary school. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 29, 323-335

<sup>125</sup> Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and Connection of School Children with Disability, Children with Disability Australia. [www.cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers](http://www.cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers)

<sup>126</sup> Hodges, EVE., Perry, DG. (1996) Victims of peer abuse: An overview. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Problems*, 5, 23-28

<sup>127</sup> Campbell, W., Missiuna, C (2011) Bullying Risk in Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature [canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/resources/bullying\\_risk\\_children\\_disabilities\\_keeping\\_current](http://canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/resources/bullying_risk_children_disabilities_keeping_current).

<sup>128</sup> For example, Kaukiainen, A., Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Tamminen, M., Vauras, M., Maki, H et al (2002) Learning difficulties, social intelligence, and self-concept: Connections to bully-victim problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 269-278

O'Moore, AM., Hillery, B. (1989) Bullying in Dublin schools. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 10, 426-441

<sup>129</sup> Kumpulainen, K., Räsänen, E., Puura, K. (2001) Psychiatric disorders and the use of mental health services among children involved in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 27, 102-110

of victims with SEND exhibit characteristics of children who bully others such as impulsivity and aggression. Data also suggest that children with psychiatric disorders or behaviour disorders may adopt aggressive behaviours in response to being victimised.<sup>132</sup>

Children with SEND with difficulties in social skills/ communication such as children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), speech difficulties, hearing impairments, neurological impairments, developmental delays, emotional impairments or communication disorders, are vulnerable to bullying. Some studies have shown that receptive vocabulary attainment (receptive vocabulary refers to words that a person can comprehend and respond to, even if the person cannot produce those words) is particularly important in terms of being bullied.<sup>133</sup>

Low frustration tolerance leads to reaching a threshold more easily and frequently and this can result in a child standing out in social situations and being perceived as different.<sup>134</sup>

Motor difficulties may lead to difficulties in reading, writing, and participating in gym class and children can be made fun of because they are unable to perform age appropriate motor tasks.<sup>135</sup>

Children who have "hidden" disabilities may be less likely to be offered protection by their peer group than are children whose disabilities are more visible, for example, children with physical disabilities such as wheelchair users.<sup>136</sup>

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Van Cleave, J., Davis, MM. (2006) Bullying and peer victimisation among children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics*, 118(4), e1212-9

<sup>130</sup> Van Cleave, J., Davis, M M. (2006) Bullying and peer victimisation among children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics*, 118(4), e1212-9

<sup>131</sup> O'Moore, AM., Hillery, B. (1989) Bullying in Dublin schools. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 10, 426-441

<sup>132</sup> Brockenbrough, K., Cornell, D., Loper, A. (2002). Aggressive victims of violence at school. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 25, 273-287

Kumpulainen, K., Räsänen, E., & Puura, K. (2001). Psychiatric disorders and the use of mental health services among children involved in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 27, 102-110

<sup>133</sup> Luciano, S., Savage, RS (2007) Bullying risk in children with learning difficulties in inclusive educational settings, *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 22 (1), 14-31

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*

<sup>135</sup> Walk a Mile in Their Shoes: Bullying and Children with Special Needs. [abilitypath.org/areas-of-development/learning--schools/bullying/articles/walk-a-mile-in-their-shoes.pdf](http://abilitypath.org/areas-of-development/learning--schools/bullying/articles/walk-a-mile-in-their-shoes.pdf)

A consistent finding in the literature on children with intellectual disabilities is that they are less likely to be socially accepted and more likely to be socially neglected and rejected by peers than other children.<sup>137</sup> Between 25-30% of children with intellectual disability are socially rejected in comparison to 8-16% of children without intellectual disability.<sup>138</sup> Along with the effects of low social status and poor peer relationships, rejection by peers leaves children with learning disabilities unprotected and susceptible to further victimisation.<sup>139</sup> Many children with intellectual disability who have average social status at the beginning of the school year are seen as neglected or rejected by the end of the school year.<sup>140</sup> While they do not differ in the number of friends they report, they have fewer mutual friendships than children without intellectual disability.<sup>141</sup>

A summary of the factors linked to the higher level of victimisation of children with SEND are:<sup>142</sup>

- They may be more socially isolated than children without SEND and lack relationships which buffer against being bullied

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<sup>136</sup> Frederickson, N. (2010). Bullying or befriending? Children's responses to classmates with special needs British Journal of Special Education, 37, 4-12

<sup>137</sup> Wiener, J (2004) Do peer relations foster behavioural adjustment in children with learning disabilities Learning Disability Quarterly, 27, 21-30 citing literature reviews by

Kavale, KA., Forness, SR., (1995) Social skill deficits and train: A meta-analysis of the research in learning disabilities. Advances in Learning and Behavioural Disabilities, 9, 119-160,

Swanson, HL., Malone, S. (1992). Social skills and learning disabilities: A meta-analysis of the literature. School Psychology Review, 21, 427-443

Wiener, J. (1987) Peer status of learning disabled children and adolescents: A review of the literature Learning Disabilities Research, 2, 62-69

<sup>138</sup> Greenham, S (1999) Learning disabilities and psychosocial adjustment: a critical review. Child Neuropsychology, 5, 171-176 as cited by Mishna, F. (2003) 'Learning Disabilities and Bullying: Double Jeopardy', Journal of Learning Disabilities, 36, 336-347

<sup>139</sup> P.337, Mishna, F. (2003) 'Learning Disabilities and Bullying: Double Jeopardy', Journal of Learning Disabilities, 36, 336-347

<sup>140</sup> Kuhne, L., Wiener, J. (2000) Stability of social status of children with learning difficulties Learning Disability Quarterly, 23, 64-75 and Vaughn, S., Elbaum, BE., Schumm, JS (1996) The effects of inclusion on the social functioning of children with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 29, 598-608 cited by Wiener, J (2004) Do peer relations foster behavioural adjustment in children with learning disabilities Learning Disability Quarterly, 27, 21-30

<sup>141</sup> Wiener, J (2004) Do peer relations foster behavioural adjustment in children with learning disabilities Learning Disability Quarterly, 27, 21-30

<sup>142</sup> NJ Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention (2012) Bullying Prevention for Children with Disabilities. [njbullying.org/documents/AdvisoryGroupDocument2.pdf](http://njbullying.org/documents/AdvisoryGroupDocument2.pdf)

- Having a disability, in and of itself, may create an imbalance of power so that children with SEND have difficulty defending themselves
- Children with SEND may behave differently or in ways that others do not understand; this "different" behaviour may be perceived, incorrectly, by other children – and sometimes staff – as "provoking" or even "deserving" a negative response
- Children with SEND may require support that staff and other children find challenging
- Children with SEND are often excluded from the mainstream social fabric of the school, a situation which limits other children from engaging with and acquiring familiarity with these children
- They may be potential targets because their appearance is different

The increased vulnerability of children with SEND to rejection and bullying can be aggravated by other factors including:<sup>143</sup>

- Being unable to be with their peers at breaks and lunchtime can isolate them
- Experiencing more transitions: children with SEND may need to settle into more new situations and groups than others. Examples of transitions are spending periods of time in hospital and returning to school or moving from a special unit to a mainstream school
- Lack of understanding towards children with SEND and their needs
- More negative attitudes towards children with SEND

Children with SEND may not recognise that they are being bullied and they may find it more difficult to communicate what is happening to them. For example, "Jane has Tourette Syndrome and delayed social skills. Taking advantage of this, a group of popular girls invited her to join them on "clash day," when they said they would all wear outlandish clothes. Jane was excited about being included in the popular group, but on "clash day," she was the only one to dress in this manner. The stares, laughter, and name calling from classmates humiliated her. School staff thought Jane was deliberately disrupting classes and suspended her for the day. She was too embarrassed and hurt to explain. After this experience, Jane never raised her hand in class, did not attend extracurricular activities, and her grades plummeted."<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> A guide to dealing with bullying: for parents/guardians of disabled children (2012) [cafamily.org.uk/media/388418/bullying.pdf](http://cafamily.org.uk/media/388418/bullying.pdf)

<sup>144</sup> Holmquist, J (2011) Bullying Prevention: Positive Strategies Pacer Centre, [tsa-usa.org/aBullyingPrev/A129DD.pdf](http://tsa-usa.org/aBullyingPrev/A129DD.pdf)

A 2014 report on belonging and connection of children with SEND explores what can help to build belonging and connection for students with SEND at the personal, systemic and school community level.<sup>145</sup> Many strategies, initiatives and relationships are happening now, but in pockets. At the level of individual students, particularly useful strategies include: attending to the protective aspects of connection; helping children to stand up for themselves; and building their capability. At the systemic level, strategies, which are valuable, work to change the system, not the child, and to understand and respond effectively to complexity. Being able to respond to needs and goals is important. At the level of the school community, research and practice show that successful inclusion builders include funding for broader inclusion initiatives, paying attention to the building of social relationships, social capital and social responsibility and taking a multi-dimensional response to social inclusion. Valuing the roles of families, friends and people outside of schools is also vital in building from school successes.”<sup>146</sup> In summary, everything that facilitates friendships and membership of peer groups decreases the risk of being bullied for children with SEND.

Some schools actively work at facilitating peer interactions. For example, running clubs that are of interest to particular children with SEND may lead to other interested peers joining in and this can facilitate friendship. Evaluation has been done on Integrated Play Groups (IPGs) for children with ASD. These groups are also being adapted for older children. These groups help children on the autism spectrum to engage in play with typical peers in regular social settings. Research and practice show that individuals with autism can improve in areas in which they are affected when they are supported in authentic and inclusive social play. IPGs help counteract problems of imagination and symbolic thinking while breaking the cycle of social isolation.<sup>147</sup>

There are exceptions to children with SEND being bullied more than their non-disabled counterparts. Possible reasons for these exceptions are important. For example, more than a decade ago, British Columbia, Canada introduced social responsibility into the school curriculum as a foundational skill as important as reading, writing and maths. Good relationships are seen as essential for academic

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<sup>145</sup> Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and Connection of School Children with Disability, Children with Disability Australia. [cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers](http://cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers)

<sup>146</sup> P.72 Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and Connection of School Children with Disability, Children with Disability Australia. [cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers](http://cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers)

<sup>147</sup> Wolfberg, P., Bottema-Beutel, P., DeWitt, M (2012 )Including Children with Autism in Social and Imaginary Play with Typical Peers. American Journal of Play, 55-80  
[.journalofplay.org/files/pdf-articles/5-I-article-including-children-with-autism](http://journalofplay.org/files/pdf-articles/5-I-article-including-children-with-autism)

success.<sup>148</sup> In a research study in British Columbia, no significant differences were found in bullying or being bullied between children with learning difficulties and their counterparts. It is possible that these results might be linked to the focus on socio-emotional learning as essential in British Columbia's policies for schools.<sup>149</sup>

While children with SEND are often less accepted by their peers and more likely to be victims of bullying than their typically developing classmates, they can sometimes be treated more favourably than classmates, like friends.<sup>150</sup> Respectful, helping relationships between typically developing classmates and children with SEND are valued by young people, parents/guardians and teachers. These helping relationships can become friendships in a positive friendly environment where there are opportunities for interaction. The reluctance of schools to discuss the special needs of a child with their classmates due to concerns about labelling may be exaggerated: knowing someone's needs in "a matter of fact way" can have a protective function.<sup>151</sup>

### 5.5. Children with SEND as bullies

Research over decades has determined that students with SEND are bullied/victimised, as well as, engaging in more bullying and fighting behaviours than students without SEND.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Diversity in British Columbia Schools.

2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=73EF8BB83CF043A59CB80D9DAE941E28&title=Diversity%20in%20BC%20Schools%20

<sup>149</sup> Vandekamp, KJ (2013) Social experiences of secondary children with intellectual and learning disabilities: school safety, victimisation, risk-taking, and feelings of belonging. Doctor of philosophy, University of British Columbia, Canada. Retrieved from [circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894](http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894)

<sup>150</sup> Frederickson, F. (2010) Bullying or befriending? Children's responses to classmates with special needs British Journal of Special Education, 37 (1), 4-12

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*

<sup>152</sup> For example,

O' Moore, AM., Hillery, B. (1989) Bullying in Dublin Schools, The Irish Journal of Psychology, 10, 426-441, [tandf.co.uk/journals/RIRI](http://tandf.co.uk/journals/RIRI)

Whitney, I., Smith, PK., Thompson, D. (1994). Bullying and children with special educational needs. In P. K. Smith & S. Sharp (Eds.), School bullying: Insights and perspectives, 213-240. London, UK: Routledge

Kaukiainen, A., Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Tamminen, M., Vauras, M., Mäki, H., Poskiparta, E. (2002). Learning difficulties, social intelligence, and self-concept: Connections to bully-victim problems. Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 43, 269-278

Rose et al (2011)<sup>153</sup> reviewed the research and concluded that students with SEND are twice as likely to be identified both as bullies and as victims when compared to peers without SEND. Similarly, McLaughlin et al (2010)<sup>154</sup> in their literature review showed that students with SEND were overrepresented as both bullies and victims. Overall, the literature suggests that students with SEND are frequent targets of victimisation and exhibit more bullying behaviours than the national average.

Children with attention deficit or hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are more likely than other children to be bullied. They are also more likely than others to bully their peers.<sup>155</sup>

Children with intellectual disabilities are at a greater risk of being bullied but there is also evidence that they may be more likely than other children to bully their peers.<sup>156</sup>

Bullying is common in children with ASD, and occurs at a higher rate than it does for their typically developing siblings. While children with ASD are more likely than other children to be bullied they can also behave as bullies, or at least be viewed as such. The Interactive Autism Network (IAN) online research found that of children with ASD surveyed:<sup>157</sup>

- 46% were victims only
- 34% no involvement

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<sup>153</sup> Rose, CA., Monda-Amaya, LE., Espelage, DL. (2011). Bullying perpetration and victimization in special education: A review of the literature. *Remedial and Special Education*, 32, 114-130

<sup>154</sup> McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Vaughn, RP. (2010). Responding to bullying among children with special educational needs and/or disabilities London, England: Anti-Bullying Alliance. [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/send\\_bullying\\_project.aspx](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/send_bullying_project.aspx)

<sup>155</sup> Twyman, KA., Saylor, CF., Saia, D., Macias, MM., Taylor, LA., Spratt, E. (2010) Bullying and ostracism experiences in children with special health care needs. *Journal of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics*, 31, 1-8

Weiner, J., Mak, M. (2009) Peer victimization in children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46, 116-131

Unnever, JD., Cornell, DG. (2003) Bullying, self-control, and ADHD. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 129-147 cited in [stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/special-needs/BullyingTipSheet.pdf](http://stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/special-needs/BullyingTipSheet.pdf)

<sup>156</sup> Twyman, KA., Saylor, CF., Saia, D., Macias, MM., Taylor, LA., Spratt, E. (2010) Bullying and ostracism experiences in children with special health care needs. *Journal of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics*, 31, 1-8. Cited in <http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/special-needs/BullyingTipSheet.pdf>

<sup>157</sup> [iancommunity.org/cs/ian\\_research\\_reports/ian\\_research\\_report\\_bullying](http://iancommunity.org/cs/ian_research_reports/ian_research_report_bullying)

- 17% were bully victims
- 3% were bullies only

In this research, 20% of parents/guardians said their child had bullied others, in comparison to 8% for typical siblings. Most of these children were bully-victims – children who had been bullied and who had also bullied others.<sup>158</sup> Given the deficits in social understanding that children with ASD have, it may be that their "bullying" is different than that displayed by typical children who generally use aggression to increase and maintain social status in the peer group.<sup>159</sup> Some parents/guardians whose children had "bullied" others noted that the motivation behind their children's behaviour had nothing to do with increasing or maintaining social status:

- "My son doesn't realize he is bullying. He is trying to get other kids to pay attention to him so he does it by grabbing their ball away from them or getting 'in their face' when they say to stop"
- "He has very set rules of behaviour that he expects all to follow. He doesn't see how his reaction to perceived slights or rule-breaking is sometimes bullying"
- "Our boy wants what he wants when he wants it. He may take an object from another child or scream when unhappy but any purposeful cruelty, he would never do"

Research in the UK on pupils with ASD indicated that engagement in bullying was largely dictated by the nature of the relationships of children with ASD with their peers.<sup>160</sup>

Researchers have noted that children with behavioural, emotional, or developmental issues are more likely to be bullied and to behave as a bully.<sup>161</sup> Unlike victims, bully-victims may insult their tormentors or otherwise try to fight

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<sup>158</sup> [iancommunity.org/cs/ian\\_research\\_reports/ian\\_research\\_report\\_bullying](http://iancommunity.org/cs/ian_research_reports/ian_research_report_bullying)

<sup>159</sup> Faris, R., Felmlee, D. (2011). Status struggles: Network centrality and gender segregation in same- and cross-gender aggression. *American Sociological Review*, 76(1), 48-73 as cited in [iancommunity.org/cs/ian\\_research\\_reports/ian\\_research\\_report\\_bullying](http://iancommunity.org/cs/ian_research_reports/ian_research_report_bullying)

<sup>160</sup> Humphrey, N., Symes, W (2010) Responses to bullying and use of social support among pupils with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) in mainstream schools: a qualitative study *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 10 (2), 82–90

<sup>161</sup> Van Cleave, J., Davis, MM. (2006). Bullying and peer victimization among children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics*, 118(4), e1212-9

back in a way that makes the situation worse. They are often "disruptive and impulsive, with poor social and problem-solving skills."<sup>162</sup>

Rose et al (2011) conducted a study that compared rates of bullying, victimization and fighting between students with and without disabilities. Results suggest that American schoolchildren with disabilities have higher rates of being bullied (victimisation) and fighting, but similar rates of bullying when compared to their peers enrolled in a general education curriculum. However, when students with disabilities are bullied (victimised), they reported higher levels of fighting behaviours when compared to students without disabilities.<sup>163</sup>

Research carried out with 178 Greek students of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades in primary school, who participated in pull-out special education programmes, found that 27% self-identified as victims, 13% as bullies and 5% as bully-victims.<sup>164</sup> There were positive associations between loneliness/social dissatisfaction and bully/victim events. Other studies have found significant correlations between bullying/ victimisation of pupils with SEND and loneliness and low sense of perceived social efficacy.<sup>165</sup> Thus, research suggests that children who are both bullies and victims are distinguishable from bullies and victims on feelings of loneliness, social dissatisfaction and levels of self-efficacy for peer interactions. Bully-victims may be at increased risk of experiencing high levels of loneliness. Schools should develop adequate provision for those children who are bully-victims.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Berger, KS. (2007). Update on bullying at school: Science forgotten? *Developmental Review*, 27, 90-126.

<sup>163</sup> Rose, CA., Espelage, D., Aragon, SR., Elliott, J (2011) Bullying and Victimization among Students in Special Education and General Education Curricula *Exceptionality Education International*, 21(3), 2-14

<sup>164</sup> Andreou, E. , Didaskalou, E., Vlachou, A (2013) Bully/victim problems among Greek pupils with special educational needs: associations with loneliness and self-efficacy for peer interactions *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Article first published online: DOI: 10.1111/1471-3802.12028

<sup>165</sup> Studies cited by Andreou, E. , Didaskalou, E., Vlachou, A (2013) Bully/victim problems among Greek pupils with special educational needs: associations with loneliness and self-efficacy for peer interactions *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Article first published online: DOI: 10.1111/1471-3802.12028

<sup>166</sup> Andreou, E. , Didaskalou, E., Vlachou, A (2013) Bully/victim problems among Greek pupils with special educational needs: associations with loneliness and self-efficacy for peer interactions *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Article first published online: DOI: 10.1111/1471-3802.12028

## 5.6. Cyberbullying and children with and without SEND

This section us explores what cyberbullying is, while section 6.7. explores how to tackle cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly the internet and mobile phones, deliberately to upset someone else.<sup>167</sup> Social networking sites are often used by young people to bully.

Cyberbullying is a method of bullying, an extension of real-world bullying.<sup>168</sup> So, while ICT can be used as a medium for bullying, it is not the reason for the bullying.<sup>169</sup> ICT can make it easier to bully but the root of the problem remains the same as other forms of bullying. It stems from emotional illiteracy and a lack of understanding among children and adults about the origin and consequences of bullying.<sup>170</sup>

Cyberbullying can be more devastating than other forms of bullying and, in the last years, there have been high-profile alleged cases of cyberbullying.<sup>171</sup> Challenges with cyberbullying include its anonymous nature, 24 hour access, potential infinite audience, lack of authority in cyberspace, potential for incidents to escalate and technological changes that provide new means to inflict bullying.<sup>172</sup>

Differences between conventional bullying and cyberbullying include the fact that the balance of power is altered because the cyberbully does not need to have physical or social status.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Department for schools, children and families (2007) Cyber bullying: Safe to learn. Embedding anti-bullying work in schools [digizen.org/downloads/CYBERBULLYING.pdf](http://digizen.org/downloads/CYBERBULLYING.pdf)

<sup>168</sup> Notar, CE., Padgett, S., Roden, J (2013) Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature Universal Journal of Educational Research 1(1), 1-9, [hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf](http://hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf)

<sup>169</sup> Speak Up: An Action Plan To Address Bullying and Cyber bullying Behaviour (2013) [antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf](http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf)

<sup>170</sup> Beat bullying (2009) VIRTUAL VIOLENCE: Protecting Children From Cyber bullying [archive.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual%20Violence%20-%20Protecting%20Children%20from%20Cyberbullying.pdf](http://archive.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual%20Violence%20-%20Protecting%20Children%20from%20Cyberbullying.pdf)

<sup>171</sup> Irish Vocational Education Association (2013) Cyber bullying in Schools Guidance & Resources for Management [etbi.ie/uploads/1/2/0/1/12012149/etbi\\_cyber\\_bullying\\_guidelines.pdf](http://etbi.ie/uploads/1/2/0/1/12012149/etbi_cyber_bullying_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>172</sup> Bauman, S., Pero, H. (2011). Bullying and cyberbullying among deaf children and their hearing peers: An exploratory study. Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 16(2), 236-253

<sup>173</sup> Bauman, S., Pero, H. (2011). Bullying and cyberbullying among deaf children and their hearing peers: An exploratory study. Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 16(2), 236-253

Willard listed eight different forms of cyberbullying:<sup>174</sup>

- Flaming: online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
- Harassment: repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages
- Denigration or 'Dissing' someone online: sending or posting gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
- Impersonation: pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble or danger or to damage that person's reputation or friendships
- Outing: sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- Trickery: talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- Exclusion: intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber-stalking: repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

Being connected online is an essential part of young people's social reality and an important part of young people's daily activity.<sup>175</sup> It is estimated that about 75% of European children use the internet.<sup>176</sup>

**EU Kids Online** (2006-09), funded by the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme, compares and draws conclusions from European research on children and online technologies.<sup>177</sup> EU Kids online have a publicly accessible database of 400 studies conducted in Europe. It shows that cyberbullying

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<sup>174</sup> Willard, N. (2007). Educators Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats. Center for Safe and Responsible Use of the Internet [csrui.org/cyberbully/docs/cbcteducator.pdf](http://csrui.org/cyberbully/docs/cbcteducator.pdf)

<sup>175</sup> Notar, CE., Padgett, S., Roden, J (2013) Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature Universal Journal of Educational Research 1(1), 1-9, [hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf](http://hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf)

<sup>176</sup> Livingstone, S, and Haddon, L (2009) EU Kids Online: Final report. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. [lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20\(2006-9\)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf](http://lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20(2006-9)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf)

<sup>177</sup> Livingstone, S, Haddon, L (2009) EU Kids Online: Final report. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. [lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20\(2006-9\)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf](http://lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20(2006-9)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf)

research is unevenly distributed, with most in Germany, the UK and Denmark and least in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Poland, Iceland, Slovenia and Ireland.<sup>178</sup>

A 2010 synthesis of research on cyberbullying shows that, overall, approximately 20–40% of children report being victimized by a cyber-bully.<sup>179</sup>

A 2011 Irish (Maynooth) study of 12-18 year olds found that 17% reported cyberbullying while one in 10 had carried out bullying.<sup>180</sup>

A 2-year research project funded under the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme investigated access and use, risks and opportunities of mobile internet use in 7 countries: Denmark, Italy, Romania, United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal and Belgium. In Ireland, 500 9-16 year olds were interviewed face-to-face in their homes in November and December 2013.<sup>181</sup> Most internet use in Ireland is still at home with 63% of children using the internet several times a day or at least once a day at home. Smart phones stand out as the most used device for internet access on a daily basis by Irish 9-16 year olds in all contexts. Overall, 1 in 5 children in Ireland (20%) say that they have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year. This is a doubling of the figure reported by EU Kids Online in 2011. While 22% of children have experienced any form of bullying on- or offline, 13% of 13-14 year olds say that they have been bullied on a social networking site. Girls are more likely to experience bullying than boys (26% for girls compared to 17% of boys) and 20% of girls compared to 11% of boys say they were upset by what happened. 35% of girls aged 13-16 have encountered some form of harmful content such as hate messages (15%), anorexic or bulimic content (14%), self-harm sites (9%); sites discussing suicide 8% and sites where people share their experiences with drugs (7%).<sup>182</sup>

A 2010 Finnish study on cyberbullying conducted with 2,215 adolescents aged 13 to 16 years showed that 5% were cyber-victims, 7% were cyber-bullies and 5%

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<sup>178</sup> Livingstone, S, and Haddon, L (2009) EU Kids Online: Final report. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. [www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20I%20\(2006-9\)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20I%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20I%20(2006-9)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20I%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf)

<sup>179</sup> Tokunaga, RS (2010) Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyber bullying victimisation *Computers in Human Behaviour* 26, 277–287

<sup>180</sup> Irish Vocational Education Association (2013) Cyber bullying in Schools Guidance & Resources for Management [etbi.ie/uploads/1/2/0/1/12012149/etbi\\_cyber\\_bullying\\_guidelines.pdf](http://etbi.ie/uploads/1/2/0/1/12012149/etbi_cyber_bullying_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>181</sup> O'Neill, B, Dinh, T. (2014) Net Children Go Mobile: initial findings from Ireland. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology [dit.ie/cser/media/ditcser/digitalchildhoods/NCGM\\_Ireland\\_initialfindingsreport\\_complete.pdf](http://dit.ie/cser/media/ditcser/digitalchildhoods/NCGM_Ireland_initialfindingsreport_complete.pdf)

<sup>182</sup> *ibid*

were cyber-bully-victims. Cyber-bully-only status was associated with hyper-activity, conduct problems, low pro-social behaviour, frequent smoking and drunkenness, headache, and not feeling safe at school. Cyberbullying and cyber-victimization were associated with psychiatric and psycho-somatic problems.<sup>183</sup> A 2013 literature review on cyberbullying highlighted that bully-victims are particularly at risk from cyberbullying.<sup>184</sup>

While some research consider that females are involved more often than males<sup>185</sup>, the research evidence is not consistent on sex differences among groups involved in cyberbullying.<sup>186</sup>

Studies investigating cyberbullying and children with SEND are small and few. While children with SEND may be no more likely than their peers to be cyber-bullied overall, they are more likely to be the targets of repeated and ongoing cyberbullying over a period of weeks to years.<sup>187</sup>

The Anti-bullying Alliance in England found that young people with SEND are 20% less likely than their peers to use the internet.<sup>188</sup> In their research,<sup>189</sup> some children with SEND were not using the internet because they were discouraged from using it or they were afraid of cyberbullying. They often experienced cyberbullying as an aspect of face-to-face bullying. They spoke about using the

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<sup>183</sup> Sourander, A., Brunstein Klomek, A., Ikonen, M., Lindroos, J., Luntamo, T., Koskelainen, M., Ristkari, T., Helenius, H., (2010) Psychosocial Risk Factors Associated With Cyberbullying Among Adolescents. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 67(7):720-728

<sup>184</sup> Notar, CE., Padgett, S., Roden, J (2013) Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 1(1), 1-9. [hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf](http://hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf)

<sup>185</sup> See, for example, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Jurist at article "Self-reported Internet Victimization in Canada, 2009." [statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11530-eng.htm](http://statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11530-eng.htm)

Also, Hinduja, S., Patchin, JW. (2010b) Cyber bullying by gender Cyberbullying Research Center. Cyber bullying Research Center [cyberbullying.us/2010\\_charts/cyberbullying\\_gender\\_2010.jpg](http://cyberbullying.us/2010_charts/cyberbullying_gender_2010.jpg)

<sup>186</sup> Gleeson, H. (2014) The prevalence and impact of bullying linked to social media on the mental health and suicidal behaviour among young people. Dublin, Dept Education and Skills and HSE

<sup>187</sup> Cross, EJ., Piggan, R., Douglas, T., Vonkaenel-Flatt, J (2012) VIRTUAL VIOLENCE II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying. Beat-bullying, London [2.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual-Violence-II.pdf](http://2.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual-Violence-II.pdf)

<sup>188</sup> Anti-bullying Alliance (2014) Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEND: guidance for teachers and other professionals: SEND: developing effective anti-bullying practice [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf)

<sup>189</sup> In this research cyberbullying among children with SEND was explored in focus groups

internet positively and thought that positive aspects of the internet and social media are often overshadowed by safety and cyberbullying concerns.<sup>190</sup> Of note is that the guidance of the Anti Bullying Alliance is essentially the same for children with and without SEND.

Research was conducted in 2009 in the Netherlands on 114 children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in special education settings. Children were 12 to 19 years of age. Between 4 to 9% of children reported cyberbullying at least once a week. Significant associations were found between cyberbullying and IQ, frequency of computer usage and self-esteem and depressive feelings. No associations were found between cyberbullying and age and gender.<sup>191</sup>

In the USA, a 2013 nationally representative telephone survey explored Internet use patterns among 1,560 young people with different types of SEND receiving special education services in schools.<sup>192</sup> The survey investigated whether they were at increased risk of unwanted sexual solicitation and online harassment. Children were more likely to report receiving online interpersonal victimization in the past year, even after adjusting for other explanatory factors.

As well as being bullied more, children with SEND can adopt bully-victim roles<sup>193</sup> and cycles of being bullied and bullying others can negatively impact on a child's

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<sup>190</sup> Anti-bullying Alliance (2014) Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEND: guidance for teachers and other professionals: SEND: developing effective anti-bullying practice [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf)

<sup>191</sup> Didden RI, Scholte RH, Korzilius H, de Moor JM, Vermeulen A, O'Reilly M, Lang R, Lancioni GE (2009) Cyberbullying among children with intellectual and developmental disability in special education settings. *Dev Neurorehabil*, 12(3):146-51

<sup>192</sup> Wells, M., Mitchell, KJ (2013) Patterns of Internet Use and Risk of Online Victimization for Youth With and Without Disabilities *The Journal of Special Education* 0022466913479141, first published on March 8, 2013 as doi:10.1177/0022466913479141 [unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/CV245\\_Wells\\_Mitchell\\_2013\\_Patterns.pdf](http://unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/CV245_Wells_Mitchell_2013_Patterns.pdf)

<sup>193</sup> Naboska, D., Smith, PK. (1993) 'Sociometric status and social behaviour of children with or without learning difficulties', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 34, 1435-1448

Kaukiainen, A., Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Tamminen, M., Vauras, M., Mäki, H., Poskiparta, E. (2002) Learning difficulties, social intelligence and self-concept: Connections to bully-victim problems. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43 (3), 269-278

Unnever, JD. and Cornell, DG. (2003) Bullying, self-control and ADHD. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18, 129-147

psychological and social development and further complicate peer interactions, enjoyment of school and educational attainment.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Tippett, N., Houlston, C., Smith, PK (2010) Prevention and response to identity-based bullying among local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at [equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/research/64\\_identity\\_based\\_bullying.pdf](http://equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/64_identity_based_bullying.pdf)

## 6. Literature Review Part 2: Addressing bullying

### 6.1. Overview of research on anti-bullying interventions

In carrying out evaluation of interventions around bullying and being bullied, there are methodological challenges that make comparisons across studies and evaluation efforts difficult.<sup>195</sup> How bullying is defined, yields different prevalence rates for being bullied. Being bullied assessed by different approaches, such as, direct observations, teacher ratings, parent reports, peer nominations, peer ratings and self reports yield different findings. Intervention efforts that raise awareness of bullying increases reports of bullying and this makes evaluation of changes in bullying difficult. In one study, observed changes in bullying over time were not confirmed by child and teacher reports, raising the question of what assessment method might best capture changes in bullying.<sup>196</sup>

“While the existing literature has clearly established that children with SEND face higher rates of bullying and victimisation than the general child population, little research on bullying prevention has focused on children with SEND either in isolation or as an identified sub-category in broader bullying prevention initiatives”.<sup>197</sup> A limited number of anti-bullying intervention programmes have been evaluated through research. These widely used bullying prevention programmes do not explicitly discuss modifications or adjustments to address the needs of children with disabilities.<sup>198</sup> Published research on these programmes has examined differences among grades, ages, genders, and racial/ethnic groups but has not studied children with SEND.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Swearer, SM., Espelage, DL., Vaillancourt, T., Hymel, S. (2010) What Can Be Done About School Bullying? Linking Research to Educational Practice Educational Researcher, 39(1): 38-47. [digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?](http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?)

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*

<sup>197</sup> Young, J., Ne’eman, A., Gelser, S (2011) Bullying and children with disabilities: a briefing papers from the National Council on disability for the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention [ncd.gov/publications/2011/March92011](http://ncd.gov/publications/2011/March92011)

<sup>198</sup> Girard, K (2012) Considering the use of bullying prevention programmes with children with disabilities in American Psychological Association: Development and Ageing News [apadivisions.org/division-16/publications/newsletters/science/2012/12/bullying-prevention-programmes.aspx](http://apadivisions.org/division-16/publications/newsletters/science/2012/12/bullying-prevention-programmes.aspx)

<sup>199</sup> Flynt, SW., Morton, RC. (2007) Bullying prevention and children with disabilities National Forum of Special Education Journal, 19, 1-6 as cited by Girard, K (2012) Considering the use of bullying prevention programmes with children with disabilities in American Psychological Association: Development and Ageing News. [www.nationalforum.com](http://www.nationalforum.com)

Thus, while children with SEND are a group at a higher risk for experiencing bullying and engaging in bullying, bullying prevention programmes have not been specifically developed or adapted for use with this population.<sup>200</sup>

Programmes using a school wide approach, which have not been modified for children with SEND should still reduce the victimisation of children with SEND by reducing the bullying behaviour of the general child population. If programmes raise awareness about bullying among school staff, this may help staff to recognise and intervene when bullying of children with SEND is taking place.

A study interviewed 186 children aged 8 to 16 years attending 8 schools, 50% of whom had special education needs, before and after an anti-bullying initiative. Two thirds of the children with SEND reported being bullied compared to a quarter of children without SEND. Although, the anti-bullying intervention was not designed specifically to address special education, the results showed that children with special education needs were significantly less victimised after the intervention.<sup>201</sup>

Ideally, however, when implementing bullying prevention programmes, consideration should be given to adapting instruction and assessment for children with SEND. Also, evaluations should specifically examine the effects of any modified programmes on the bullying of children with SEND.<sup>202</sup>

### **Research evidence on anti-bullying interventions**

A 2011 meta-analysis of anti-bullying interventions showed that school-based anti-bullying programmes are effective.<sup>203</sup> Being bullied decreased by 17 to 20% and bullying others decreased by 20 to 23%. This suggests that anti-bullying initiatives should be informed and modified in the light of the successful elements. In this 2011 meta-analysis the programme strategies were correlated with the effect sizes for being bullied and bullying others. What worked in terms of a

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<sup>200</sup> Young, J., Ne'eman, A., Gelser, S (2011) Bullying and children with disabilities: a briefing paper from the National Council on disability for the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention. [ncd.gov/publications/2011/March92011](http://ncd.gov/publications/2011/March92011)

<sup>201</sup> Thompson, D., R. Whitney and P. K. Smith. 1994. "Bullying of children with special needs in mainstream schools." *Support for Learning*, 9: 103-106.

<sup>202</sup> Young, J., Ne'eman, A., Gelser, S (2011) Bullying and children with disabilities: a briefing paper from the National Council on disability for the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention. [ncd.gov/publications/2011/March92011](http://ncd.gov/publications/2011/March92011)

<sup>203</sup> Ttofi, MM., Farrington, DP (2011) Effectiveness of school-based programmes to reduce bullying: a systematic and meta-analytic review *Journal Exp Criminology* (2011) 7:27–56 DOI 10.1007/s11292-010-9109-1  
[sinohacesnadasosparte.org/Download/english/02\\_METAANALISIS\\_2011.pdf](http://sinohacesnadasosparte.org/Download/english/02_METAANALISIS_2011.pdf)

decrease in bullying others and/or a reduction in the prevalence of being bullied included:

- Improved playground supervision - one of the elements most strongly related to program effectiveness
- Parent training/meetings - significantly related to a decrease in both bullying and being bullied
- Teacher training was associated with a decrease in bullying others
- Authoritative disciplinary methods were significantly related to reductions in both bullying and being bullied. (This finding was attributable to the effects of the whole school Olweus program (OBPP) in the meta-analysis which includes a range of firm sanctions, including serious talks with bullies, sending them to the principal, making them stay close to the teacher during break times and depriving them of privileges)
- Co-operative group work between professionals was associated with a decrease in bullying others
- No evidence that individual work with bullies or victims was effective. In fact, work with peers was significantly associated with an increase in being bullied. This agrees with other research which shows that programmes targeting delinquent peers tend to cause an increase in bullying. The authors noted that most programmes are not based on skills training and suggested that perhaps more efforts should be made to implement programmes based on skills training with individual bullies and victims<sup>204</sup>

In 2008, a meta-analysis of school bullying intervention research across a 25-year period from 1980 through 2004 identified 16 studies that met their inclusion criteria.<sup>205</sup> The intervention studies produced meaningful and clinically important positive effects for about one-third of the variables. The authors concluded that while anti-bullying interventions are useful in creating awareness, knowledge, and competency in dealing with bullying behaviours they may not dramatically influence the incidence of bullying behaviours.

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<sup>204</sup> ibid

<sup>205</sup> Merrell, KW., Gueldner, BA., Ross, SW., Isava, DM (2008). How effective are school bullying intervention programmes? A meta-analysis of intervention research *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(1), 26-42

Another evaluation<sup>206</sup> examined 26 studies evaluating school-based anti-bullying efforts. Interventions were categorized as curriculum (10), multidisciplinary or "whole-school" (10 studies), social skills groups (4), mentoring (1 study) and social worker support (1 study). Promising results were reported for:

- Whole-school anti-bullying efforts including establishing school-wide rules and consequences for bullying. School-wide programmes were more effective in reducing bullying and being bullied than classroom curriculum or social skills training
- Teacher training
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Classroom curricula

In 2004, Smyth et al<sup>207</sup> synthesised evaluation research on whole school anti-bullying and found that, while a small number of programmes reported positive outcomes, the majority yielded non-significant outcomes on measures of self-reported victimisation and bullying. Programmes with systematic monitoring of implementation tended to be more effective than those without monitoring. Discussion around the findings included:

- Bullying may be relatively refractory to interventions and so small significant findings should not be dismissed, as they may reflect a reasonable return on investment in low cost non stigmatising primary prevention programmes
- Olweus's impressive success may be related to the quality of Scandinavian schools with small class size, well-trained teachers and tradition of state intervention in questions of social welfare. Similarly, successful results in Finland and Italy may also be associated with quality of the schools

While it seems to make logical sense to do individual and group work with bullies and those who encourage bullying, as mentioned above, some research findings would discourage doing this.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Vreeman RC, Carroll, AE. (2007) A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 161(1), 78-88

<sup>207</sup> Smith, J., Schneider, B., Smith, P., Ananiadou, K. (2004) The effectiveness of whole-school antibullying programmes: A synthesis of evaluation research. School Psychology Review, 33, 547-560

<sup>208</sup> Dishion, T.J., Capaldi, DM., Yoerger, K. (1999) Middle childhood antecedents to progressions in male adolescent substance use: An ecological analysis of risk and protection. Journal of Adolescent Research, 14, 175-205

In 2011, the Swedish National Agency for Education evaluated eight anti-bullying programmes used in Swedish schools.<sup>209</sup> Children in class years 4–9 at 40 schools completed a questionnaire on three occasions at 6 monthly intervals about their experience of bullying/degrading treatment. The schools were representative of the approximately 4,700 compulsory schools in Sweden.<sup>210</sup> Results included that some schools managed to keep bullying at a low level or reduce it, whilst others were less successful. Successful schools were characterised by:

- Systematic and well-thought through implementation of a combination of different anti-bullying measures
- A clear allocation of roles and division of responsibilities
- All staff and children were clear on how to act when bullying occurred
- Consensus and support for the process -not only from teachers and those on the safety team and also from, for example, cleaning staff, caretakers etc.
- The combination of measures used was often developed in relation to the school's local conditions and experiences of different approaches
- A shared approach by staff and children seemed to be a prerequisite of success
- A positive school climate characterised by creativity, learning, security, helpfulness, participation and responsibility was another prerequisite of successful prevention
- The evaluation showed a difference between measures that reduce bullying of girls and those that reduce bullying of boys. Some measures helped remedy bullying for both girls and boys and these included:
  - Encouraging children to actively participate in the work of preventing bullying, not just on isolated occasions, but also in activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere, with support and cooperation of adults at the school
  - Regular follow-up and evaluation of the frequency of bullying and the use of these results as a basis for the way the school's anti-bullying measures are designed

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<sup>209</sup> Skolverket (Swedish National Agency) (2011) Evaluation of Anti bullying Methods [vloraedukim.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/9/15594174/pdf2849.pdf](http://vloraedukim.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/9/15594174/pdf2849.pdf)

<sup>210</sup> Skolverket (Swedish National Agency) (2011) Evaluation of Anti bullying Methods [vloraedukim.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/9/15594174/pdf2849.pdf](http://vloraedukim.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/9/15594174/pdf2849.pdf)

Wider approaches to bullying behaviours can also be considered as broader anti-bullying interventions. Countries and schools are increasingly focusing on developing positive behaviours in schools.

Alberta in Canada, for example, supports positive behaviour in schools at different levels:<sup>211</sup>

- A universal school-wide approach
- A targeted classroom management approach
- An intensive, individualized approach

All children benefit from a universal system of interventions, and for 80% to 85% of children these supports are sufficient to maintain positive behaviour. The more targeted interventions, such as social skills instruction and behavioural management benefit 5% to 15% of children and intensive. Individualized supports will benefit 1% to 7% of children who require more than the universal and/or targeted interventions.<sup>212</sup>

An example of a community-wide response to school bullying can be found in Nova Scotia, Canada. The 2013 Government's **Speak Up Action Plan** addresses the causes of bullying and cyberbullying behaviour through a whole community, as well as, a whole school approach. It focuses on:<sup>213</sup>

- Interpersonal relationships
- Public awareness and education
- Partnerships and system response
- Accountability and responsibility

A few examples from the many planned under each area are outlined below:

- Provide families across the province with access to telephone coaching services that help children with behavioural or anxiety issues and their families to manage these issues

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<sup>211</sup> Mackenzie, N (principal writer) for Alberta Education (2008) Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools A school-wide approach A PDF version of this resource is available on the Alberta Education Web site [education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx)

<sup>212</sup> *ibid*

<sup>213</sup> 2013 Nova Scotia Anti-bullying Action Plan, Speak Up: An Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying. [antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf](http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf)

- Require cell phone companies to distribute educational materials on responsible cell phone use to customers entering a new contract. This should include information on how to help stop cyberbullying
- Require all school boards to report annually on incidents of disruptive behaviour including bullying and cyberbullying
- Amend the Education Act and Regulations and include bullying and cyberbullying definitions in the act and regulations
- Revise the Nova Scotia School Code of Conduct and identify bullying and cyberbullying behaviours as severely disruptive behaviours and align the code with the changes to the act and regulations<sup>214</sup>

## **6.2. Anti-bullying interventions for children with SEND**

Whatever anti-bullying approach, or combination of approaches, is taken to tackle school bullying, children with SEND should be specifically considered and adaptations ensured for the following reasons:

- Children with SEND are more likely to be bullied. This is the conclusion from research conducted during the last 3 decades: children with SEND are at an increased risk of being bullied compared to their peers without SEND.<sup>215</sup> Thus, bullying of children with SEND needs to be specifically acknowledged, considered and addressed at the whole school, classroom and child level
- In order that children with SEND benefit from any anti-bullying strategies and programmes, these need to be tailored to meet the needs of children with SEND. Otherwise, schools will be unsuccessful in their efforts to reduce or eliminate instances of bullying for everyone<sup>216</sup>
- Knowing the risk and protective factors for bullying for children with SEND enables schools and individual teachers to foster protective factors and minimise risk factors:
  - Peer difficulties and peer isolation are common among children with particular SEND and marginalisation and isolation are factors that increase

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<sup>214</sup> *ibid*

<sup>215</sup> The 2010 literature review by McLaughlin et al outlines research evidence from the UK, Ireland, Scandinavia, the USA, Canada, Hong Kong: McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Peppin Vaughan, R. (2010) Responding to bullying among children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org/media/13555/SEND\\_bullying\\_Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org/media/13555/SEND_bullying_Literature_Review.pdf)

<sup>216</sup> Flynt, SW., Collins Morton, R. (2007) Bullying Prevention and Children with Disabilities, National Forum of Special Education Journal, 19 (1), 1-6  
[nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Flynt%20and%20Morton,%20Bullying%20Prevention%20and%20Children%20with%20Disabilities.pdf](http://nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Flynt%20and%20Morton,%20Bullying%20Prevention%20and%20Children%20with%20Disabilities.pdf)

the likelihood of victimisation and bullying,<sup>217</sup> so both social and academic inclusion are key in minimising these risk factors. In the research literature, social acceptance by the peer group is a key factor in reducing vulnerability to bullying and victimisation. The school context and the social fabric of the classroom are therefore important. It must be recognised that inclusion in mainstream settings alone does not automatically resolve problems of bullying and victimisation

- Social skills, language and communication are often key issues in the bullying that affects children with SEND. Promoting the development of these skills is crucial in order to protect children with SEND<sup>218</sup>
- Children with mild SEND and/or hidden disabilities may be more at risk<sup>219</sup>

Policy implications for anti-bullying interventions for children with SEND include:<sup>220</sup>

- Communication, language and social skills develop both resilience and coping and should have a central role in the curriculum for children with SEND
- Peer education, peer support and the development of social competence should have a central role in the curriculum for children with SEND
- Informed approaches to child grouping and extended responsibility for children with SEND during the ‘non-teaching’ parts of the school day
- Support staff trained in the personal, social and emotional aspects of learning and deployed in ways that do not increase the marginalisation of children with SEND

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<sup>217</sup> McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Peppin-Vaughan, R. (2011) Responding to Bullying among Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities: Briefing paper for Head teachers and school staff. [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2251/SEND\\_bullying\\_briefing\\_ABA\\_Headteachers\\_and\\_school\\_staff.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2251/SEND_bullying_briefing_ABA_Headteachers_and_school_staff.pdf)

<sup>218</sup> McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Peppin-Vaughan, R. (2011) Responding to Bullying among Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities: Briefing paper for Head teachers and school staff. [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2251/SEND\\_bullying\\_briefing\\_ABA\\_Headteachers\\_and\\_school\\_staff.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2251/SEND_bullying_briefing_ABA_Headteachers_and_school_staff.pdf)

<sup>219</sup> *ibid*

<sup>220</sup> McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Peppin-Vaughan, R. (2010) Knowledge Phase: Part 2 – A comprehensive review of the literature Responding to Bullying among Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2263/SEND\\_bullying\\_Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2263/SEND_bullying_Literature_Review.pdf)

- Build empathy and active responsibility among the peer group for the well-being of children with SEND. Adults in schools need to pro-actively develop peer relationships
- Improved support for advocacy among children with SEND and actively involving children with SEND in school review and development processes
- Help parents/guardians to support children with SEND to become advocates
- National and local policy and practice need to respond more effectively to bullying and victimisation among children with SEND
- Raise teachers' awareness of the bullying and victimisation of children with SEND
- Considering the following may be helpful in preventing and responding to the bullying of children with SEND:
  - Conceptualise bullying as located with the social context of the school and young people's lives
  - Intervene both preventatively and reactively and monitor the bullying of children with SEND
  - Planned preventative interventions improve matters but, if there is no intervention, bullying in mainstream settings can be worse than in special settings
  - Peer support interventions need to be assisted by the classroom and school climate
  - Simple targeted interventions can have considerable impact but need to focus on the particular needs of children with SEND or the social meaning of the behaviour and experiences
  - While the research on interventions for children with SEND has developed over the last fifteen years, there is a need for more research on school-based interventions and their efficacy
  - Accessing the views of young people with SEND is a significant methodological challenge

## **Evaluation of anti bullying interventions for children with SEND in England**

Evaluation research was conducted on local practice in schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations in responding to bullying of children with special educational needs (SEND).<sup>221</sup> The evaluation found that:

- While there is lively local practice going on in schools, little of that practice is empirically validated as effective. Schools were unsure about how to evaluate initiatives formally<sup>222</sup>
- The majority of interventions probably reflect existing anti bullying strategies for all children, rather than offering approaches tailored specifically to fit the needs of children with SEND. There were exceptions
- The East Sussex Local Authority developed and designed a toolkit to tackle bullying among children with SEND. This Local Authority recognised that their anti-bullying work was not meeting the needs of these children, who were overrepresented in the numbers of children being bullied. They developed and adapted their programme for children with SEND including the adaptation of sessions for children with ASD on friendship issues
- While there are multiple approaches being used by schools in England, schools need to develop an integrated approach to bullying of children with SEND and/or disabilities through leadership, policies, targeted training and support and effective systems<sup>223</sup>

The evaluation found a range of approaches to address bullying among children with SEND including:

- Raising awareness/understanding of children with SEND/disabilities
- Monitoring of bullying and children with SEND/disabilities
- General preventative training and awareness-raising for teachers and children offered by local authorities
- The development of a whole school ethos: The success of other strategies was felt to be dependent on the extent to which a whole school approach was in place

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<sup>221</sup> McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Oliver, C for the Anti Bullying Alliance (2011) Knowledge Phase: Part 3 – Validating practice in schools and local authorities anti-bullyingalliance.org/media/13561/SEND\_bullying\_validating%20local%20practice.pdf

<sup>222</sup> ibid

<sup>223</sup> ibid

- Individualised support and counselling offered to children involved in bullying events, either as one off events or in regular casework
- Preventative and reactive small group work with peers to resolve bullying incidents. (These approaches recognise the psychosocial aspects of bullying. However, there is little rigorous evaluation of programmes and limited evidence about how relatively short term approaches are or may need to be adapted for children with SEND and/or disabilities.)
- Confidence raising and skills training to equip children with SEND and/or disabilities with appropriate coping skills, confidence and resilience to deflect bullying behaviours
- Reduce potential for bullying through initiatives such as quiet zones, ‘positive playtimes’, shortened lunch breaks and identification of bullying hot spots

### **6.3. Belonging, connection and peer social support**

A 2014 report<sup>224</sup> brought research on the conditions required for belonging and research on bullying and interpersonal harm together and explored belonging and connection. Feeling a strong sense of belonging and connection in school is not extra or special. It is a fundamental human need and one to which all children are equally entitled. Research findings included:<sup>225</sup>

- Having a sense of belonging and connection makes a positive difference to school life
- Key elements to belonging and connection are friendship, peer acceptance, capability, being valued and supportive relationships with key adults
- When belonging and connection are threatened:
  - Friendships of children are limited
  - Children are lonely
  - The places they can go in school are controlled
  - There are tensions in negotiating support relationships
  - Children feel and are excluded
  - Their strengths are not seen by peers or adults in school

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<sup>224</sup> Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and connection of school children with disability. [cda.org.au/.../Belonging\\_and\\_Connection\\_-\\_2014\\_PDF](http://cda.org.au/.../Belonging_and_Connection_-_2014_PDF)

<sup>225</sup> Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and connection of school children with disability. [cda.org.au/.../Belonging\\_and\\_Connection\\_-\\_2014\\_PDF](http://cda.org.au/.../Belonging_and_Connection_-_2014_PDF)

Increased peer social support is the most significant predictor of decreased bullying, victimisation, fighting, and anger for both children with SEND and without SEND.<sup>226</sup> Peer acceptance is a protective factor in relation to being bullied while peer rejection increases the likelihood of being bullied.<sup>227</sup>

If children with SEND had friends in general education and were liked this was associated with less bullying.<sup>228</sup> Children with friends tend to be more cooperative, emotionally supportive, sociable and self-confident than those without friends.<sup>229</sup> Targeted strategies focusing on children at risk of bullying can include teaching friendship skills.<sup>230</sup> This can be done during individual interactions and during group work. Children can be taught how to enter a group, give compliments appropriately, co-operate in groups and demonstrate empathy. They can be helped to identify interests and join clubs and school groups in order to make friends with those who have similar interests. Coaching can be used for those children who are reluctant to engage with others.

A study of children with communication disorders found that children with language impairments, who were more widely accepted, seemed to be protected from the risk of being bullied.<sup>231</sup>

Children with SEND, who do not have opportunities to interact appropriately with their peers, are not fully included.<sup>232</sup> Much can be done to improve

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<sup>226</sup> Rose CA, Espelage DL, Monda-Amaya LE, Shogren KA, Aragon SR. (2013) Bullying and Middle School Children With and Without Specific Learning Disabilities: An Examination of Social-Ecological Predictors (2013) *Journal for Learning Disabilities*. Online First. doi: 10.1177/0022219413496279]

<sup>227</sup> Perry, DG., Kusel, SJ., Perry, LC. (1988) 'Victims of peer aggression', *Developmental Psychology*, 24, 807-814

<sup>228</sup> Malian, IM (2012) Bully versus Bullied: A Qualitative Study of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings, *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, 2 (10), 1-24 citing Carlson, EJ., Flannery, MC., Kral, MS. (2005) Differences in bullying/victim problems between early adolescents with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers. [corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1146&context=ejie](http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1146&context=ejie)

<sup>229</sup> Wentzel, K., Baker, S., Russell, S. (2009). Peer relationships and positive adjustment at school. In R. Gilman, E. S. Huebner, & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in schools* (pp. 229-244). New York: Routledge

<sup>230</sup> AOTA (2010) Occupational Therapy's role in Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Intervention with Children and Youth Bullying prevention and friendship promotion [aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/Practice/Children/SchoolMHToolkit/BullyingPreventionInfoSheet.pdf](http://aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/Practice/Children/SchoolMHToolkit/BullyingPreventionInfoSheet.pdf)

<sup>231</sup> Savage, RS (2005) Friendship and bullying patterns in children attending a language base in a mainstream school. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 21 (1), 23-26

relationships and interactions between children with SEND and other children and to ensure their academic and social inclusion:

- Teach social skills. This can be done directly using a structured approach to instruction<sup>233</sup> which involves "identifying critical social skills and teaching them through modelling, role-playing and performance feedback."<sup>234</sup> Some methods for teaching social skills include:
- Incidental teaching — using a natural interaction between a child and adult to practice a skill
- Reading and discussing children's literature and videos — many children's stories are on social skills topics such as making new friends, dealing with bullies, or encountering new situations
- After a social interaction, discuss what the child did, what happened, whether the outcome was positive or negative and what the child will do in the same situation in the future
- Social stories are a successful way of teaching social skills to children with ASD, for example, because they can provide children with a narrative or script about a variety of situations and appropriate behaviour<sup>235</sup>

Approaches or programmes such as the **4 Rs Program** (Reading, Writing, Respect and Resolution) which was started in the USA, treat bullying as a problem of communication and emotional literacy. The **4 Rs Program** is a social emotional learning (SEL) programme that integrates SEL into the language curriculum from kindergarten through Grade 5 with a focus on children at risk. It

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<sup>232</sup>Waltz, M. (1999). Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Finding a diagnosis and getting help. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly & Associates Publishing.

<sup>233</sup> National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (2007) Practicing Social Skills: How to Teach Your Child Social Interactions. [ldonline.org/article/21025/](http://ldonline.org/article/21025/)

<sup>234</sup> Peterson LD., Young KR., Salzberg CL., West RP., Hill M. (2006). Using self-management procedures to improve classroom social skills in multiple general education settings. Education and Treatment of Children, 29(1), 1-21 as cited by National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (2007) Practicing Social Skills: How to Teach Your Child Social Interactions. [ldonline.org/article/21025/](http://ldonline.org/article/21025/)

<sup>235</sup> National Center for Technology Innovation and Center for Implementing Technology in Education (2007) Practicing Social Skills: How to Teach Your Child Social Interactions. [www.ldonline.org/article/21025/](http://www.ldonline.org/article/21025/) citing a number of authors

also targets the skills of the teacher for social-emotional learning and language development with intensive professional development<sup>236</sup>

Consider using technology: a systematic review examined interventions aimed at improving peer interaction outcomes for school-aged children with complex communication challenges who regularly used/might benefit from augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Thirty one studies were identified and although the configurations of the intervention packages varied, most were found to be effective at increasing measures of peer interaction<sup>237</sup>

Peer support strategies such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring address can address the instructional needs of children with mild disabilities in general education classrooms. However, some pairings of children can be advantageous while others may be highly detrimental. Research has shown that membership in both aggressive and popular peer groups support bullying and can place some children at risk of bullying others while protecting from victimisation those within the group<sup>238</sup>

Schools are sometimes reluctant to discuss the special needs of a child with their peers due to concerns about naming and labelling. However, the literature suggests that such concerns have been exaggerated and that discussing needs and helping others to understand can sometimes serve a protective function. This has to be done sensitively and involve parents/guardians and the child in question. Respectful, helping relationships between typically developing classmates and children with special needs are valued by young people, their parents/guardians and teachers, and can build to friendships within a context of positive opportunities for interaction<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> See, for example, Aber, L., Brown, JL, Jones, SM., Berg, J. & Torrente, C. (2011). School-based strategies to prevent violence, trauma, and psychopathology: The challenges of going to scale. *Development and Psychopathology*, 23 (2011), 411–421. Also, [casel.org/.../4rs-reading-writing-respect-and-resolution](https://casel.org/.../4rs-reading-writing-respect-and-resolution) or [casel.org/wp-content/uploads/CASEL\\_Guide\\_4Rs.pdf](https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/CASEL_Guide_4Rs.pdf)

<sup>237</sup> Chung, Y-C., Carter, EW., Sisco, LG. (2013) A Systematic Review of Interventions to Increase Peer Interactions for Children With Complex Communication Challenges Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 37(4), 271-287(17)

<sup>238</sup> Estell, DB., Farmer, TW., Irvin, MJ., Crowther, A., Akos, P., Boudah, DJ. (2009). Children with exceptionalities and the peer group context of bullying and victimisation in late elementary school. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 18, 136-150.

<sup>239</sup> Fredericson, N (2010) Bullying or befriending? Children's responses to classmates with special needs *British Journal of Special Education*, 37 (1), 4-10  
[jakestone.net/wikipics/pdfs/frederickson.pdf](http://jakestone.net/wikipics/pdfs/frederickson.pdf)

McLaughlin et al (2010) suggested that schools can take action by:<sup>240</sup>

- Being aware of the social aspects of bullying and developing informed approaches to child grouping and taking responsibility for non-teaching times and social opportunities
- Building empathy among the peer group and active responsibility among peers for the well-being of children with SEND. Building awareness and empathy can be a strong agent of change and bring out the best qualities in peers
- Promoting peers as buddies and mentors
- Encouraging peers to be active and supportive bystanders
- Pro-actively developing peer relationships by creating social opportunities for children with SEND
- Giving a central role to the social aspects of education and to communication and language in the curriculum for children with SEND

### **Peer support interventions**

Peer support interventions involve arranging for one or more peers without disabilities to provide ongoing social and academic support to their classmates with moderate to severe disabilities, while receiving guidance and support from paraprofessionals, special educators, and/or general educators.<sup>241</sup>

Children, who help other children to learn, boost academic achievement and social skills in children with and without disabilities. For children with disabilities, their non-disabled peer is a role model, academically, behaviourally and socially. And for the peer helper, they learn to see these children as individuals and friends, not just as 'that disabled child.'<sup>242</sup>

Peer support interventions are an effective way to assist children with moderate to severe disabilities to access the general curriculum. Research has shown that higher levels of social interaction and contact with the general curriculum were

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<sup>240</sup> McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Peppin Vaughan, R (2010) Responding to Bullying among Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. [antibullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2263/SEND\\_bullying\\_Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://antibullyingalliance.org.uk/media/2263/SEND_bullying_Literature_Review.pdf)

<sup>241</sup> Carter E., Cushing, L., Kennedy, C., (2008) Peer Support Strategies for Improving All Children' Social Lives and Learning Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co Baltimore

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*

observed when children with disabilities worked with two peers relative to one peer.<sup>243</sup>

A review of interventions to promote peer interaction among adolescents with intellectual disabilities and their general education peers found that almost all the interventions were effective at increasing peer interaction.<sup>244</sup> Peer support interventions are individually tailored to address the instructional and social needs of children with disabilities. The following steps are often taken when establishing these arrangements in inclusive classrooms:<sup>245</sup>

- Identifying children with severe disabilities who need assistance to participate in class activities
- Recruiting peers from within the same classroom to help provide some of these supports
- Arranging for children to sit next to each other and remain in close proximity during class activities
- Orienting peers to their roles, explaining the rationale for their involvement, and showing them basic strategies for supporting the academic and social participation of their classmate
- Providing ongoing monitoring, feedback, and assistance to peers and their partners throughout the semester, as needed
- Shifting para-professionals to a broader support role in which they assist all children in the classroom or complete other responsibilities as directed by the teacher whenever possible

### **Paraprofessionals facilitating interaction and relationships**

Para-professionals, such as Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), can play a critical role in supporting children's access to the general curriculum. However, research suggests that an exclusive reliance on adult-delivered, one-on-one supports may inadvertently hinder children from participating in academic, social, and other

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<sup>243</sup> Carter EW, Cushing, LS., Clark, NM., Kennedy, CH (2005) Effects of Peer Support Interventions on Children's Access to the General Curriculum and Social Interactions Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities 30 (1), 15–25

<sup>244</sup> Carter, EW., Hughes, C. (2005) Increasing Social Interaction Among Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities and Their General Education Peers: Effective Interventions Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 30, (4) 179–193  
[uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/RPSD2005v30p179-193.pdf](http://uvm.edu/~cdci/evolve/RPSD2005v30p179-193.pdf)

<sup>245</sup> Carter E., Cushing, L., Kennedy, C., (2008) Peer Support Strategies for Improving All Children's Social Lives and Learning Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co Baltimore

learning opportunities that comprise the general curriculum.<sup>246</sup> “Challenging over-reliance on one-to-one para-professionals is not intended to diminish the contributions made by dedicated, hardworking and often underappreciated para-professionals. Nor is this challenge designed to preclude the thoughtful use of para-professionals, a practice widely acknowledged as beneficial” and that “in identifying overreliance on para-professionals..., it is equally important to exercise caution so that this information is not misused to the detriment of children with disabilities”<sup>247</sup>.

Unnecessary para-professional proximity can have an unintended negative social effect on children with SEND.<sup>248</sup> Potential, detrimental effects of excessive para-professional proximity include:<sup>249</sup>

- Separation from classmates
- Unnecessary dependence
- Interference with peer interaction
- Insular relationships
- Feelings of stigmatization
- Limited access to competent instruction
- Paraprofessionals are not always skilled in providing instruction
- Interference with teacher engagement
- Loss of personal control
- Loss of gender identity (Child with a disability is treated as the gender of the paraprofessional, for example, male taken into female bathroom)
- Provocation of problem behaviours

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<sup>246</sup> Carter, EW., Kennedy, CH (2006) Promoting Access to the General Curriculum Using Peer Support Strategies, Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 31,(4), 284-292. [inclusiveclassrooms.pressible.org/files/2010/04/Carter-et-al-peer-support.pdf](http://inclusiveclassrooms.pressible.org/files/2010/04/Carter-et-al-peer-support.pdf)

<sup>247</sup> Giangreco, M (2010) One-to-One Paraprofessionals for Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms: Is Conventional Wisdom Wrong? Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 48 (1), 1-13

<sup>248</sup> Giangreco, MF., Edelman, S., Luiselli, TE., McFarland, SZ. (1997) Helping or hovering? Effects of instructional assistant proximity on children with disabilities. Exceptional Children, 64, 7-18

<sup>249</sup> Giangreco, M (2010) One-to-One Paraprofessionals for Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms: Is Conventional Wisdom Wrong? Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 48 (1), 1-13

- Risk of being bullied (Some children are teased or bullied because they are assigned a paraprofessional)<sup>250</sup>

Sometimes it is necessary to assign 1-to-1 para-professionals to support children with SEND in the general education classrooms but this should not detract from a consideration of alternatives to over-reliance on para-professionals such as:

- Reassigning para-professional roles, for example, from one-to-one to the classroom
- Using peer supports
- Co-teaching
- Increasing ownership of general educators and their capacity to include children with disabilities
- Transitional para-professional pools, for example, short-term, targeted assignments for roving staff<sup>251</sup>

The use of strategies to help para-professionals facilitate interactions between children with and without SEND can increase the number of peer interactions for children with disabilities rather than hindering them:<sup>252</sup>

- Ensure that the child is in rich social environments
- Highlight similarities between the child and peers
- Re-direct child conversation to the child with a disability
- Directly teach and practice interaction skills in natural settings
- Use instructional strategies that promote interaction
- Teach others how to interact with the child with a disability
- Make rewards for behaviour social in nature
- Give the child responsibilities that allow for interactions with peers
- Systematically fade direct support
- Make interdependence a goal for the child

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<sup>250</sup> Giangreco, MF., Yuan, S., McKenzie, B., Cameron, P., Fialka, J. (2005). "Be careful what you wish for...": Five reasons to be concerned about the assignment of individual paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37(5), 28–34

<sup>251</sup> *ibid*

<sup>252</sup> Causton-Theoharis, J., Malmgren, K. (2005 ) *Building Bridges: Strategies to Help Paraprofessionals Promote Peer Interaction* *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37 (6), 18-24

## 6.4. School culture, climate and social emotional learning

A positive social environment is a pre-requisite for learning.<sup>253</sup>

Knowing that bullying is rooted in experimenting with social power makes it logical to focus on the social environment and on making bullying socially unacceptable, as an important element in any anti-bullying prevention strategy. Research evidence supports this approach:<sup>254</sup> “In a positive school climate where all members of the school community expect and experience acceptance, the challenges of different populations within the diverse group of children with disabilities may not loom as large. In schools with positive climates, children with and without disabilities, benefit from opportunities to interact and to develop friendships. When children with disabilities become less socially isolated, children without disabilities gain understanding about individual differences and the importance of empathy, acceptance, and support for all people.”<sup>255</sup>

School culture and climate are interactive aspects of a school environment. Changes in one produce changes in the other.<sup>256</sup> School culture is how things are done in a school and what things are done. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour that characterise a school:

- How people treat each other
- The extent to which people feel included and appreciated
- Traditions and processes that reflect collegiality and collaboration<sup>257</sup> are indicators of a good school culture

The school culture affects the school climate, which can be described as how children and staff “feel” about being at school each day. A number of factors influence the school climate including:

- Number and quality of adult/child interactions

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<sup>253</sup> Skolverket (Swedish National Agency) (2011) Evaluation of Anti bullying Methods [vloraedukim.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/9/15594174/pdf2849.pdf](http://vloraedukim.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/9/15594174/pdf2849.pdf)

<sup>254</sup> Department for education (2011) Reducing bullying amongst the worst affected. [dera.ioe.ac.uk/10364/1/Reducing\\_Bullying\\_Amongst\\_the\\_Worst\\_Affected.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10364/1/Reducing_Bullying_Amongst_the_Worst_Affected.pdf)

<sup>255</sup> NJ Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention (2012) Bullying prevention for children with disabilities. [njbullying.org/documents/AdvisoryGroupDocument2.pdf](http://njbullying.org/documents/AdvisoryGroupDocument2.pdf)

<sup>256</sup> Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention, 2011, by Berlin, R., and Ruscitti, DJ. of the Regional Office of Education and State’s Attorney’s Office, Du Page County, Illinois. [dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf)

<sup>257</sup> *ibid*

- Feelings of safety and trust
- Environmental factors such as buildings, classrooms and instructional materials
- Academic performance
- Children's and teachers' perceptions of their environment<sup>258</sup>

Changes in culture, at the highest school level, positively or adversely affect the climate at the school building level. Phillips conducted more than 3,000 school culture assessments from 1981-2006<sup>259</sup> and found compelling anecdotal evidence of how the school culture affects everything that happens in a school. Bullying prevention can include an assessment of the school climate and measurement tools exist to do this.<sup>260</sup>

A number of responses, in a consultation with parents/guardians in Australia, mentioned elements that were missing from their own experience and that would have made a real and positive difference.<sup>261</sup> These were:

- Genuine care and respect being shown by the school to the child and families
- A commitment to the right of every child to a quality education
- Trained teachers who are flexible and caring in their approach, and who genuinely believe in the capacity of every child to learn
- Regular open communication
- Collation of detailed information about the child to inform planning and provision
- A number of respondents highlighted the importance of children having peer relationships
- Access to external expertise and safeguards to ensure that individual programs are optimal and to add accountability for school performance

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<sup>258</sup> *ibid*

<sup>259</sup> In Wagner, C. "The School Leader's Tool for Assessing and Improving School Culture" Principal Leadership, v7 n4 p41-44 Dec 2006 as quoted in Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention, 2011, by Berlin, R., and Ruscitti, DJ. of the Regional Office of Education and State's Attorney's Office, Du Page County, Illinois. [dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf)

<sup>260</sup> Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention, 2011, by Berlin, R., and Ruscitti, DJ. of the Regional Office of Education and State's Attorney's Office, Du Page County, Illinois. [dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://dupage.k12.il.us/main/anti-bullying/pdf/BestPracticesManual.pdf)

<sup>261</sup> Children with Disability, Australia (2014) Member Consultation on Positive Education Experiences CDA Issues Paper. [cda.org.au/\\_.../Positive\\_Education\\_Experiences\\_-\\_April\\_2014\\_](http://cda.org.au/_.../Positive_Education_Experiences_-_April_2014_)

- Having respect for the knowledge parents/guardians have about their children and being responsive to advice and requests about particular approaches that parents/guardians know will work
- Being respectful of children with disability and taking their feedback seriously about what may or may not work for them is particularly relevant in instances of bullying from other children or teachers

### **Social and emotional learning and the school culture and climate**

Research on social skills and values in schools, sometimes called socio-emotional learning (SEL), demonstrates connections between SEL and improved school attitudes, behaviour, and performance among children.<sup>262</sup> Schools using a social and emotional learning (SEL) framework can foster a climate of warmth, respect and inclusion, and promote the development of social and emotional skills among children and staff. Bullying prevention can be easily embedded in a school's SEL framework.<sup>263</sup>

Examples of research demonstrating links between school environment, social-emotional learning (SEL), behaviours and performance include the following<sup>264</sup>:

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<sup>262</sup> Durlak, JA., Weissberg, RP., Dymnicki, AB., Taylor, RD., Schellinger, KB. (2011) The impact of enhancing children's social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82, 405-432 (2013)

Greenberg, MT., Weissberg, RP., Utne-O'Brien, M., Zins, JE., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., Elias, MJ. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning *American Psychologist*, June/July, 466-474

Zins, JE., Bloodworth, MR., Weissberg, RP., Walberg, HJ. (2004). The scientific base linking social and emotional learning to school success. *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say?* Teachers College, Columbia University, Columbia as cited by Social experiences of secondary children with intellectual and learning disabilities: school safety, victimisation, risk-taking, and feelings of belonging. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of philosophy in the faculty of graduate studies (school psychology) the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). [circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894/ubc\\_2013\\_spring\\_vandekamp\\_karen.pdf](http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894/ubc_2013_spring_vandekamp_karen.pdf)

<sup>263</sup> Ragozzino, K. & O'Brien, M.U. (2009). Social and emotional learning and bullying prevention. Chicago: CASEL. [casel.org/downloads/2009\\_bullyingbrief.pdf](http://casel.org/downloads/2009_bullyingbrief.pdf) as cited by School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA (2011) A Center Policy and Practice Brief: Embedding Bullying Interventions into a Comprehensive System of Child and Learning Supports [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf)

<sup>264</sup> Ott Vandekamp, KJ. (2013). Social experiences of secondary children with intellectual and learning disabilities: school safety, victimisation, risk-taking, and feelings of belonging. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of philosophy in the faculty of graduate studies (school psychology) the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). [circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894/ubc\\_2013\\_spring\\_vandekamp\\_karen.pdf](http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894/ubc_2013_spring_vandekamp_karen.pdf)

- A five-year longitudinal study<sup>265</sup> showed that a social-systems/anti-violence programme implemented in elementary schools resulted in:
  - Significant reductions in disciplinary referrals and suspension rates
  - Increased child ratings of school safety
  - Significant increases in standardised achievement tests scores school-wide and for individual children. Children in schools participating in the programme made notable gains regardless of socio-economic or cultural background. Children, who transferred out of such schools, showed signs of decline in academic achievement that was not attributable to changing schools. These gains did not happen in control group schools and children
- A meta-analysis of 300 studies showed that social and emotional learning programmes improved academic performance.<sup>266</sup> An average child receiving social and emotional programming ranked at least 10% points higher on achievement tests than children who did not receive programming

The connections between academic and social learning mean that developing social and emotional skills play a central role in improving the academic performance of children<sup>267</sup>, as well as, their emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. Long-term outcomes associated with inadequate social-emotional competence include academic, social and emotional problems during adolescence

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<sup>265</sup> Twemlow, SW., Fonagy, P., Sacco, FC., Gies, ML., Evans, R., Ewbank, R. (2001). Creating a peaceful school learning environment: A controlled study of an elementary school intervention to reduce violence. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158, 808-810

Fonagy, P., Twemlow, SW., Vernberg, E., Sacco, FC., Little, TD. (2005). Creating a peaceful school learning environment: The impact of an antibullying program on educational attainment in elementary schools. *Medical Science Monitor*, 11, CR317-CR325 as cited by Ott Vandekamp, KJ. (2013) above

<sup>266</sup> Durlak, JA., Weissberg, RP., Dymnicki, AB., Taylor, RD., Schellinger, KB. (2011). The impact of enhancing children social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82, 405-432 as cited by Ott Vandekamp, KJ. (2013) see footnotes above

<sup>267</sup> Utne O'Brien, M., Weissberg, RP., Munro, SB. (2005/2006). Reimagining education: In our dream, social and emotional learning – or “SEL” – is a household term. *Green Money Journal.com*, 14(2) (as quoted by Ott Vandekamp, KJ. (2013). Social experiences of secondary children with intellectual and learning disabilities: school safety, victimisation, risk-taking, and feelings of belonging. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of philosophy in the faculty of graduate studies (school psychology) the University of British Columbia (Vancouver).  
[circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894/ubc\\_2013\\_spring\\_vandekamp\\_karen.pdf](http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894/ubc_2013_spring_vandekamp_karen.pdf)

and adulthood.<sup>268</sup> Children socially rejected by their schoolmates are at risk of academic and mental health difficulties.<sup>269</sup>

Social-emotional programmes have had positive outcomes that decrease problem behaviours and are a foundation for personal development.<sup>270</sup> Positive outcomes include:<sup>271</sup>

- Schools and classrooms that foster inclusion and respect
- Increases in supportive relationships
- School success such as better academic performance
- Reductions in special education referrals and school violence
- Reductions in high-risk behaviours such as drug and alcohol use
- Life-long learning and associated outcomes such as decreased school drop-out, non-attendance and delinquency and other conduct problems

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<sup>268</sup> Merrell, KW., Merz, JM., Johnson, ER., Ring, EN. (1992) Social competence of children with mild handicaps and low achievement: A comparative study. *School Psychology Review*, 21, 125-137 cited by Ott Vandekamp as above

<sup>269</sup> McDougall, P., Hymel, S., Vaillancourt, T., Mercer, L. (2001) The consequences of early childhood rejection In M. Leary (Ed.) *Interpersonal Rejection* (pp. 213-247) New York: Oxford University Press

Parker, JG., Asher, SR. (1987). Peer relations and later personal adjustment: Are low-accepted children at greater risk? *Psychological Bulletin*, 102, 357-389 as cited by Vandekamp, KJ (2013) Social experiences of secondary children with intellectual and learning disabilities: school safety, victimisation, risk-taking, and feelings of belonging. Doctor of philosophy, University of British Columbia, Canada. [circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894](http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894)

<sup>270</sup> Greenberg, MT., Weissberg, RP., Utne-O'Brien, M., Zins, JE., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., Elias, MJ. (2003) Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist*, June/July, 466-474 as cited by Ott Vandekamp, KJ. (2013) as above

<sup>271</sup> Durlak, JA., Weissberg, RP., Dymnicki, AB., Taylor, RD., Schellinger, KB. (2011) The impact of enhancing children's social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82, 405-432

Elias, M J. (2006) The connection between academic and social-emotional learning. In M. J. Elias & H. Arnold (Eds.), *The Educator's Guide to Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement* (pp.4-14) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Ragozzino, K., Resnik, H., Utne O'Brien, M., Weissberg, R. (2003). Promoting academic achievement through social and emotional learning. *educational HORIZONS*, Summer 2003, pp.169-171, and others as cited by Ott Vandekamp, KJ (2013) as above

## 6.5. Designing the Built Environment

This section outlines some issues with the built environment and, in particular, for children with SEND.

Evidence is growing that the built environment in schools can create an anti-bullying environment or vice versa. Behaviours and research in various fields, shows that specific public locations are more susceptible to violence than other locations.<sup>272</sup> In schools, the playground, for example, can be a negative or a positive learning environment.<sup>273</sup> Schools need to be aware of the physical spaces that can be unsafe. In addition to playgrounds, hallways, staircases and hidden stairwells, bathrooms, sports fields, dense foliage, parking lots, classrooms, outside the school gates and on the school bus, can be bullying hot spots. A whole school approach to bullying needs to consider the physical environment and update information about “isolated areas, class-rooms, staircases, hallways, and basements” as well as “incident data mapped out by location, time and type”.<sup>274</sup> When designing or redesigning schools, consideration can be given to the issues outlined below, including specific physical and spatial design considerations for children with SEND.

### Participatory design

Edwards (2006) discusses the benefits of participatory design in the ‘**Sharing Spaces Project**’, which was carried out in three schools in North Staffordshire, in the UK.<sup>275</sup> This research demonstrated the link between improved school grounds and improved student welfare. A critical component of this project was the pupil-centred consultation process which resulted in the formation of a pupil committee, and a design process where all students assessed the existing site and

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<sup>272</sup> Fram, Sheila M. Ellyn M. Dickmann (2012), How the School Built Environment Exacerbates Bullying and Peer Harassment, *Children, Youth and Environments* 22, 1,227-249 [colorado.edu/journals/cye](http://colorado.edu/journals/cye) This article cites a range of published research on the issue

<sup>273</sup> Leff, SS., Power, TJ., Costigan, TE., Manz, PH (2003) Assessing the Climate of the Playground and Lunchroom: Implications for Bullying Prevention Programming, *School Psychology Review*, 32, 418-430 as cited by Fram, Sheila M. Ellyn M. Dickmann (2012), How the School Built Environment Exacerbates Bullying and Peer Harassment, *Children, Youth and Environments* 22, 1,227-249 [colorado.edu/journals/cye](http://colorado.edu/journals/cye)

<sup>274</sup> Glover, RL., Murphy, HR (2003) *School Safety Management: Practical Approaches*, Current Theories, and Standards, 2nd ed. Kingston, NJ: Civic Research Institute as cited by Fram, Sheila M. Ellyn M. Dickmann (2012), How the School Built Environment Exacerbates Bullying and Peer Harassment, *Children, Youth and Environments* 22, 1,227-249 [colorado.edu/journals/cye](http://colorado.edu/journals/cye)

<sup>275</sup> Edwards, K. 2006. Sharing spaces: school playground design and children's well-being. *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 5, 18-23

addressed key concerns by designing out issues, such as, bullying ‘hot spots’. The students then developed their ideal playground design and a landscape architect developed the design. An evaluation of the completed projects found that there was a reduction in negative playground incidences; that children had more pride in their schools and felt happier at break time; and there was increased use of the school grounds, as a learning resource.

### **Creating safe and age specific school spaces<sup>276</sup>**

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in the UK published guidelines around the design of school grounds and advises that provision must be made for differing children’s needs, whether, this is age or ability related.<sup>277</sup> The adoption of certain spaces by year groups is inevitable. It is suggested that sufficient, well-designed space must be provided for different age groups to reduce conflicts and to create conditions for greater positive social interaction: “The type of places often identified as worrying for young people are places where there’s little definition of place or activity – “...bleak... desolate... boring... no teachers... fights... bullies”<sup>278</sup>.

Another DfES document argues for the creation of specific identifiable spaces where students can feel secure. “Spaces, in which year or house groups can gather, can be valuable at post primary level, particularly in large schools, where pupils feel a lack of community or, where bullying and poor attendance are felt to be partly due to the lack of a social base.”<sup>279</sup>

In terms of managing the school grounds, the DfES suggest that schools should consult caretakers and grounds workers about the creation and implementation of access agreements or codes of conduct for the campus as they are the gate-keepers of the schools facilities”.<sup>280</sup> They propose, “Ongoing management

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<sup>276</sup> This is taken from a forthcoming publication from the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design at the NDA (2014) "Research on Universal Design of Shared Educational Campuses"

<sup>277</sup> DFES (UK) (2006) Schools for the Future - Designing School Grounds UK: Department for Education and Skills

<sup>278</sup> P. 74, DFES (UK) (2006) Schools for the Future - Designing School Grounds UK: Department for Education and Skills

<sup>279</sup> P. 29, DFES (UK) 2002. Schools for the Future – Design for Learning Communities. UK: Department for Education and Skills

<sup>280</sup> P. 79, DFES (UK) (2006) Schools for the Future - Designing School Grounds UK: Department for Education and Skills

policies should encourage and allow pupils and staff to adapt the space and its uses to suit current and future priorities”.<sup>281</sup>

### **Specific physical and spatial design considerations for children with SEND<sup>282</sup>**

DCSF<sup>283</sup> design guidance details a number of design issues associated with a number of specific needs.<sup>284</sup> According to this design guidance, children with cognitive and learning difficulties may need practical sensory and physical experiences to support learning in relation to abstract ideas and concepts. These needs must be considered, as part of school design, and attention must be paid to good acoustics for speech and language support and storage for learning aids and other SEN resources. Good visibility helps with supervision and well-designed way finding to aid independence are important issues. Most documents highlight the importance of good lighting to prevent threatening areas or blind spots.

In relation to children with behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties, disruptive, disturbing or hyperactive behaviour, or a tendency to be withdrawn or isolated will influence school design in many ways. In this case, the design issues relate to good sightlines, which create a balance between privacy and supervision, secure storage and tamper proof services, low health and safety risks, and large spaces for social and outdoor activities.

For children with communication and interaction difficulties, the design of a school should provide a legible school layout with clear signage that is easily understood, as well as, providing good lighting and acoustics. ICT may be required to provide additional sound or speech supports. Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will often benefit from the measures described above. However, they may also require additional measures to ensure an inclusive education approach. The DCSF design guidance recommends a simple school layout containing: “calm, ordered, low stimulus spaces, no confusing large spaces; indirect lighting, no glare, subdued colours; good acoustics, avoiding

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<sup>281</sup> P. 93, DFES (UK) (2006) Schools for the Future - Designing School Grounds UK: Department for Education and Skills

<sup>282</sup> This is taken from a forthcoming publication from the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design at the NDA (2014) "Research on Universal Design of Shared Educational Campuses"

<sup>283</sup> The department for children, schools and families (DCSF or dcsf) was a department of the UK government, between 2007 and 2010

<sup>284</sup> DCSF (UK) (2008) Designing for disabled children and children with special educational needs : guidance for mainstream and special schools, Norwich, TSO

sudden/background noise.”<sup>285</sup> Safe indoor and outdoor spaces for withdrawing and calming down are recommended, along with, precautions around health and safety and tamper proof services.

The experience of primary school, from the perspective of a young boy with ASD, illustrates the challenges faced by a person with ASD when attending school, for example:<sup>286</sup>

- Engaging with others: provide respite spaces in circulation areas, playgrounds or other social spaces from which the child can retreat but still maintain a view of activities to avoid being totally removed or isolated. The provision of secure dedicated play space for a particular class or age group may also help in this regard
- Quiet Space: greater retreat than that outlined above may also be beneficial and the provision of a quiet space which is acoustically separated from the activity area will help a person with ASD to calm down and rest

### **Using security design or Crime prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) approaches<sup>287</sup>**

In the 2004 **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development** (OECD) a document called ‘**Review of security in school design in Ireland**’ (Dolan, 2004) examines security at the building and site level.<sup>288</sup> This document outlines the development of CPTED, which is a planning, urban design and architectural design approach. CPTED began in 1961 and further defined in the 1970s. It promotes environmental design and management practices that create safer places for inhabitants and discourage criminal activity by increasing passive security and making targets more unattractive for criminals. Schools can use CPTED for tackling fear-based exclusion and reducing the fear of crime by designing out spaces that make people feel insecure or vulnerable. Various

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<sup>285</sup> p.199, DFCSF (UK) (2008) Designing for disabled children and children with special educational needs : guidance for mainstream and special schools, Norwich, TSO

<sup>286</sup> McNally, H., Morris, D. & McAllister, K. (2013) Aldo goes to Primary School: Experiencing school through the lens of the autistic spectrum, Belfast, McNally Morris Architects / Northern Ireland Arts Council.

<sup>287</sup> This is taken from a forthcoming publication from the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design at the NDA (2014) "Research on Universal Design of Shared Educational Campuses"

<sup>288</sup> Dolan, J. (2004) Review of Security in School Design in Ireland. In: OECD (ed.) Lessons in Danger. OECD Publishing

guidelines have been developed for CPTED at the urban level.<sup>289</sup> An Garda Síochana developed a fact sheet on how to design an environment that is conducive to the overall security of the community.<sup>290</sup>

To assist schools in their safety efforts, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in the USA has developed a series of eight guidebooks. These are intended to build a foundation of information that will assist schools and school districts in developing safe learning environments.<sup>291</sup> Examples of key issues regarding the physical design, use and supervision of the school are:

- Height of windows
- Number and type of entrances/exits
- Location and design of bathrooms
- Patterns of supervision
- Traffic patterns and their management
- Lighting
- Ratio of supervising adults to students
- Size of school relative to capacity

### **6.6. Using the curriculum to address bullying behaviours**

There has been increasing interest in school and classroom environments as important factors in the wellbeing, behaviour and academic performance of students and the connectedness of students and teachers to the school.

In Canada, in British Columbia in 2001, the Ministry for Education identified social responsibility as a foundational skill, as important as reading, writing and maths and the social-emotional and interpersonal aspects of schooling including adequate relationships as an essential foundation for academic success.<sup>292</sup> Schools introduced social responsibility into the school curriculum. Research in British Columbia found no significant differences between children with learning

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<sup>289</sup> Balducci, A., Cardia, C., Bottigelli, C. (2007) Planning urban design and management for crime prevention - handbook. European Commission - Directorate-general justice, freedom and security

<sup>290</sup> [garda.ie/Documents/User/CP%20Info%20Sheet%20-%20ED%20-%20CPTED-2009-04-22.pdf](http://garda.ie/Documents/User/CP%20Info%20Sheet%20-%20ED%20-%20CPTED-2009-04-22.pdf)

<sup>291</sup> [ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/book1.pdf](http://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/book1.pdf) and [ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/book4.pdf](http://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/book4.pdf)

<sup>292</sup> Diversity in British Columbia Schools  
[2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=73EF8BB83CF043A59CB80D9DAE941E28&title=Diversity%20in%20BC%20Schools%20](http://2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=73EF8BB83CF043A59CB80D9DAE941E28&title=Diversity%20in%20BC%20Schools%20)

difficulties and their counterparts in bullying or being bullied.<sup>293</sup> It is possible that such outcomes result from the curricular focus on socio-emotional learning in response to British Columbia's educational policies for schools.

Schools are introducing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into whole school programmes and the curriculum. Many programmes that promote the mental wellbeing of children, for example, encompass emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. In the USA, the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)<sup>294</sup> identifies categories for social emotional learning including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Similarly, in England, both primary and post-primary schools have used the SEAL curriculum as part of a whole-school approach to promote social and emotional skills including self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills. Initial evaluations in post-primary schools showed mixed results with many implementation issues.<sup>295</sup> Small group work in the curriculum had a positive impact upon children's social and emotional skills and, subsequently, had a broader impact upon areas, such as, child wellbeing.<sup>296</sup>

Downes (2009) articulates a systemic level preventative approach to bullying that focuses on building-up processes at a classroom and school climate level and that uses the school curriculum. The framework underpinning the approach is that of assumed connection rather than assumed separation between individuals, groups and classes, that is, to think of everyone, children and teachers investigating and learning together, rather than traditional authoritarian relations between teachers and students that can lead to 'us versus them' labels. Relations of assumed closeness and connection challenge traditional hierarchical relations between teachers and students and static labels such as 'bully' and 'victim'. Dimensions of such a relational and integrated curriculum for bullying prevention include:

- A curriculum approach to bullying prevention that offers sufficient intensity and duration to bring habitual change to relations in the class and school

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<sup>293</sup> Vandekamp, KJ. (2013) Social experiences of secondary children with intellectual and learning disabilities: school safety, victimisation, risk-taking, and feelings of belonging. Doctor of philosophy, University of British Columbia, Canada. [circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894](http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/43894)

<sup>294</sup> [casel.org/policy-advocacy/federal-policy/](http://casel.org/policy-advocacy/federal-policy/)

<sup>295</sup> Dept for Education (2010) Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme in post-primary schools: national evaluation  
[gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/181718/DFE-RR049.pdf](http://gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181718/DFE-RR049.pdf)

<sup>296</sup> Dept for Education (2008) Primary Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Evaluation of Small Group Work  
[gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/222231/DCSF-RR064.pdf](http://gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/222231/DCSF-RR064.pdf)

Integrate the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills across the school curriculum in Drama, English, History and Religion as well as SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education): the Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999) offers a model of how to do this

- Professional development of teachers and teacher pre-service education in how to make promotion of a positive class and school climate a priority in bullying prevention
- Professional development of teachers so that they move to an ethic of care which treats bullying as a problem of relation which requires construction of new narratives of identity for individuals and relationships between individuals and groups in the school
- Develop narratives of assumed connection between classes and groups through cooperative tasks leading to reframe existing oppositional narratives
- Connection and mutual dialogue between teachers so that there is consistent curricular implementation across classes in the same school in relation to bullying prevention strategies
- Specific designated teachers to facilitate connections between teachers in order to provide consistent curricular implementation of strategies

### **6.7. Tackling cyberbullying for children with and without SEND**

Cyberbullying is a method of bullying, an extension of real-world bullying.<sup>297</sup> ICT may become a medium for bullying but it is not the reason for the bullying.<sup>298</sup> The problem remains the same as other form of bullying. It stems from emotional illiteracy and a lack of understanding among children and adults about the origin and consequences of bullying.<sup>299</sup> There should be policies and procedures that address the safe and responsible use of technologies.<sup>300</sup>

In addition, a school's anti-bullying policies and procedures must address all forms of bullying including cyberbullying. Parents/guardians, schools and children need to be involved in tackling bullying and cyberbullying.

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<sup>297</sup> Notar, CE., Padgett, S., Roden, J (2013) Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature Universal Journal of Educational Research 1(1), 1-9, [hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf](http://hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf)

<sup>298</sup> Speak Up: An Action Plan To Address Bullying and Cyber bullying Behaviour (2013) [antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf](http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/R1240223-AntibullyingActionPlan-WEB2.pdf)

<sup>299</sup> Beat bullying (2009) VIRTUAL VIOLENCE: Protecting Children From Cyber bullying [archive.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual%20Violence%20-%20Protecting%20Children%20from%20Cyberbullying.pdf](http://archive.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual%20Violence%20-%20Protecting%20Children%20from%20Cyberbullying.pdf)

<sup>300</sup> Bauman, S., Pero, H. (2011). Bullying and cyberbullying among deaf children and their hearing peers: An exploratory study. Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 16(2), 236-253

Educators must learn to provide all children with the skills to manage risk and protect themselves online as well as learning how to offer support to peers, in particular to those who are more vulnerable to cyberbullying. Children need to learn how to identify and respond appropriately to cyberbullying and potential bullies must know that there are serious consequences associated with such behaviour, including school discipline, litigation, and criminal prosecution.<sup>301</sup>

Schools can respond effectively to cyberbullying in a variety of ways:<sup>302</sup>

- Address cyberbullying as part of the bullying phenomenon, rather than, as a problem that sits on its own
- Take a whole-school approach and address cyberbullying specifically in the school's code of behaviour, anti-bullying policy and the internet acceptable use policy. There should be consistency between the policies
- Engage parents/guardians in the development of policies to combat bullying and cyberbullying
- Survey children about bullying including cyberbullying
- Address cyberbullying as well as bullying in SPHE and RSE programmes: what it is; how to stay safe using the web; how to avoid trouble; how to deal with material or comments that are upsetting; reporting concerns about cyberbullying to a member of staff; how to report inappropriate material
- Educate staff and ensure that staff using social media do so safely
- Investigate cyberbullying incidents

In 2014, guidance provided for teachers and other professionals on cyberbullying and children with SEND in England is, essentially, the same for children with and without SEND. Their recommendations are grouped under prevention, reporting and responding and can be found on page 23 of that report and are also summarised here.<sup>303</sup> The recommendations of the AntiBullying Alliance for teachers and professionals on cyberbullying of children with SEND include:

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<sup>301</sup> Notar, CE., Padgett, S., Roden, J (2013) Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature Universal Journal of Educational Research 1(1), 1-9, 2013  
[hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf](http://hrpub.org/download/201306/ujer.2013.010101.pdf)

<sup>302</sup> Irish Vocational Education Association (2013) Cyberbullying in Schools Guidance & Resources for Management [etbi.ie/uploads/1/2/0/1/12012149/etbi\\_cyber\\_bullying\\_guidelines.pdf](http://etbi.ie/uploads/1/2/0/1/12012149/etbi_cyber_bullying_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>303</sup> Anti-bullying Alliance (2014) Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEND: guidance for teachers and other professionals: SEND: developing effective anti-bullying practice [.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf](http://.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf)

## **Reporting**

- Make reporting cyberbullying easier, publicise existing reporting routes so children, parents/guardians and staff are clear on how and who to report to
- Bullying and cyberbullying should be built into 'everyday' school conversations, so that during, personal tutor sessions, staff should talk to children about bullying and cyberbullying so that children have the opportunity to talk about any issues they are
- Provide real life examples when teaching, so that, children can use these to spot when they or others are being bullied, or to understand when their own actions could be construed as bullying

## **Responding**

- Support the person being bullied. Give reassurance that the child that has come to you has done the right thing by telling someone about the incident, refer to any existing pastoral support/procedures and inform parents/guardians. Young people we spoke with wanted staff members to work with them closely to agree a course of action and support, so that the young person felt in control of this process
- Advise on next steps e.g. save the evidence and don't retaliate. Young people requested further support to review how they currently use the internet and explore ways of improving their online safety. For example, being shown how to block people or increase their privacy settings
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated and, to do this, steps may include:
  - Asking the person responsible to take the content down
  - Reporting the content online yourself
  - Considering disciplinary powers to confiscate devices that are being used to cyberbully
  - Contacting the police if the law has been broken
- Investigating incidents – keep a record. If necessary, take steps to identify the person displaying the bullying behaviour
- Working with the person with SEND displaying the bullying behaviour. They may have been bullied themselves, or may not understand how their behaviour and actions have affected others

## **Preventing**

- E-safety education, e.g., thinking before you post is important; encourage children to put themselves in the shoes of the person receiving messages and to respect peers' thoughts and feelings online

- Make cyberbullying more visible in schools and ensure that information is in accessible formats, so it can be accessed and understood by all children
- Children, especially those with SEND, should be taught how to use the internet and new technologies safely and responsibly - this is a key step to preventing cyberbullying and to get the most out of technology
- Update existing policies and practices to reflect cyberbullying issues, and ensure that policies are 'owned' and understood by all. Children and parents/guardians should be made aware of children's responsibilities in their use of ICT and schools should be clear on how they will respond to issues of cyberbullying of young people with SEND
- Promote the positive use of technology: Schools should ensure that learning strategies and targets, as well as, staff development programmes, support the innovative and engaging use of technologies
- Regularly review the impact of prevention activities to make sure that anti-bullying policies are working and up-to-date. Consider conducting an annual survey of children's experiences of bullying, including cyberbullying, and a parent satisfaction survey

The Anti Bullying Alliance research on effective anti-bullying practices for children with SEND, also list some e-safety/cyberbullying teaching resources:<sup>304</sup>

- **Let's Fight it Together** (subtitled)  
<http://digizen.org/resources/cyberbullying/films/uk/lfit-film.aspx>
- **Character interviews** (subtitled)  
<http://digizen.org/resources/cyberbullying/films/uk/character-interviews.aspx>
- **SMART adventures** (signed stories)  
<http://www.signedstories.com/authors/clifford-boobyer>
- **SMART rules** (BSL) <http://www.childnet.com/resources/know-it-all-for-teachers-sen/bsl-smart-rules>
- **Symbols-based SMART rules** <http://www.childnet.com/resources/know-it-all-for-teachers-sen/symbols-based-smartrules>
- **Clicker 5 SMART adventure** <http://www.childnet.com/resources/know-it-all-for-teachers-sen/clicker-5-smartadventure>

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<sup>304</sup> P.23, Anti-bullying Alliance (2014) Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEND: guidance for teachers and other professionals: SEND: developing effective anti-bullying practice [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7441/cyberbullying-and-send-module-final.pdf)

- The UK Safer Internet Centre run the **Professionals Online Safety Helpline** (POSH) which provides support to teachers, Head Teachers, youth workers and social workers, see [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk).
- Other resources include the many educational clips and videos on YouTube and other resources including pictorial manuals to promote understanding of cyberbullying among children with SEND and other children.<sup>305</sup>

In 2014, a number of reports were published, following a 2-year research project in seven European countries on internet safety<sup>306</sup> including Ireland<sup>307</sup>. Some of the recommendations from this research include:<sup>308</sup>

- Wider use of mobile devices has made young people's internet use a more private experience. Therefore, parents, need to communicate with children about their online experiences
- It is important to encourage children to seek support when dealing with unpleasant online experiences. While many talk to someone when they encounter a problem online, one in three children do not ask for help
- Schools and teachers have a vital role to play in engaging children in online safety. By integrating mobile media use into learning activities, schools could promote more positive and safer uses of these devices
- Many children still lack basic safety skills. It is crucial therefore that digital literacy be integrated into the primary school curriculum to ensure that all children receive training in safety skills
- Bullying remains the risk that causes most harm. Adolescents now report more bullying through SNS and phone-calls than face to face. Despite evidence that children are more aware of the dangers of online harassment, more needs to be done to promote safer and more responsible uses of mobile communication. This should include raising awareness of privacy issues, reporting and blocking features, location-tracking functions, as well as

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<sup>305</sup> See, for example, Bhargava, D. (2011). Getting started!!! Using visual systems to promote an understanding of cyber bullying: Perth, Australia: Department of Education of Western Australia. [ashs.wa.edu.au/esc/CYBERBULLYING.docx](http://ashs.wa.edu.au/esc/CYBERBULLYING.docx)

<sup>306</sup> Livingstone, S., Mascheroni, G., Olafsson, K., Haddon, L. (2014). Children's online risks and opportunities: comparative findings of EU Kids Online and Net Children Go mobile. November 2014. [netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/](http://netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/)

<sup>307</sup> O'Neill, B., Dinh, T. (2014). Net Children Go Mobile: initial findings from Ireland. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology. [netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/](http://netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/)

<sup>308</sup> Barbovschi, M., O'Neill, B., Velicu, A. & Mascheroni, G., (2014). Policy Recommendations. Report D5.1. Milano: Net Children Go Mobile. [netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/](http://netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/)

the risks of escalation of exchanges that can occur through online 'social drama'. Schools, in particular, can play a more active role, given that most social media communication happens between peers and schoolmates

- Parents need to be more aware of the potential risks of underage social networking. They should be encouraged to supervise their children's SNS use and to take into account the child's age and agency. Nearly a third of 9-10 years and three out of every five 11-12 year olds has a social networking profile, despite age restrictions. Many do so with the permission of parents and without restrictions or constraints
- Given that children are more comfortable with mobile and online communication, the development of safety apps that promote an active dialogue between parents and children should be encouraged
- Industry and other stakeholders can help to create safer and better internet experiences for young people by ensuring that supports such as content classification, age-appropriate privacy settings, and easy and robust reporting mechanisms on mobile devices and services, are widely available
- Younger children are usually not fully aware of commercial risks: while they are sensitive to in-app purchases, they are less concerned about the misuse of personal data for customisation and marketing. Operators, industry, and content providers should promote a 'user-centric' approach to mobile privacy and more transparent payment procedures (especially for in-app purchases)
- Parental control tools for smart-phones and tablets can help parents create a safer online environment for their children, especially the youngest ones. In order to enhance their uptake and effectiveness, parental controls need to be user-friendly and flexible in terms of settings and functionalities, and tailored to children's needs, so as to be perceived as helpful resources rather than invasive tools

A 2013 Reference Report by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission made the following recommendations to eradicate social network-driven cyberbullying:<sup>309</sup>

- The best policy to address cyberbullying is raising awareness and supporting the whole school anti-bullying process. "At school, education about online media should play a key role in preparing young people to be able to use ICT 'civically' and become active citizens. The community as a whole has a

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<sup>309</sup> Rizza, C., Guimarães Pereira, A for European Commission (2013) Social Networks and Cyberbullying among Teenagers  
[ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/fileadmin/repository/trva/sidso/docs/cyberbullying-MAIN.pdf](http://ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/fileadmin/repository/trva/sidso/docs/cyberbullying-MAIN.pdf)

responsibility for making young people understand what human nature and values are”<sup>310</sup>

- Another successful approach is organising targeted actions with teenagers discussing these issues in what they consider as safe spaces. The process of awareness-raising should ideally be led by children themselves
- Cyberbullying is often framed as an issue arising from tampering with an individual’s online privacy and policy strategies focus on data protection. It may be more effective to frame cyberbullying as an identity-related ethical issue rather than a privacy one. The right to identity deals with the transmission of correctly and accurately expressed information to the public sphere. If any of a person’s data are used, without authorisation, in ways that cannot be reconciled with the identity (public image, projection) they wish to convey, that person’s identity is infringed
- Responsibility means that, when designing, developing and implementing Internet applications, ethical values currently enshrined in common global principles, rights and other rules should be embedded in the applications. Corporate responsibility plays a major role here<sup>311</sup>
- “Internet policy must move beyond the division between child victims and adult perpetrators. Some children perpetrate online risks, whether from malice, playfulness or mere accident; those who tend to experience online risks may generate further risks; those who create risks may also be victims; and those who are vulnerable online may lack adequate social support offline”<sup>312</sup>

## 6.8. Teacher training, classroom management and bullying

Research shows correlation between classroom management and whether bullying takes place.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> p.28, Rizza, C., Guimarães Pereira, A for European Commission (2013) Social Networks and Cyberbullying among Teenagers  
[ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/fileadmin/repository/trva/sidso/docs/cyberbullying-MAIN.pdf](http://ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/fileadmin/repository/trva/sidso/docs/cyberbullying-MAIN.pdf)

<sup>311</sup> Rizza, C., Guimarães Pereira, A for European Commission (2013) Social Networks and Cyberbullying among Teenagers  
[ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/fileadmin/repository/trva/sidso/docs/cyberbullying-MAIN.pdf](http://ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/fileadmin/repository/trva/sidso/docs/cyberbullying-MAIN.pdf)

<sup>312</sup> Livingstone, S., Haddon, L (2009) EU Kids Online: Final report. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.  
[lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20%20\(2006-9\)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf](http://lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20%20(2006-9)/EU%20Kids%20Online%20%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf)

<sup>313</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

A mediating variable between classroom management and whether bullying takes place, is the social structure of the class; the informal relationships among children, such as, friendship, support, attraction, isolation, power and relations between subgroups.<sup>314</sup> The social context of the school and teachers' contact with one another, impacts on teachers' beliefs, knowledge, ideas, and practices with regards classroom management. Relationships of children to one another and to the teacher in the classroom are reciprocal and interconnected. Thus, the actions of each person in the classroom affect the behaviours of everyone else in that environment.<sup>315</sup>

Bullying behaviours are encouraged by adults when they yell, threaten, shame, and punish children rather than staying calm, setting limits, problem solving, and following up with positive interactions. In order to eliminate bullying by children, bullying by adults must be eliminated.<sup>316</sup> Research suggests that bullying occurs in environments where there are harsh and punitive discipline methods, lower-quality classroom instruction, disorganized class-room and school settings, and child social structures characterized by anti-social behaviours.<sup>317</sup> Variables that appear to contribute to punitive school environments that promote antisocial behaviour include:<sup>318</sup>

- An over-reliance on punitive methods of control
- Unclear rules for child deportment
- Lack of administrative support for staff, little staff support of one another, and a lack of staff agreement with policies
- Academic failure experiences

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<sup>314</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>315</sup> Sullivan, K., Cleary, M., Sullivan, G. (2004). Bullying in post-primary schools: What it looks like and how to manage it. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press as cited in Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>316</sup> Evans, B (2011) Bullying: Can It Begin in Preschool? Curriculum Newsletter from Highscope 25 (3), 1-12. [highscope.org/file/NewsandInformation/Extensions/ExtVol25No3\\_low.pdf](http://highscope.org/file/NewsandInformation/Extensions/ExtVol25No3_low.pdf)

<sup>317</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>318</sup> Mayer, G. R. (2002). Behavioural strategies to reduce school violence. Child & Family Behaviour Therapy, 24(1/2), 83–100 as cited in Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

- Children lacking critical social skills that form the basis of doing well academically and relating positively to others, such as persistence on task, complying with requests, paying attention, negotiating differences, handling criticism and teasing
- A misuse of behaviour management procedures
- Lack of child involvement
- Lack of understanding or appropriate responding to child differences

Research suggests that bullies and victims come from families where parenting is either passive or authoritarian and, conversely, children from families where parenting is authoritative are less likely to be involved in bullying or in victimisation.<sup>319</sup> Similarly, there is universal support for an authoritative style of teaching in research; the authoritative teacher is in control of the classroom, has a clear purpose and agenda and encourages all children to develop their independence and self-determination within reasonable boundaries.<sup>320</sup>

Positive behavioural approaches encourage teachers to be proactive and positive rather than reactive and negative with regards behavioural management strategies. Some of these approaches grew out of the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis.<sup>321</sup>

When teachers organize classrooms so that positive child relationships develop, and manage learning and behavioural issues in positive, educational ways, children are far less likely to engage in or experience bullying.<sup>322</sup>

“Teachers who communicate respect and trust to their children are successful in creating positive classroom environments in which fewer behaviour problems occur”.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Baumrind, D. (1996). The discipline controversy revisited. *Family Relations*, 45(4), 405–414, cited in Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices, The Professional Educator [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>320</sup> Sullivan, K., Cleary, M., & Sullivan, G. (2004). Bullying in post-primary schools: What it looks like and how to manage it. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press as cited in Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>321</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>322</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

There is a growing body of research that has identified positive attitudes as being equally important as, if not more important than, knowledge and skills as prerequisites for good inclusive teachers.<sup>324</sup>

The role of the teacher is a critical determinant in the practice of inclusive education.<sup>325</sup> A systematic literature review on approaches that include children with SEND in mainstream classes found that characteristics of teachers, as well as the community of learners, influenced effective inclusion. Teachers, who recognised their responsibility for all learners and the importance of social interaction to learning, were effective. In addition, planning for communal learning experiences with flexible groupings and diverse opportunities to engage with concepts and practices through activities learners found meaningful, effectively included children with SEND.<sup>326</sup>

In Australia, the effectiveness of teacher preparation course in catering for diversity has become a key focus in Australian reports.<sup>327</sup> Models developed to prepare pre-service teachers for inclusive education include:<sup>328</sup>

- Education on students with special educational needs infused across all curricular areas field experiences in inclusive classrooms
- Field experiences in inclusive classrooms

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<sup>323</sup> Friend, M., Bursuck, W (2006) Including children with special needs: a practical guide for classroom teachers, 4/E Allyn & Bacon 75 Arlington St., Suite 300 Boston, MA 02116  
ablongman.com

<sup>324</sup> P.18, Forlin, C. and Lian, M.-G.J. 3–12. Abingdon, , UK: Routledge as cited by Forlin, C., Chambers, D. (2011) Teaching preparation for inclusive education: increasing knowledge but raising concerns, Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39 (1), 17-32

<sup>325</sup> Forlin, C., Lian, J. (2008) “Contemporary trends and issues in educational reform for special and inclusive education”. In Reform, inclusion and teacher education: Towards a new era of special education in the Asia-Pacific region, Edited by: Forlin, C. and Lian, M.-G.J. 3–12. Abingdon, , UK: Routledge, as cited by Forlin, C., Chambers, D. (2011) Teaching preparation for inclusive education: increasing knowledge but raising concerns, Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39 (1), 17-32

<sup>326</sup> Rix, J., Hall, K., Nind, M., Sheehy, K., Wearmouth, J. (2009). What pedagogical approaches can effectively include children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms? A systematic literature review, Support for Learning, 24 (2), 86-94

<sup>327</sup> Forlin, C. and Lian, M.-G.J. 3–12. Abingdon, , UK: Routledge as cited by Forlin, C., Chambers, D. (2011) Teaching preparation for inclusive education: increasing knowledge but raising concerns, Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39 (1), 17-32

<sup>328</sup> Forlin, C., Chambers, D. (2011) Teaching preparation for inclusive education: increasing knowledge but raising concerns, Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39 (1), 17-32

- Information about diversity throughout the curriculum
- Dedicated unit of study on diversity
- Coursework on inclusive education
- Direct contact with people with disabilities
- Children with disabilities coming to visit at the university

The Webster-Stratton **Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management** (TCM) programme provides teachers with strategies and skills to manage pupil behaviour within the classroom.<sup>329</sup> It aims to reduce conduct problems and promote pro-social behaviour.<sup>330</sup> The TCM programme is group-based. It consists of five one-day training sessions over 5 months and uses videotaping, role-play and discussions to help teachers reduce undesirable and aggressive behaviour by using praise, encouragement and motivation through incentives. Teachers are encouraged to establish positive relationships with pupils and to facilitate peer-to-peer bonding. The programme encourages teachers to work with parents/guardians and to promote parent involvement in school.<sup>331</sup> Evaluations of the IY TCM programmes support the effectiveness of the intervention in improving child behaviour, classroom environment and teacher skills across several different cultural contexts.<sup>332</sup>

In Ireland, research was carried out on the Incredible Years TCM programme in 11 schools in the Limerick area, 22 teachers and 217 children, aged 4 to 7 years, from Junior and Senior Infant classrooms. A Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)

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<sup>329</sup> Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, M.J. (1999) Treating children with early onset conduct problems: The importance of teacher training. Paper presented at the Association for the Advancement of Behaviour Therapy: Toronto, Canada, (November)

<sup>330</sup> Webster-Stratton, C. (2005). The Incredible Years Parents/guardians, Teachers, and Children Training Series: Early Intervention and Prevention Programs for Young Children. In P. S. Jensen & E. D. Hibbs (Eds.), *Psychosocial Treatments for Child and Adolescent Disorders* (pp.435-474), Washington: APA

<sup>331</sup> Webster-Stratton, C. Reid, J.M. (2008) Adapting the Incredible Years child Dinosaur social, emotional, and problem solving intervention to address co-morbid diagnoses, *Journal of Children's Services*, 3, 17-30

<sup>332</sup> For example,

Hutchings, J., Daley, D., Jones, K., Martin, P. Gwyn, R. (2007). Early results from developing and researching the Webster-Stratton Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Training Programme in North West Wales. *Journal of Children's Services*, 2: 15-26

Baker-Henningham, H., Walker, S., Powell, C. Meeks Gardner, J. (2009) A pilot study of the Incredible Years teacher training programme and a curriculum unit on social and emotional skills in community pre-schools in Jamaica. *Child: Care, Health, Development*, 35: 624-631

was conducted at six-month pre-post intervention period, during which time the teachers were still receiving the training. The findings are encouraging. The programme led to improvements in classroom environment, including a reduction in teacher reported stress and negative classroom management strategies, as well as, fewer incidences of disruptive behaviour amongst pupils in the classroom. There were some improvements in teacher reports of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the intervention group children when compared to their control group counterparts including, in particular, a significant reduction in emotional symptoms. The nature of the teacher-child relationships amongst the intervention group teachers, appear to have changed positively in the six-month period.<sup>333</sup>

Schools are looking for positive alternatives to negative school interventions, such as, out of school suspension. Research indicates that suspension does not change inappropriate behaviour nor deter other students from engaging in the same behaviours.<sup>334</sup> Instead, suspension can make the student's academic progress more difficult, and may increase the likelihood of the student dropping out of school or having other negative outcomes. In addition, there is evidence that there is over-representation of minority groups among those suspended or expelled from school.<sup>335</sup> Promising alternatives to suspension include:<sup>336</sup>

- Negotiation and problem-solving approaches can be used to assist students in identifying alternative choices as well as developing a contract that reminds the student to engage in a problem-solving process
- In-kind restitution rather than financial restitution, which often falls on the parents/guardians, permits the student to help to restore or improve the school environment either by directly addressing the problems caused by the student's behaviour, for example, in cases of vandalism students can work to

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<sup>333</sup> McGilloway, S., Hyland, L., Ní Mháille, G., Lodge, A., O'Neill, D., Paul Kelly, Yvonne Leckey, Bywater, T., Comiskey, T., Donnelly, M (2010) Positive classrooms, Positive children A Randomised Controlled Trial to investigate the effectiveness of the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management programme in an Irish context (short-term outcomes) Downloads/Positive-Classrooms\_TCM\_Report\_2011.pdf

<sup>334</sup> Skiba RJ., Peterson, RL., Williams, T. (January, 1999). The dark side of zero tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe schools? Phi Delta Kappan, 80(5), 372-381

Skiba RJ., Peterson, RL., Williams, T. (August, 1997) Office referrals and suspension: Disciplinary intervention in middle schools. Education and Treatment of Children, 20(3), 1-21 as cited by Peterson, RL in Ten Alternatives to Suspension [ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over5.html](http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over5.html)

<sup>335</sup> Peterson, RL in Ten Alternatives to Suspension [ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over5.html](http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over5.html)

<sup>336</sup> Peterson, RL in Ten Alternatives to Suspension [ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over5.html](http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over5.html)

repair things they damaged or by having the student improve the school environment more broadly, for example, picking up rubbish, washing lockers

- Parent involvement/supervision
- Counselling
- Coordinated behaviour plans
- Short- or long-term changes in the student schedule, classes or course content or offer the option of participating in an independent study or work-experience programme
- Short courses or self-study modules on topics related to the student's inappropriate behaviour and designed to teach the student to have increased awareness or knowledge about the topic, thus facilitating behaviour change. These modules might include readings, videos, workbooks, tests, and oral reports on a range of topics such as alcohol/drug use or abuse, strategies for conflict resolution, anger control strategies, social skills, for example, getting along with peers, making behaviour appropriate for the setting, and appropriate communication skills, for example, appropriate and inappropriate language, how to express disagreement

In North Carolina, USA, Public Schools and Community Initiatives sponsor alternatives to suspension for students who are suspended long-term.<sup>337</sup> These include, for example:

- The Community Services Grant program which funds volunteer activities that enable youth to give something back to the community while learning to appreciate helping others and deterring them from delinquent activities
- If a school in Burke County suspends a student, school officials bring parents/guardians and student together and offer them traditional suspension or Burke Alternative to Suspensions (BATS). Burke Alternatives-to-Suspension (BATS) is a collaborating community alliance sponsored by Burke County Public Schools.<sup>338</sup> BATS is designed to target at-risk youth who have been suspended for three to ten days. These students are at risk for becoming involved in the juvenile court system, dropping out of school as well as developing poor personal health habits. Combining community service with completing assigned school work successfully in a structured environment may begin a change in feelings of self worth and result in positive behaviours at school and in the community. Students in BATS have the

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<sup>337</sup> [njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/examples.pdf](http://njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/examples.pdf)

<sup>338</sup> See, for example, Phase 4, Tool I - Program Brochure Sample at [ncdps.gov/.../Phase%204%20Tool%20I%20Program%20Br](http://ncdps.gov/.../Phase%204%20Tool%20I%20Program%20Br)

opportunity to choose between 14 non-profit agencies to perform volunteer work during their suspended school days. They also devote a portion of their day to completing school assignments

A program offers high school students who have been long-term suspended the opportunity to perform volunteer work while continuing their education. During their 5 day week, students spend 2 days volunteering with a non-profit organization. For the remaining 3 days, the students continue the courses that they were doing in the public school system through a computer based Curriculum Resource called Nova Net. The curriculum is based on the Standard Course of Study for North Carolina and contains all of the courses offered through Wake County Public Schools. It is self-directed and self-paced, giving the students the opportunity to move on to the next course level after showing mastery of the current course, if they choose to do so.

## **6.9. Planning transitions for children with SEND**

Research shows that transitioning from primary to post-primary school is an educational milestone in the lives of all children.<sup>339</sup> “Relative to the large body of research on children in general, the sub-group of children with SEND has received less research attention at international and national levels. While some evidence suggests this group overall do not experience a less successful transition, identified barriers to transition may be more prevalent among this group, for example, low attainment, low self-esteem, problem behaviour and social challenges and these may affect child experiences of transition. Although, this group’s pre-transition concerns and post-transition experiences are strikingly similar to children in general, accessing support is a unique theme.”<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., Ryan, J. (1996) *Schooling for change: reinventing education for early adolescents* London: Routledge Falmer

Measor, L., Woods, P. (1984) *Cultivating the middle ground: teachers and school ethos* *Research in Education*, 31, 25-40

Sirsch, U. (2003). The impending transition from primary to post-primary school: challenge or threat? *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 27, 385-395, as quoted by Barnes-Holmes, Y., Scanlon, G., Desmond, D., Shevlin, M., Vahey, Nigel (2013) *A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Children with Special Educational Needs: Report commissioned by the NCSE.* [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions\\_23\\_03\\_13.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions_23_03_13.pdf)

<sup>340</sup> P.21, Barnes-Holmes, Y., Scanlon, G., Desmond, D., Shevlin, M., Vahey, Nigel (2013) *A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Children with Special Educational Needs: Report commissioned by the NCSE* [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions\\_23\\_03\\_13.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions_23_03_13.pdf)

Specific implications for children with SEND, in post primary schools, include:<sup>341</sup>

- Changes in the organisation of SEND resources/supports
- Coordination across schools
- Other services to ensure a continuum of support to address individual special needs

Accessing support is the primary theme recorded for children with SEND, but not with children in general.<sup>342</sup>

Knowing about resources on arrival at the new school and having a sense of continuity reduced post transition anxieties.<sup>343</sup>

In Ireland, research on 8 children with SEND and 2 parents/guardians found that the children were positive about primary school and had generally positive perceptions of the new post primary school after several visits. Their biggest fears centred on bullying and on hard work and they were aware that the supports they had in primary school would be important at post primary school.<sup>344</sup>

Key themes raised by parents/guardians in Irish post-transition qualitative research (focus groups and interviews) included:<sup>345</sup>

- Social integration is the bedrock of transition
- Information and support decrease ‘communication problems’

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<sup>341</sup> Barnes-Holmes, Y., Scanlon, G., Desmond, D., Shevlin, M., Vahey, N. (2013) A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Children with Special Educational Needs a report commissioned by the NCSE. [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions\\_23\\_03\\_13.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions_23_03_13.pdf)

<sup>342</sup> *ibid*

<sup>343</sup> Maras, P., Aveling, E., (2006) Children with Special Educational Needs: transitions from primary to post-primary school. *British Journal of Special Education*, 33, pp.196-203 (as quoted in A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Children with Special Educational Needs: Report commissioned by the NCSE. [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions\\_23\\_03\\_13.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions_23_03_13.pdf))

<sup>344</sup> Maunsell, C., Barrett, V., Candon, M (2007) Primary to post-primary school: perceptions of children with Special Educational Needs. In: P. Downes & A. Gilligan, ed. 2007. *Beyond educational disadvantage*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration as cited in A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Children with Special Educational Needs: Report commissioned by the NCSE. [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions\\_23\\_03\\_13.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Transitions_23_03_13.pdf))

<sup>345</sup> *ibid*

- Good transition planning ensures that effective early supports are put in place and this prevents problems developing

Parents/guardians and children perceived valued social inclusion over academic success. They also reflected the importance of having a specific individual, a significant other in the school during the transitioning process, who could provide support and with whom issues regarding transition could be discussed and dealt with.<sup>346</sup>

There is now a new circular on transitioning in Ireland.<sup>347</sup> From 2014/15, schools will be required to use the Education Passport materials. These include the standard 6th Class Report Card Template for completion by schools, the My Profile sheet for completion by pupils in primary schools before being shared with their parents/guardians/guardians and The My Child's Profile sheet for completion by parents/guardians/guardians. This should be sent with the My Profile sheet to parents/guardians/guardians by the end of the second week of June. Parents/guardians may complete the My Child's Profile should they wish to do so. The NCCA has developed materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools and these materials are presented under the title of Education Passport.<sup>348</sup>

## **6.10. Leadership and inclusion**

Decreasing the risk of bullying for children with SEND involves achieving social and academic inclusion. Inclusion, therefore, must be central to any efforts to tackle the bullying of children with SEND. Merely being present in mainstream settings does not automatically lead to the inclusion of children with SEND but requires a series of practical steps.

“A ‘rights-based framework’ is said to underpin the ideology and practice of inclusion and is considered particularly meaningful for promoting inclusive education. The fundamental principle of inclusive education is the valuing of diversity in the community and the contribution that every person has to make”.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid

<sup>347</sup> [http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045\\_2014.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045_2014.pdf)

<sup>348</sup> These materials are available at [ncca.ie/transfer](http://ncca.ie/transfer)

<sup>349</sup> Shevlin, M., Kearns, H., Ranaghan, M., Twomey, M., Smith, R. Winter, E (2009) Creating inclusive learning environments in Irish schools: Teacher perspectives. Report prepared for the NCSE [ncse.ie/uploads/1/creating\\_inclusive\\_learning\\_environments.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/creating_inclusive_learning_environments.pdf)

International best practice suggests that when real inclusion exists at school level there is less need for specific education policies and categorical systems for children with SEND. The Swedish emphasis on inclusive education is exemplified in a one-track educational system, where most children are educated in the same school. Only 2% of children are educated in separate special schools.<sup>350</sup> There is no data collection on children with SEND in mainstream schools. Instead, efforts focus on improving the school environment for all children.<sup>351</sup>

In research on bullying and inclusion of children with SEND in Ireland,<sup>352</sup> children's perspectives included:<sup>353</sup>

- Across all schools one theme emerged: the principal needs to listen and to communicate with children with SEND if they are to feel included
- Children suggested that teachers could help to make all children feel included in school by responding to individual needs and having more group activities
- Children felt included when there was a “positive” atmosphere, and when they had friends for playing, talking, and listening to them. They felt most included when they played games together

Some Irish research suggested that prospective principals should be required to demonstrate evidence of positive attitudes and commitment to inclusive education.<sup>354</sup> The role of the school principals in contributing to all aspects of school climate and organisational culture is recognised.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> p.118 in Banks, J., McCoy, S (2011) A Study on the Prevalence of Special Educational Needs conducted by the ESRI for the NCSE: NCSE, Trim, Meath  
[ncse.ie/uploads/1/Prevalence\\_of\\_SEND\\_10\\_09\\_12.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Prevalence_of_SEND_10_09_12.pdf)

<sup>351</sup> *ibid*

<sup>352</sup> Page xviii Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O'Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills.  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

<sup>353</sup> Six case studies were completed in three primary and three post-primary schools. Data included 312 questionnaires, 72 child interviews and 10 child day-long observations, documents and child drawings

<sup>354</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O'Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills.  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

<sup>355</sup> Children with Disability, Australia (2014) Member Consultation on Positive Education Experiences CDA Issues Paper. [www.cda.org.au/.../Positive\\_Education\\_Experiences\\_-\\_April\\_2014\\_PDF](http://www.cda.org.au/.../Positive_Education_Experiences_-_April_2014_PDF)

Key points raised in a consultation with parents/guardians in Australia included that successful inclusion starts with:<sup>356</sup>

- Positive attitudes from school leadership
- Trained teachers
- Strong advocacy from parents/guardians to negotiate the needs of children with SEND

In an Australian Report on belonging and connection of children with SEND, school leadership was emphasised: “The impact of school leadership and culture in leading teacher practice is vital. In an environment where resource constraints and lack of funding to support children with disability are common, creativity, collaboration and a visible commitment to inclusion are essential.”<sup>357</sup>

A principal recommendation of this report was leadership training, recognising its importance in building belonging and connection in schools. Leadership training modules for principals and other school leaders should be expanded to contain elements that cover the belonging and connection for children with disability, and cover practice examples of how they can be embedded in school practice. In addition, the **UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and the **National Disability Strategy** should be added to the training program on the **Disability Standards for Education for school leaders** to add a social context to this training”.<sup>358</sup>

“The manner in which principals approached their role was the vital element in creating a positive working environment in the school. The leadership style adopted by the principal serves as an example for everybody who works in the school. The principal must be receptive to other people’s ideas, and delegate authority and responsibility so that all members of the school community have a shared sense of pride, respect, dignity and ownership. Such an approach to

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<sup>356</sup> Children with Disability, Australia (2014) Member Consultation on Positive Education Experiences CDA Issues Paper. [www.cda.org.au/.../Positive\\_Education\\_Experiences\\_-\\_April\\_2014\\_PDF](http://www.cda.org.au/.../Positive_Education_Experiences_-_April_2014_PDF)

<sup>357</sup> P.39 Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and connection of school children with disability. [www.cda.org.au/.../Belonging\\_and\\_Connection\\_-\\_2014\\_PDF](http://www.cda.org.au/.../Belonging_and_Connection_-_2014_PDF)

<sup>358</sup> P.39 Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and connection of school children with disability. [www.cda.org.au/.../Belonging\\_and\\_Connection\\_-\\_2014\\_PDF](http://www.cda.org.au/.../Belonging_and_Connection_-_2014_PDF)

leadership is positive and it involves all staff members in a collaborative process”.<sup>359</sup>

“Among the skills required for leadership roles are the capacity to initiate and maintain positive working relations with others. Without training, the era of what Professor John Coolahan has referred to as the ‘gifted amateur’ will continue to be the approach adopted to the management of schools, with principals picking up the skills informally. Lynch has suggested that those who are in leadership positions should receive training in leadership styles that will promote the psychological well-being of colleagues. He focuses on staff development as a priority in preventing bullying and inappropriate behaviour, and also in providing counselling for those who may encounter bullying.”<sup>360</sup>

### **Barriers to inclusion in Irish Schools**

The Special Education Department of St Patrick’s College reviewed barriers to inclusion in Irish schools from the literature and conducted their own empirical research.<sup>361</sup> The research team studied inclusion in schools in Ireland using a case study research design. The team used multiple methods of data collection across six primary and post-primary schools, relying on key informants in the Irish education system to ensure that the selected schools were trying to operate as inclusively as possible.<sup>362</sup> Barriers to inclusion included, for example: <sup>363</sup>

#### **At the school and system level**

- Withdrawing children for additional support
- Lack of support for transitions between different stages of education

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<sup>359</sup> INTO (2000) Staff Relations: A Report on Adult Bullying in Schools  
[into.ie/ROI/Publications/StaffRelations.pdf](http://into.ie/ROI/Publications/StaffRelations.pdf)

<sup>360</sup>Page 15, INTO (2000) Staff Relations: A Report on Adult Bullying in Schools  
[into.ie/ROI/Publications/StaffRelations.pdf](http://into.ie/ROI/Publications/StaffRelations.pdf)

<sup>361</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O’Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills.  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

<sup>362</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O’Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills.  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

<sup>363</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O’Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills.  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

- A lack of leadership; a deficient understanding of SEND which affected the coherence of policy and service delivery, a shortfall in the range and level of skills required to deliver quality education for children with SEND<sup>364</sup>
- Some schools do not comply with whole school planning guidelines in relation to SEND and there is a lack of training in how to compile and use IEPs as well as logistical barriers around preparing and using IEPs<sup>365</sup>
- Some post-primary schools have restrictive enrolment policies that exclude children with SEND. Other schools may fail to make reasonable accommodations for children with SEND.<sup>366</sup> Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders encountered multiple refusals and ended up in schools outside their community and far away from their home<sup>367</sup>
- Inadequate early identification, intervention and pre-school provision for children with SEND; lack of access to the curriculum for many children; no structured emphasis on outcomes; delays in assessment; poor educational planning; under-resourced schools; inadequate institutional and systemic supports for inclusive education; insufficient training; and inappropriate, inefficient and inequitable allocation of resources<sup>368</sup>
- Challenges in relation to the inclusion of children with SEND include the subject-centred curriculum, preparation for state exams and the 'points race'.<sup>369</sup> Even with positive leadership, curriculum and assessment practices, subject interests and the points system militate against a whole school-shift in

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<sup>364</sup> Shevlin, M., Kenny, M., Loxley, A. (2008) A time of transition: Exploring special educational provision in the republic of Ireland, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 8(3), 141-152

<sup>365</sup> O'Sullivan, S. (2002). Individualised education plans in a mandatory environment: Perceptions of teachers in Irish primary schools. Unpublished M.Ed, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin as cited in *Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools* [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENReport2010.pdf)

<sup>366</sup> Department of Education and Science. (2007) Inclusion of children with special educational needs post-primary guidelines. Dublin

<sup>367</sup> Shevlin, M., Kenny, M., Loxley, A. (2008). A time of transition: Exploring special educational provision in the republic of Ireland. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 8(3), 141-152

<sup>368</sup> National Council for Special Education (2006) Implementation report: Plan for the phased implementation of the EPSEN Act 2004, Trim: NCSE

<sup>369</sup> Department of Education and Science (2007) Inclusion of children with special educational needs post-primary guidelines, Dublin

practices.<sup>370</sup> The maintenance of status hierarchies between different post-primary schools makes it difficult for schools to become inclusive.<sup>371</sup> Pressure on schools to deliver in the ‘points race’ can lead to a perception that inclusion of marginalised learners may not be in their best interests<sup>372</sup>

- A lack of planning for diversity, separateness and a dualism in the organisational culture underpinning provision for children with SEND means that they are an “add-on” in the system. This is contrary to inclusive processes, which should operate in schools, in the education system and in the interaction between the two systems.<sup>373</sup> The lack of planning for diversity is reflected in curriculum reform with the NCCA studying the creation of a new and different curricular framework for some children with learning disabilities at post-primary level<sup>374</sup>

#### **At the teacher level**

- Negative attitudes on the part of teachers to inclusion<sup>375</sup>
- Lack of teacher training and expertise to support all groups of children
- Lack of time to plan together for teaching and to give individual attention

#### **At the child level**

- A child’s ability, characteristics and personality, including motivation, confidence and self esteem
- Children with SEND may not be able to access assessment<sup>376</sup>
- Children with SEND may not be able to access the curriculum, for example, deaf children may not have access to Irish Sign Language<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Daly, T. (2008) School culture and values-related change: Towards a critically pragmatic conceptualisation, *Irish Educational Studies*, 27(1), 5-27

<sup>371</sup> Drudy, S., Kinsella, W. (2009), Developing an inclusive system in a rapidly changing European society, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(6), 647-663

<sup>372</sup> Daly, T. (2008) School culture and values-related change: Towards a critically pragmatic conceptualisation, *Irish Educational Studies*, 27(1), 5-27

<sup>373</sup> Kinsella, W., Senior, J. (2008) Developing inclusive schools: A systemic approach, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12(5/6), 651-665

<sup>374</sup> National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009) Junior cycle curriculum framework for children with general learning disabilities: Towards a discussion paper. Dublin: NCCA

<sup>375</sup> Drudy, S., Kinsella, W. (2009) Developing an inclusive system in a rapidly changing European society, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(6), 647-663

<sup>376</sup> Irish National Teachers Organisation (2006) *In Touch*, Dublin: INTO

Drawing on the Irish research literature and their own school visits, their recommendations for inclusion at the system and school levels in Ireland included:<sup>378</sup>

- Implement the entire EPSEN Act to strengthen the right of children with SEND to an appropriate assessment and to have their educational needs met
- Dedicate time, outside of existing teaching hours, for shared planning and collaboration to develop high quality inclusive classroom practices
- Team teaching, when in the best interests of children, should be part of the professional obligation of all teachers
- Formalise a system of support for parents/guardians of children with special educational needs in choosing placement options for their children
- Appoint co-ordinators of special educational needs within the existing posts of responsibility structure. They should be part of the school leadership team and be required to avail of mandatory professional development
- Develop curricula, assessment and certification systems that recognise the diversity of children and address all levels, needs and interests
- Use technology, shared web space and virtual learning environments to facilitate collaboration and planning
- Access to multi-disciplinary support services should to be equitable, based on need regardless of location of school or placement type and integrated with school supports
- Align whole school approaches with individual supports for particular children
- Address needs of children with SEND in Individual Education Plans (IEP)

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<sup>377</sup> Shevlin, M., Kenny, M., Loxley, A. (2008) A time of transition: Exploring special educational provision in the republic of Ireland. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 8(3), 141-152

<sup>378</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O'Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills. [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

## 7. Discussion and conclusions

### 7.1. Introduction

Children with SEND are more likely to 'be bullied'/ victimised than children without SEND.<sup>379</sup> If bullying is to be tackled effectively for all children, schools, teachers, educational professionals and parents/guardians need to be aware of how bullying behaviours emerge and why children with SEND are more at risk of 'being bullied' and, also, in some cases, more at risk, of bullying others. They need to know the risk and protective factors for bullying behaviours, including the specific factors for children with SEND.

Increased peer social support is the most significant predictor of decreased bullying, victimisation, fighting, and anger for both children with and without SEND. Isolation is a major risk factor for the increased risk that children with SEND have of being victimised/bullied and, in some cases of bullying others.

A sense of belonging and connection in school is not an extra but a fundamental human need to which all children are entitled: opportunities to interact with peers and develop friendships, peer acceptance, being valued and having supportive relationships with key adults.<sup>380</sup>

Peer witnesses are present in most bullying incidents in school and the peer group reinforces bullying behaviours.

The factors that interact and determine whether bullying/cyber-bullying takes place include:

- School level factors: school environment and organisation (culture, climate, cohesiveness, inclusion)
- Peer-level factors
- Individual characteristics of pupils (enhanced or reduced by school, classroom and family characteristics)
- Early childhood factors

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<sup>379</sup> Recent secondary data analysis of the Growing Up in Ireland Survey, once again, confirms this ubiquitous finding - see presentation in Appendix 8

<sup>380</sup> Robinson, S., Truscott, J. (2014) Belonging and Connection of School Children with Disability, Children with Disability Australia [cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers](http://cda.org.au/cda-issue-papers)

## 7.2. ‘Whole school’ approaches

Research shows that ‘whole school’ approaches are more effective in reducing the risk of being victimised/bullied, than single component interventions.

‘Whole school’ refers to an approach, sustained over time, which involves children, staff and parents/guardians. “It is cohesive, collective and collaborative action, in and by a school community, constructed to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these”.<sup>381</sup>

The effectiveness of whole-school approaches fits in with the environmental and group nature of bullying. Rather than a negative approach to bullying that includes punishment, naming and shaming, suspension etc, whole school systemic approaches decrease bullying behaviours by involving children, teachers and the wider community in the following strategies:

- Creating a positive school environment
- Establishing inclusive processes
- Ensuring that the physical environment is safe
- Focusing on the social emotional as well as the academic development of children and facilitating friendships
- Addressing the individual needs of children with SEND
- Building school connectedness, and a positive school culture and climate where children and staff feel safe, through mechanisms such as:<sup>382</sup>
  - Inclusive processes that involve the diversity of members in the school
  - The equal participation of everyone in the school community with supportive school structures (policies, school organisation, the physical environment etc) that reflect the values of participation and inclusiveness and promote processes based on these values

A ‘whole school’ approach is sometimes called ‘a healthy school’, ‘health-promoting school’, ‘universal’ or ‘multi-systemic’ approach etc.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> [det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/definitions/whole-school-approach.en](http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/definitions/whole-school-approach.en)

<sup>382</sup> Rowe, F., Steward, D., (2007) Promoting school connectedness through whole school approaches Health Education, 107 (6), 524-542

<sup>383</sup> [iuhepe.org/upload/File/PE\\_SH\\_05.pdf](http://iuhepe.org/upload/File/PE_SH_05.pdf)

A range of ‘whole school’ programmes that are effective contain the same elements and address the same inter-related issues. Examples include the NCSE’s framework for inclusion, mental health/mental health promotion programmes and social emotional learning interventions, as well as, ‘whole school’ anti-bullying interventions. This finding is of great significance because it means that schools do not have to implement a multiplicity of programmes. A single, comprehensive and whole-school systemic approach can address school issues including bullying, inclusion, early school leaving,<sup>384</sup> lack of connection to school, social and emotional learning and mental health problems.

Research has shown that the following elements of whole school anti-bullying interventions are associated with effectiveness:

- Intensity and duration of a program (directly linked to effectiveness)
- Improved playground supervision (strongly related to program effectiveness)
- Parent training and information for parents/guardians
- Teacher training
- Authoritative (not punitive) disciplinary methods
- Classroom management and classroom rules
- Cooperative group work between teachers and other professionals
- Programmes with systematic monitoring of implementation

In terms of school bullying, the whole school approach addresses the built environment, school culture and the development of children including their resilience and self-esteem; their social skills and ability to communicate and interact well with peers and teachers; their interests and their learning needs. Children need to be empowered to be active agents for positive change in schools. Staff can promote this in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities. In all parts of the curriculum, teachers can teach active citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities as taught in the Junior Certificate course of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE).<sup>385</sup> Schools can also use early

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<sup>384</sup> In some cases there is an overlap between Special Educational Needs and early school leaving Statements on Early School Leaving EUNEC Conference, Vilnius, 18-20<sup>th</sup> November 2013 [eunec.eu/event/conference-early-school-leaving](http://eunec.eu/event/conference-early-school-leaving)

<sup>385</sup> [education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Junior-Cycle-/Syllabuses-Guidelines/jc\\_cspe\\_guide.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Junior-Cycle-/Syllabuses-Guidelines/jc_cspe_guide.pdf)

education in human rights and democracy to create positive school environments and prevent negative behaviours and violence in schools.<sup>386</sup>

However, whole school approaches often require significant system change and leadership in a school to bring about a transformation in the way of thinking and operating. In contrast to health, youth work and community mental health, educators have not focused on the system as a unit of change until recently and so system learning within education is relatively new.<sup>387</sup>

Whole school approaches require:

- Developing a vision for the school
- Establishing a robust and effective communication system
- Collective responsibility for school planning and cooperation and a unified approach to the implementation of policies and procedures across the school
- Provision of support for pupils with SEND that involves the principal, staff and parents/guardians and consultation with children with SEND
- Inclusive processes in the school require leadership and commitment from the principal, teachers and other school staff, in the first place, so that both children and parents/guardians also engage and become inclusive

### **7.3. Teacher training and education**

When teachers model desirable behaviours, students appreciate and imitate them and the school environment becomes unfavourable to a bullying culture and makes it less rewarding and more difficult for bullies to act. “The impact of school leadership and culture in leading teacher practice is vital. In an environment where resource constraints and lack of funding to support children with disability are common, creativity, collaboration and a visible commitment to inclusion are essential.”<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Final report of the meeting on tackling violence in schools High-Level Expert meeting co-organised by the Government of Norway, the Council of Europe and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children Oslo, 27-28 June 2011 [coe.int/t/dg3/children/violence/OsloReport\\_en.pdf](http://coe.int/t/dg3/children/violence/OsloReport_en.pdf)

<sup>387</sup> Downes, P (2011) Multi/Interdisciplinary teams for early school leaving prevention: Developing a European Strategy informed by international evidence and research [nesetweb.eu/content-resource-library/multiinterdisciplinary-teams-early-school-leaving-prevention](http://nesetweb.eu/content-resource-library/multiinterdisciplinary-teams-early-school-leaving-prevention)

<sup>388</sup> P.39 Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and connection of school children with disability [cda.org.au/.../Belonging\\_and\\_Connection\\_-\\_2014\\_PDF](http://cda.org.au/.../Belonging_and_Connection_-_2014_PDF)

A systematic literature review on approaches that include children with SEND in mainstream classes, found teachers' characteristics, as well as, the community of learners, influenced effective inclusion. Teachers, who recognised their responsibility for all learners and the importance of social interaction to learning, were effective. In addition, planning for communal learning experiences with flexible groupings and diverse opportunities to engage with concepts and practices through activities learners found meaningful, effectively included children with SEND.<sup>389</sup>

The European Network of Education Councils (EUNEC)<sup>390</sup> has highlighted the role teachers can play in improving negative school environments.<sup>391</sup> So that teachers are able to tackle environments that predispose to bullying behaviours, teachers and trainee teachers need adequate education and training in:

- Creating learner-centred classrooms
- Differentiated teaching and high-quality learning activities for all
- Assuming a shared responsibility for learning
- Peer support intervention
- Classroom organisation and behaviour
- Proactive versus reactive academic and behavioural responses to students' needs
- Reflective practice
- Peer coaching and mentoring which can help teachers with the structure and support to learn about, practice, and reflect on improving classroom management practices

Concerning children with SEND, schools and teachers need to know how they can:

- Utilise group activities to encourage students to form friendships with pro-social peers and use peer support intervention for assisting students with SEND to access the general curriculum and develop peer relationships

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<sup>389</sup> Rix, J., Hall, K., Nind, M., Sheehy, K., Wearmouth, J. (2009) What pedagogical approaches can effectively include children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms? A systematic literature review, *Support for Learning*, 24 (2), 86-94

<sup>390</sup> The Irish Teaching Council (ITC) has recently become a member of EUNEC

<sup>391</sup> Early School Leaving Report of the conference of EUNEC  
[spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/statementsonESLEUNEcnov12132013vilnilius.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/statementsonESLEUNEcnov12132013vilnilius.pdf)

- Build empathy and active responsibility among peers and the peer group for the well-being of all pupils including pupils with SEND
- Develop informed approaches to pupil groupings and be aware that membership in aggressive peer groups and perceived popular peer groups can place some students at risk for bullying others
- Point out, in a consistent manner, inappropriate attitudes, communication and behaviour and praise and reward positive, respectful and friendly behaviour
- Pay attention to the social aspects of education and to social emotional learning (social skills and values) and to the communication and language skills of pupils with SEND who lack them
- Incorporate social and communication goals into the whole school plan and into the Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Encourage peers to be supportive of peers who are treated badly rather than remaining as passive bystanders and plan and organise peer support and promote a peer network where a student with SEND is isolated

#### **7.4. Leadership and inclusion**

Inclusion in school is central to tackling bullying behaviours for children with SEND. It creates an environment where all children can be valued and experience a sense of belonging and where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential in all areas of development.<sup>392</sup>

Inclusion is a process of increasing access and participation and benefits all learners in the education system.<sup>393</sup> Increasing the participation of children with SEND in all aspects of mainstream school life facilitates interactions and friendships with peers. This decreases their risk of 'being bullied' / victimised and of bullying. Inclusion benefits all children, including the typically developing child, by fostering appreciation of diversity, understanding, collaboration, patience etc.

Inclusion of children with SEND is taking place, but it is by no means uniform, so how to give impetus to the inclusion process in all schools is an important issue nationally and internationally.

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<sup>392</sup> Cologon, K. (2013). Inclusion in education: towards equality for children with disability. Melbourne, Children with Disability Australia as cited by Robinson, S., Truscott, J (2014) Belonging and connection of school children with disability [cda.org.au/.../Belonging\\_and\\_Connection\\_-\\_2014](http://cda.org.au/.../Belonging_and_Connection_-_2014)

<sup>393</sup> Travers, J., Balfe, T., Butler, C., Day, T., Dupont, M., McDaid, R., O'Donnell, M., Prunty, A. (2010) Addressing the Challenges and Barriers to Inclusion in Irish Schools: Report to Research and Development Committee of the Department of Education and Skills. [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/documents/StPatricksCollegeSENDReport2010.pdf)

The UK re-focused on inclusion in schools by establishing the Achievement for All pilot programme involving 454 primary, post primary mainstream schools, special school and a few pupil referral units. The purpose was to improve educational opportunities for pupils with SEND, to improve pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher relationships, improve attendance and to decrease bullying and the risk of 'being bullied'. An evaluation showed that pupils with SEND in the project made significantly greater progress compared to pupils with SEND nationally. In several of the analyses, the progress of the 'Achievement for All' cohort was significantly greater than that made by pupils without SEND nationally. The evaluation showed the inter-related nature of the factors that produce positive outcomes and lead to real inclusion. School characteristics; pupils' positive relationships influenced their academic progress; conversations with parents/ guardians; and assessment and intervention were all associated with changes in behaviour.<sup>394</sup>

For an ongoing process of inclusion, strong leadership is required from the school principal in the first instance. The leadership style adopted by the principal serves as an example for everybody who works in the school.<sup>395</sup> Leadership from the principal plays a key role in every aspect of the school, including organising whole school interventions, promoting a positive school environment, ensuring the wellbeing of all children and staff and planning the social and academic inclusion of children with SEND as well as tackling bullying behaviours consistently and effectively. The manner in which principals approached their role is a central element in creating a positive working environment in the school.

In visits to schools, staff considered that important characteristics of whole school inclusive processes included:

- Leadership from the principal
- Commitment, collective responsibility, communication and collaboration on the part of the principal and staff to achieve participation and learning of all
- School level plans around
  - Developing special education expertise
  - The coordination of provision of supports for pupils with SEND
  - How to access the resources needed to include all learners in mainstream school life

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<sup>394</sup> Department of Education (2011) Achievement for all national evaluation [gov.uk/government/publications/achievement-for-all-national-evaluation](http://gov.uk/government/publications/achievement-for-all-national-evaluation)

<sup>395</sup> INTO (2000) Staff Relations: A Report on Adult Bullying in Schools [into.ie/ROI/Publications/StaffRelations.pdf](http://into.ie/ROI/Publications/StaffRelations.pdf)

- Deployment of SNAs to integrate children with SEND into the mainstream and maximise their independence
- Excellent communication and cooperation between teachers and the SNAs and between the Special Education Department in the school and the SNAs
- Implementing school policies and evaluating them
- Some schools considered that employing teachers with experience in Assessment for Learning, special education or an interest in mixed ability teaching etc was crucial to maintaining a successful school inclusive process

In the UK, a national survey of parents/guardians' views on educational provision for children with SEND<sup>396</sup> showed a largely positive view. Of note is that the most satisfied parents/guardians were those with children attending special schools. Parents/guardians of children with psychosocial difficulties in mainstream schools were the least satisfied with mainstream provision.<sup>397</sup> Such findings suggest that children with behavioural and social difficulties in schools need more attention and support.

In Ireland, children attending schools in areas experiencing high levels of social exclusion are more likely to be identified with behavioural problems and are less likely to be identified with learning disabilities than children with similar characteristics are, who are attending other schools.<sup>398</sup> It may be that behavioural issues take precedence over learning difficulties and suggests a culture of containment rather than of academic progress in these schools.<sup>399</sup> Schools and the wider education system need to study how all schools can best provide the support and services for students with SEND that are appropriate to their level of need. A 2010 National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE) Report, 'Why are post 12 year old students with special

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<sup>396</sup> Parsons, S., Lewis, A., Davison, I., Ellins, J., Robertson, C. (2009) Satisfaction with educational provision for children with SEN or disabilities: a national postal survey of the views of parents/guardians in Great Britain, *Educational Review*, 61 (1), 19-47

<sup>397</sup> Parsons, S., Lewis, A., Davison, I., Ellins, J., Robertson, C. (2009) Satisfaction with educational provision for children with SEN or disabilities: a national postal survey of the views of parents/guardians in Great Britain, *Educational Review*, 61 (1), 19-47

<sup>398</sup> McCoy, S., Banks, J., Shevlin, M (2012) School matters: how context influences the identification of different types of special educational needs, *Irish Educational Studies*, 31 (2), 119-138

<sup>399</sup> McCoy, S., Banks, J., Shevlin, M (2012) School matters: how context influences the identification of different types of special educational needs, *Irish Educational Studies*, 31 (2), 119-138

education needs who have attended mainstream schools seeking admission to special schools', confirmed that changes are required in the way mainstream schools cater for children with SEND. The report highlights that the main benefits of special schools as identified by parents/guardians, are related to academic, social, emotional/behavioural factors and improved access to resources.

Wrap around multidisciplinary specialised services working across schools may best address the needs of children with a range of chronic and complex mental and behavioural health problems. In these services a range of professionals such as family support care, speech and language therapists etc work in schools.<sup>400</sup> The HSE Programme 'Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People' is currently developing a national network of community based 'network', early-intervention and school age disability teams, as part of their community disability services for children with significant disability. These services are establishing links including memoranda of understanding with other community health services such as Primary Care Services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). As child development and early learning are intrinsically intertwined, it may be timely to consider the employment of early education specialists on early intervention teams (there were 9 of these employed in early intervention teams in 2012).<sup>401</sup>

This provides an opportunity for schools and education services to develop working relationships with community health and other services to address inter-related school issues in a coordinated manner and to improve the emotional and mental resilience of children.

## 7.5. Summary

There are effective whole school approaches that decrease bullying behaviours. These approaches also address other important school issues such as mental health problems, poor engagement with school life, early school leaving etc. These approaches involve children, staff, parents/guardians and the community in creating positive and safe learning environments for all children. A whole school approach aims to create a vision for the school that is integrated and coherent in all school policies and practices, in the curriculum and in the teaching and learning methods. In this approach, building empathy among children, facilitating

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<sup>400</sup> Downes, P. (2011) Multi/Interdisciplinary teams for early school leaving prevention Developing a European Strategy informed by international evidence and research [spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/staff/documents/Multi-InterDisciplinaryTeamsNESETReportApril20123.pdf](http://spd.dcu.ie/site/edc/staff/documents/Multi-InterDisciplinaryTeamsNESETReportApril20123.pdf)

<sup>401</sup> The NDA are finalising a report to contribute to the HSE Programme 'Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People'

friendships for every child in the school, developing their social responsibility and raising their awareness about appropriate communication and interactions is as important as academic achievement.

Based on the literature review and empirical research, five guiding principles can underpin a framework to guide a whole school approach to the prevention of bullying behaviours, as well as, the inter-related issues of inclusion, mental health problems, truancy, early school leaving etc.

The principles are developed and expanded in the executive summary and are as follows:

### **Principle I: Rights-based approach to the protection of children from bullying**

The prevention of bullying forms an integral part of the national guidelines for protecting children in Ireland.<sup>402</sup> Connecting bullying prevention with human rights, and the core values that underpin them, may help principals, staff and parents/guardians develop an adequate vision for the school. These values are dignity, equality, autonomy and solidarity and dignity is the anchor norm of human rights.<sup>403</sup> “By listening to children’s views and perspectives and being informed by their experience, we gain a better understanding of the hidden face of violence and its root causes; we learn about the different ways in which boys and girls perceive violence and suffer its impact, and we enhance our ability to shape strategies to address persisting risks”.<sup>404</sup>

Ireland has ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, and has signed, and is committed to ratifying the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

Children need to be empowered to be active agents for positive change in schools. Staff can promote this in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities.

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<sup>402</sup> See, for example, Farrelly, G (2007) Bullying and social contexts: Challenges for school In: P. Downes & A. Gilligan, ed. Beyond educational disadvantage, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration

<sup>403</sup> Quinn, G., Degener, T (2002), 'The Moral Authority for Change: Human Rights Values and the Worldwide Process of Disability Reform', in Gerard Quinn et al. (Eds.), Human rights and disability: The current use and future potential of United Nations Human Rights Instruments in the context of disability (pp. 13-28), New York; Geneva: United Nations.

<sup>404</sup> Final report of the meeting on tackling violence in schools High-Level Expert meeting co-organised by the Government of Norway, the Council of Europe and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Oslo, 27-28 June 2011 [coe.int/t/dg3/children/violence/OsloReport\\_en.pdf](http://coe.int/t/dg3/children/violence/OsloReport_en.pdf)

Building empathy among children, facilitating friendships for every child in the school, developing their social responsibility and raising their awareness about appropriate communication and interactions is as crucial as among the adults within the school community.

### **Principle 2: Systemic interventions**

Systemic interventions involve coherent, ‘whole-school’, substantive and holistic approaches to facilitate the development of everyone in the school community. Parents/guardians, children, and community entities need to be actively involved in these interventions. Systemic interventions use universal (for all), targeted (for some) and individual strategies to address the inter-related school issues which include bullying behaviours; exclusion and isolation; early school leaving; mental health issues; and failure to develop in school.

### **Principle 3: Inclusive processes**

Inclusive processes require leadership and commitment from the principal, teachers and other school staff, in the first place, so that both children and parents/guardians also engage and become leaders in inclusion. Inclusion of children with SEND in all aspects of school life has benefits for all children, including the typically developing child, in fostering understanding, collaboration, patience, appreciation of diversity etc. A unified approach to diversity and inclusion operating at the school and the wider education system could usefully reinforce one another.

### **Principle 4 Education and Training**

Staff development is a priority in preventing bullying and inappropriate behaviours and in providing counselling for those who may encounter bullying.

### **Principle 5: Leadership and communication**

Bullying is a problem of communication and interaction. Communication is a central aspect of good leadership. The principal has a crucial role in the school in leading out on a robust system of communication.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1: Example of a bullying policy in an Irish post-primary school's behaviour code**

#### **Promoting a Safe Learning Environment for all Children:**

The context of this policy is our mission statement:

Our college is a vibrant learning community where, children, parents/guardians and teachers are supported, encouraged and challenged.

We provide an open, caring and friendly learning environment which embraces diversity and recognises that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make. We celebrate all achievements.

Our commitment to our mission statement means that our college has a very strong anti-bullying ethos. We have developed programmes, structures and roles within the college to ensure that every child and staff member feels safe, happy and able to learn.

#### **Our commitment to this aim means that we:**

- Take the issue of bullying very seriously
- Do all we can to be proactive about the issue
- Put support systems in place for children and parents/guardians if it does happen
- Include children and parents/guardians in decisions about how to resolve the issue
- Review our policy regularly with children, parents/guardians and staff

#### **Aims of our Policy:**

- To inform all children, parents/guardians and staff of our procedures
- To empower children to deal with the issue should it arise
- To engender a sense of collective responsibility regarding the issue of bullying
- To support children and parents/guardians involved

#### **Essential Elements of the Policy:**

- Focus on bullying as a human rights issue
- Regular highlighting of the issue with all children from first year
- Provision of a range of ways for children to access advice and support

- Regular information and In-Service support for staff

**Features of the Policy:**

- Clear guidelines for staff about how to document and resolve the issue
- Clarity for children about our procedures
- Clear steps for children to follow in seeking advice or reporting bullying
- Regular highlighting of the issue with children, parents/guardians and staff
- Regular review of our policy with children, parents/guardians and staff

**Raising awareness about the issue of bullying:**

- Anti bullying workshops for all first year children
- A workshop for all first year parents/guardians
- 'Stop It' booklet given to all child and parents/guardians
- Follow up lessons in SPHE with the class tutor
- Class tutors sit in on the workshop
- Equality/respect for others posters around the college
- Emphasis on equality in all college policies and guidelines
- Follow up workshop in senior cycle

**Guidelines and advice for children**

- Do not keep it to yourself-it will not go away!
- If you protect the bully by your silence, it will continue and get worse
- You have the right to be happy in school
- No one has the right to make you unhappy
- Reporting bullying is standing up for one of your human rights

**What to do if you see someone being bullied**

- Never ever join in!
- Be a friend-don't leave them all alone. A friendly word or smile could really help
- Talk to them about what happened- this will help them feel better. Don't pretend you didn't see what happened
- Try to persuade them to report it
- If they are not able to report it-report it in confidence for them

**What will happen when you report a bullying incident?**

- The teacher will talk to your tutor/year head or the college principal. One of them will then meet with you
- You must be sure to tell them everything that has happened
- They will write down what you say, to make sure they do not forget the details
- They may talk in confidence to a few other children who may have seen the bullying happening
- They will organise to meet your parents/guardians
- You will all discuss how to handle the situation
- You will be given help and support to help you recover and move on from what's happened
- They will check in with you regularly to make sure you are ok

**When an incident is reported: Staff Guidelines**

- Working with the target child
- Meet with the child at a place and time when you will not be interrupted

**Do not promise confidentiality**

- Stay very calm-be aware of any baggage you may hold re this issue and be careful not to bring this into the meeting
- Ask only open, not leading questions
- Take careful notes of everything they say

**Do not make any judgement statements in response. Just let them talk. At this stage, it is most important that they feel heard.**

- Try to get specific details about incidents if possible-if they are not ready for this now, arrange to meet them again to get the details we will need to speak to the child leading the bullying behaviour
- If it's on line etc, ask them to print out texts/conversations etc-do it now in school
- Seek advice from their tutor/year-head/deputy principal/principal before proceeding
- It may be appropriate to speak to some other children who may have witnessed the bullying incidents. Do this as discretely and carefully as possible Take careful notes of what they say. Assure them that this is confidential and ask them to respect that. Never divulge to other children where you got the

information. Make every effort to safeguard any child who has given you information

- Organise to meet the target child with their parents/guardians/guardians. Ask another staff member/Principal/Deputy Principal to help you do this
- Allow both child and parents/guardians/guardians to talk the issue out
- Arrange for the child to see the Guidance Counsellor as soon as possible
- Monitor the situation carefully over the next few weeks/months
- Contact the child to see if there has been any recurrence of the bullying behaviour
- Contact and update the child's parents/guardians/guardians about progress at school level

### **Working with the child involved in the bullying**

This should be someone who knows this child very well-their year head may be the best person to do this. Bring them all the information they will need before the meeting. Details will be very important.

For the staff member meeting the child:

- Prepare in advance how you will introduce this issue. It is essential that the target child is not linked to the reporting of the incident. **Plan carefully how you will do this**
- Arrange discretely to speak to the child
- Organise this at a time and place when you will not be disturbed
- Do not accuse the child at any stage of this meeting. Do not demonise this child
- Remember that a happy child does not engage in this behaviour and this child will need help and support to change this behaviour
- Bring the conversation indirectly to the subject matter. Ask general questions about their relationship with the other child
- Mention that some children have noticed him/her slagging/messing (whatever is relevant) and that it looked a little like bullying type behaviour
- Explain how that could make the other person feel. Encourage empathy with the other child
- Try to ascertain what might be behind this behaviour
- Offer support for this child-organise this with the guidance counsellor

- Outline how unacceptable that behaviour is in this college, and that the consequences of bullying behaviour would be very severe
- Gain a commitment from this child that they will have no direct or indirect contact with the other child
- Make sure that the child knows before the end of the meeting that if there is a reoccurrence of the behaviour, you both know it is bullying and that there would be severe consequences for that
- Be positive with the child. Thank them for their commitment. Communicate respect and full acceptance of their commitment
- Check in with this child later and remember to positively acknowledge their changed behaviour
- Always ensure that you maintain a positive relationship with this child going forward

## **Appendix 2: Key actions for school leaders and staff from an expert advisory group (USA)<sup>405</sup>**

- Ensure that school policies and procedures specifically address children with SEND
- Create an understanding of diversity, helping all children to understand ways in which we are all different and that SEND is one of these differences
- Ensure that materials and communications about anti-bullying and climate-strengthening approaches are modified if needed so that children with SEND understand the basic messages and are engaged. Barriers to understanding/engagement, including language, communication, emotional/ behavioural and cognitive challenges, can be overcome with proper modifications
- Include information that addresses anti-bullying issues specific to children with disabilities in harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) training
- Include children with SEND and their families in the school's anti-bullying assessment, planning and implementation activities
- Include staff and parent/s with special education experience on the school environment (school climate) team. Having team members who are familiar with a wide range of children with disabilities will help your team be sensitive to their specific issues and challenges
- Include children with disabilities in data collection and assessment of bullying and school climate. Their voices will contribute to the development of more effective programs and policies
- Encourage all children to participate in anti-bullying programs. For example, children with intellectual and developmental disabilities can successfully participate in curricula and programs related to improving school climate, inclusion, and anti-bullying as long as these programs are appropriately modified to meet their learning needs
- Address isolation and moderate exclusion. Be sensitive to the needs of children who are separated out of the mainstream receiving special services. Establish peer support programs and activities to promote friendships between children with disabilities and their mainstream peers
- Encourage and provide for safe, accessible means for children to let an adult know about any HIB experienced

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<sup>405</sup> From the Expert Advisory Group, Bullying Prevention for Children with Disabilities, NJ Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention in 2012  
[njbullying.org/documents/AdvisoryGroupDocument21-12.doc](http://njbullying.org/documents/AdvisoryGroupDocument21-12.doc)

- Address the needs of children with emotional and behavioural disabilities. This subgroup may be more involved in being bullied and bullying others, partly due to disability-related behaviours and deficits such as poor emotional self-regulation and impulse control. School staff should receive training in understanding and responding to children with emotional and behavioural disabilities in a supportive way. Counselling services focusing on pro-social skill development, including anger management training, should be available
- When bullying occurs, specific services should be available at school to help children with disabilities. Individualized plans should be developed to help children with disabilities cope with the negative impact of being bullied. This may include individual counselling or group counselling to develop and strengthen relevant social and behavioural skills. Children with disabilities who engage in bullying behaviour may need an individualized plan of intervention that provides individual counselling and/or group counselling with a focus on social skill, behavioural skill, and anger management skill development
- School specialists such as psychologists, counsellors and social workers, have important roles. They should work with all adults involved with the child, preparing the adults to be vigilant, protective, and ready to support skill development relevant to bullying. Specialists should consult with teachers to help teachers provide the specific support children with disabilities may need

### **Appendix 3: Immediate actions that schools can take re bullying**

The Department of Education and Skills Working Group highlighted immediate actions that schools can take which will help to prevent and tackle bullying in schools.<sup>406</sup> Examples of what approaches schools might take to implement these “actions” are given under the various headings.

#### **Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with school rules and routines**

##### **Positive behavioural supports**

- Use positive behavioural approaches such as being proactive and positive rather than reactive and negative to manage behaviour in the classroom<sup>407</sup>
- Notice and reinforce children who are behaving safely, responsibly and respectfully as this increases the frequency of desirable behaviours.<sup>408</sup> Autism researchers recommend reinforcing behaviours within five seconds<sup>409</sup>
- Positive reinforcement can be:<sup>410</sup>
  - Verbal, for example, statements, descriptive feedback
  - Nonverbal, for example, smile, thumbs up
  - Privileges, for example, seating choice, free time, additional break time, first in line for school lunch
  - Rewards, for example, stickers or other tangibles
  - Incentives, for example, tokens, tickets for a draw
  - Individual preferred activities, for example, computer use, time in a special area or getting to do a preferred job
- Work at building a positive relationship with each child over time realising that positive teacher–child relationships are the foundation of classroom-

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<sup>406</sup> [education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf)

<sup>407</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>408</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>409</sup> Katz, BW. List of Strategies for Children for Social Skills in the Classroom. [classroom.synonym.com/list-strategies-children-social-skills-classroom-6281.html](http://classroom.synonym.com/list-strategies-children-social-skills-classroom-6281.html)

<sup>410</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices The Professional Educator. [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

based and school-wide approaches to positive behaviour.<sup>411</sup> Strategies to build positive relationships with all children might include, for example:

- Stand by the door and welcome children as they enter the classroom. This quick and easy procedure shows children that you are glad to see them and helps you start the day with personal contact with every child<sup>412</sup>
- When children display strong emotions e.g., when they are happy, excited, or angry, you can build positive relationships by asking them how they are doing and what is going on with them. Statements such as, “Are you all right?” and “Can I help with anything?” let children know that you care for, value, and notice them<sup>413</sup>
- Listen sincerely to children communicates powerfully that you care about them. Maintaining eye contact and paraphrasing helps children realize that you have heard them<sup>414</sup>
- Empathising with children also helps them understand that they are valued. You can communicate empathy by telling children that even though it's wrong to hit someone, you understand the emotions behind an incident
- Support children’ interest and participation in non-academic and extra-curricular activities as well as in academic work, helps their confidence and well-being
- Positive communication with parents/guardians can powerfully reinforce many children. Look for opportunities to share good news with parents/guardians about how their children are demonstrating positive behaviours at school

### **Staff collaboration:**

Work together with other staff to have a consistent approach to behaviour management. If teachers constantly reprimand misbehaving children, the children can engage in further negative behaviour. The more attention adults pay to behaviours, whether positive or negative, the more that behaviour is likely to

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<sup>411</sup> Chapter 1: Positive relationships in Supporting Positive behaviour in Manitoba Classrooms. [edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key\\_element1.pdf](http://edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key_element1.pdf)

<sup>412</sup> Boynton, M., Boynton, C. (2005) Educator's Guide to Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems [ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing\\_Positive\\_Teacher\\_Child\\_Relations.aspx](http://ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing_Positive_Teacher_Child_Relations.aspx)

<sup>413</sup> Boynton, M., Boynton, C. (2005) Educator's Guide to Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems [ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing\\_Positive\\_Teacher-Child\\_Relations.aspx](http://ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing_Positive_Teacher-Child_Relations.aspx)

<sup>414</sup> Boynton, M., Boynton, C. (2005) Educator's Guide to Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems [www.ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing\\_Positive\\_Teacher-Child\\_Relations.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing_Positive_Teacher-Child_Relations.aspx)

increase.<sup>415</sup> A central factor in the success of any positive reinforcement system is consistency among the adults in the school. For a reinforcement system to be maximally effective, implement it across the school.<sup>416</sup>

### **Classroom structure and teaching:**

Parents/guardians and teachers can reinforce bullying if they label a child as a “bully” rather than understanding that bullying is a set of actions, not a person. Once a child is labelled as a bully and is punished without problem-solving and replacement behaviours and solutions, the behaviour may become more difficult to change.

Structure the classroom so that negative behaviours are unlikely to occur, and when they do, avoid repeating ineffective intervention strategies. Instead, focus on classroom management practices such as developing rules and consequences, and teaching social skills.<sup>417</sup>

Children sometimes are troublesome in school because they find the teaching too difficult or because the tasks and/or materials are not meaningful or relevant for them. In Alberta a school-wide approach to differentiated instruction is part of the school-wide positive behaviour programme.<sup>418</sup> Teachers in the school must agree to provide instruction and support that embodies the following principles:

- Children learn at different rates and in different ways
- Fairness sometimes calls for differences: all children do not need to do the same work in the same way
- The key to motivation is interest, and all children have different interests

### **Reaffirming positive behaviour - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention**

In order to reaffirm positive behaviour :

- Establish clearly defined expectations and clearly defined school and classroom routines

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<sup>415</sup> Chapter 1: Positive relationships in Supporting Positive behaviour in Manitoba Classrooms [edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key\\_element1.pdf](http://edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key_element1.pdf)

<sup>416</sup> Chapter 1: Positive relationships in Supporting Positive behaviour in Manitoba Classrooms [edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key\\_element1.pdf](http://edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/behaviour/key_element1.pdf)

<sup>417</sup> Allen, KP (2010) Classroom Management, Bullying, and Teacher Practices, The Professional Educator, [theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring\\_10.pdf](http://theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20spring_10.pdf)

<sup>418</sup> Mackenzie, N (principal writer) for Alberta Education (2008) Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools A school-wide approach [education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx).

- Praise children when they observe the rules. Have clear consequences for any violations of the rules and be consistent about implementing the consequences<sup>419</sup>
- Encourage children efforts. This is a way of catching them being “good”: Jane, each day your multiplication gets better and better. Tom, you're putting in a lot of effort. I know that you're going to master this material soon<sup>420</sup>
- To develop kindness in younger children, build opportunities for practicing it into the school day. In some schools children keep journals where they record random acts of kindness or where they reflect on their character and behaviour:
  - How did I show kindness today?
  - How did I not show kindness today?
  - How will I show kindness tomorrow?

The following is an example of a teacher’s effort to promote pro-social behaviour:<sup>421</sup> “To promote caring behaviour with my students (13/14 year olds) I use a character quotation and a weekly character challenge. I share a quote along with a photo of the author. First, I ask them, “What does the quote mean?” After they share some of their ideas, I offer my own. Then I challenge them to think about how they will apply the quote to their own lives. We discuss ways to do that. Later in the week, I ask them to share examples of how they did apply the quote. Each week, I challenge children to perform a caring or kind act during that week. During Week 1 of the school year, this was the challenge: Try to give a compliment to three different people this week. Your uplifting words make more of a difference than you could possibly imagine. After I introduce the Weekly Character Challenge, we discuss (1) why it’s important and (2) how to meet it. With the Compliments Challenge, I give examples of what a compliment is and is not. A good compliment focuses on a behaviour shown by another individual. For example: “I think you are an amazing listener. Whenever I have a problem, I know I can come to you and you will listen and give me support.” At the week’s end, I have the children write about their experience. “What did you like about this week’s challenge? How successful were you in meeting it?” I then collect the journals to check for completion and understanding. To increase accountability, I

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<sup>419</sup> *ibid*

<sup>420</sup> McIntyre, Tom. Creating a Behaviour Management System for Your Classroom [behavioradvisor.com/4Components.html](http://behavioradvisor.com/4Components.html)

<sup>421</sup> Lickona, T. (2012) Prevent Bullying, Promote Kindness: 20 Things All Schools Can Do, the Smart & Good Schools Education Letter. [2.cortland.edu/dotAsset/340b8b7f-e067-4231-9dd8-1eae2a8962e.pdf](https://2.cortland.edu/dotAsset/340b8b7f-e067-4231-9dd8-1eae2a8962e.pdf)

give a completion grade on the journal.<sup>422</sup> Other challenges have included gratitude, encouragement and no-complaints challenges.

**Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in child friendly language in the classroom and in common areas**

A list of 10 or 12 rules that urge children to be fair, kind, and respectful is not as useful as a few specific rules, such as:<sup>423</sup>

- “Speak one at a time”
- “Keep your hands to yourself”
- “Be prepared to start class when the bell rings by having your learning materials ready”

Effective classroom rules share key characteristics:<sup>424</sup>

- Brief/few in number
- As specific as possible
- Positively worded
- Clearly understood by all children

Children can assist in making classroom rules because children who participate in rule-making are likely to be more motivated to obey the rules. Some rules sound punitive because they are too negative. Consider the difference between a rule that states, “Don’t call out answers,” and one that says, “Raise your hand to speak.” The teacher should encourage positive wording by rephrasing rules.

After the teacher and children have established and reviewed classroom rules, the teacher can explain and recap on their use, congratulate the children when they follow them, and ask children who break them to explain why their behaviour violated the rules.

Rules should be explained carefully to all children so that they are understood by all. For this pictures may need to be used for some children. Modelling the rules by the teacher and children is always effective. Children can draw pictures about

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<sup>422</sup> *ibid*

<sup>423</sup> Friend, M., Bursuck, W. (2006) Including children with special needs: a practical guide for classroom teachers, 4/E Allyn & Bacon 75 Arlington St., Suite 300 Boston, MA 02116  
ablongman.com

<sup>424</sup> Friend, M., Bursuck, W. (2006) Including children with special needs: a practical guide for classroom teachers, 4/E Allyn & Bacon 75 Arlington St., Suite 300 Boston, MA 02116  
ablongman.com

the rules and procedures, write about the need for these rules or do role play. Violations of the rules should be pointed out and corrected immediately.<sup>425</sup>

Post rules during the first weeks of school, explain and discuss them, and model them for children. Setting classroom expectations at the start of the school year has a yearlong payoff. By rehearsing them and focusing child attention on them, the rules become part of children's understanding of classroom interactions. When teachers do not take the time to teach the rules to everyone, they often become a bulletin board display, ignored by both teachers and children.

### **Adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision**

This involves:<sup>426</sup>

- **Moving:** Constant movement gives the impression that adults are everywhere at once. It increases opportunities for staff to have positive contacts with more children, and provide behaviour management and support. Staff require a plan; for example, complete two figure eights across the playground within five minutes each and vary the patterns of movement throughout the day and from day to day. Target problem areas, activities and individuals at a higher rate
- **Scanning:** Maintain visual movement whether standing, walking or talking. Make eye contact with children outside your immediate physical area, and smile and wave to children who are engaged in positive behaviour. This increases opportunities for natural and positive contact, such as, greeting children, having brief conversations and acknowledging positive behaviour
- Set and readjust physical boundaries. Clearly communicate about areas that children are free to use. Readjust boundaries to accommodate adequate supervision. Identify areas that supervisors typically cannot see such as bathrooms, unused hallways and parking lots and ensure that they are regularly supervised
- Look at the children's behaviour and at the big picture, not just one child or one activity, but as many as possible. Recognize potential trouble spots and scan them often. Know individual children who have been identified as having

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<sup>425</sup> Friend, M., Bursuck, W (2006) Including children with special needs: a practical guide for classroom teachers, 4/E Allyn & Bacon 75 Arlington St., Suite 300 Boston, MA 02116 [www.ablongman.com](http://www.ablongman.com)

<sup>426</sup> Mackenzie, N (principal writer) for Alberta Education (2008) Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools A school-wide approach A PDF version of this resource is available on the Alberta Education Web site at [education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx).

particular difficulties. Informally check in with them to give feedback and prevent problems

- Recognize situations that may precede problem behaviour, which is typically preceded by arguing, rough play, unsportsmanlike conduct and over-competitiveness. Supervisors who recognize these precursors and reinforce appropriate behaviour can prevent the situation from escalating
- On the sports field, attend to individual behaviours. Watch for games breaking up for no apparent reason; children frowning and gesturing to others; children shrinking back from a peer/peers; rough movements for no apparent reason; someone running away from a peer or peers outside of an apparent game; frightened looks; or someone making a fist or obscene gesture
- Minimize the time spent dealing with problem behaviour. Supervisors need to maximize their movement and scanning opportunities. If you can't solve a problem or correct behaviour in two minutes or less, refer the problem to the office or to some other prearranged place

### **Positive contact and reinforcement**

- Actively project a friendly, helpful, open demeanour that communicates caring, trust and respect. A positive contact can be as simple as, "Good morning, Robert. It's good to see you"
- Increasing positive contacts gives staff more opportunities to provide friendly reminders that help children "get it right before they get it wrong"
- Deliver reinforcement immediately, or as soon as possible after observing the targeted behaviour. Positive reinforcement is contingent upon specific child behaviour that the school has targeted for reinforcement. For example: "Mary, I saw you helping John pick up those books he dropped—that showed thoughtfulness. That's going to make a difference in his day." The statement should clearly describe the behaviour that is being reinforced
- Follow the four-to-one ratio rule. That is, seek to provide four positive comments for every one negative or corrective statement. High rates of positive reinforcement increase the likelihood that children will engage in the targeted positive behaviour
- Strive to be consistent when providing positive reinforcement and when correcting behaviour

### **Immediate consequences for negative behaviour**

Supervisors should respond to inappropriate behaviour immediately and basing the intervention on a clear and shared understanding of specific behavioural expectations.

**Explicitly teach children what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like; acts like; sounds like; feels like in class and around the school**

The following is an example of adult modelling of respectful behaviour in the classroom. “Mr. Elliott reprimanded a child who talked out of turn. He said: “I know you have a question about your work, and I’m glad you care enough to ask for help, but I need to have you raise your hand because I can only help people one at a time.” Mr. Elliott showed respect for the child and built the child’s trust by not ‘putting her down’. Yet, Mr. Elliott stuck to his rule about not speaking before being called on, and he explained why it was important. Similarly, Ms. Belson asked Harriet to define the word diffident. Harriet gave an incorrect definition, saying it meant, “being bored.” Ms. Belson said, “Harriet, I can see how you might think the meaning is ‘bored’ because diffident looks a lot like indifferent. However, the word actually means ‘lacking in confidence.’”<sup>427</sup>

**Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve children in the development of these messages**

Schools can develop a set of “we” statements that express core standards that everyone in the school observes. Such ‘school touchstones’ can be developed by children, parents/guardians and staff. One example of a school statement is:<sup>428</sup>

- Whatever hurts my neighbour hurts me
- We show respect and caring by our words and actions
- We defend those who can't defend themselves

A teacher of 10 and 11 year olds establishes a ‘Compact for Excellence’ based on the children coming up with rules for work and for the treatment of others.<sup>429</sup>

The teacher sets up stations with markers and a large sheet of paper with one of the following headings:

- To help everyone feel welcome and respected, CHILDREN will...
- To help everyone feel welcome and respected, THE TEACHER will...

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<sup>427</sup> Friend, M., Bursuck, W (2006) Including children with special needs: a practical guide for classroom teachers, 4/E Allyn & Bacon 75 Arlington St., Suite 300 Boston, MA 02116  
[www.ablongman.com](http://www.ablongman.com)

<sup>428</sup> Lickona, T (2012) Prevent Bullying, Promote Kindness: 20 Things All Schools Can Do, the Smart & Good Schools Education Letter. [www2.cortland.edu/dotAsset/340b8b7f-e067-4231-9dd8-1eaed2a8962e.pdf](http://www2.cortland.edu/dotAsset/340b8b7f-e067-4231-9dd8-1eaed2a8962e.pdf)

<sup>429</sup> *ibid*

- To help everyone do their best work, CHILDREN will...
- To help everyone do their best work, THE TEACHER will...

After children write their suggestions at their station, they rotate at the teacher's signal to another station, read the entries there, and write others they think are needed. Then the teacher and children have a meeting, look at the ideas, and synthesize them into a 'Compact for Excellence'.

**Classroom management: give constructive feedback to children and model respectful behaviour**

Teach social behaviour in the same way as academic skills are taught, that is, use multiple examples (define, show, tell, describe), teach where/when the problems occur, give frequent practice opportunities, provide useful corrections and provide positive feedback.<sup>430</sup>

Social instruction can focus on skills like participating in conversations, noticing non-verbal cues, or behaving appropriately in the classroom. Children with ASD have difficulty reading facial expressions so they will benefit from looking at pictures of faces and identifying the corresponding emotion. Various instructional strategies to teach skills include social story scripts, video modelling, role-playing and colour-coded interpersonal diagrams. The teachers can model the skill they are teaching as often as possible.<sup>431</sup>

Integrate social skills throughout the day. For example, intervene with children using the language of social skill instruction. For example, if a child is running in the hall, say, "What is the rule about hallways? Please go back and walk to show respect for the safety of yourself and others."<sup>432</sup>

Teach positive social skills step-by-step. For example:<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Mackenzie, N (principal writer) for Alberta Education (2008) Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools A school-wide approach citing Sopris West Educational Services. Best Behaviour: Building Positive Behaviour Support in Schools by Jeff Sprague © 2005, Figure 10, page 55. A PDF version of this resource is available on the Alberta Education Web site [ateducation.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx](http://ateducation.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx).

<sup>431</sup> Katz, BW. List of Strategies for Children for Social Skills in the Classroom. [classroom.synonym.com/list-strategies-children-social-skills-classroom-6281.html](http://classroom.synonym.com/list-strategies-children-social-skills-classroom-6281.html)

<sup>432</sup> Mackenzie, N (principal writer) for Alberta Education (2008) Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools A school-wide approach A PDF version of this resource is available on the Alberta Education Web site at [education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx).

<sup>433</sup> Mackenzie, N (principal writer) for Alberta Education (2008) Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools A school-wide approach A PDF version of this resource is available on the Alberta Education Web site at [education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx).

- Identify the social skill you want to teach
- Introduce the skill to children through stories, film, poetry or discussion
- Identify the components or steps involved in the skill
- Model the components or steps of the skill
- Give children opportunities to practise and master the skill through other activities. Provide corrective feedback, as necessary
- Acknowledge and celebrate independent use of the skill

Teachers can vary their instructional approach. They may teach a small group of children who have similar instructional needs or an individual child who needs extra help with an English assignment. Teachers may group children of differing interests and abilities to foster cooperative problem solving and/or peer tutoring. Children respond differently to these types of groupings. For example, Mike needs adaptations in classroom grouping in order to succeed. He might do better in a small group where other children read assignments aloud so that he can participate in responding to them.<sup>434</sup>

**Explicitly teach children about the appropriate use of social media. Positively encourage children to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with children who ignore the rules**

Schools can:<sup>435</sup>

- Promote positive use of technology to support engaging, positive and effective learning, more flexible learning that is creative and accessible; explore safe ways of using technology to support: self-esteem, assertiveness, participation and developing friendships; show learners that adults in the school understand the technologies they use – or get the children to teach the adults
- Make reporting of cyber-bullying easier, for example, provide and publicise different ways of reporting such as cyber-mentors, peer reporting, tutors, year head, counsellor, chaplain and foment a school culture that encourages and facilitates all in the school community to act as ‘unofficial monitors’
- Understand and talk about use of technology and cyberbullying. Children need to know how to stay safe using the web, what cyberbullying is, how to report

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<sup>434</sup> Friend, M., Bursuck, W (2006) Including Children With Special Needs: A Practical Guide For Classroom Teachers, 4/E.

[www.ablongman.com/html/productinfo/friend4e/contents/0321317742\\_ch05.pdf](http://www.ablongman.com/html/productinfo/friend4e/contents/0321317742_ch05.pdf)

<sup>435</sup> ACCS Convention (2013) Cyberbullying: Can Schools and Boards deal with it effectively?

[www.accs.ie/content/uploads/1/Cyberbullying\\_Presentation-\\_\\_March\\_2013.pdf](http://www.accs.ie/content/uploads/1/Cyberbullying_Presentation-__March_2013.pdf)

any concerns to staff, how to go about reporting inappropriate material on the web, how to avoid trouble, how to deal with upsetting comments.

Parents/guardians and children must be aware of children's responsibilities. Use the child body: 'Cyber Mentors'; build staff capacity – there is online training available to inform teachers and other school personnel. Hold a Safer Internet Day:

- Have relevant policies and practices around the use of social media
- Engage with others re cyberbullying, Have a Serious Incident Protocol and engage with parents/guardians. There is a need, too, that the industry gets involved, that the media is responsible and that there are laws regarding cyberbullying

## **Appendix 4: Letter and questions sent to schools re school visits and schools visited**

### **Letter to schools**

#### **Good practice in Irish schools for the prevention of bullying of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

Dear (Principal's name),

Ministers Quinn and Fitzgerald recently launched an Action Plan on Bullying which sets out 12 actions to help prevent and tackle bullying in all primary and second level schools in Ireland. The 12 actions in the Plan are focused on supports for schools and teachers, awareness raising measures and further research. Number 10 in the plan states that 'research on effective supports for children with special educational needs' will be conducted in 2013. This research will be conducted by the National Disability Authority.

A key part of this research is to document examples of good practice in Ireland, including whole-school approaches, which are effective in preventing or addressing the issues of bullying of children with special educational needs or a disability. This research will complement what has been learned from reviewing the research literature, and discussions with some key informants in education.

We are visiting schools and are particularly interested in any good learning that could be of benefit to other schools. We would like to arrange for a researcher from the National Disability Authority to visit the school, and to interview yourself and another teacher you would nominate as being most relevant for this purpose. We would expect that an interview should take about 50 minutes.

Schools will not be identified in the research.

We are interested in learning about measures that your school has in place and that you find to be effective, whether you measure effectiveness on the basis of your judgement, or of formal measurement or evaluation.

These are the kind of questions we would like to explore with you

- What are the things that work well at decreasing bullying behaviours?
- Which practices decrease the likelihood of children with special education need or disabilities being bullied? Do you have examples of how this works?

- What doesn't work or is counter-productive?
- As a principal/teacher what helps most in addressing bullying for these particular children?
- What happens when a case of bullying is identified?

We would like to conduct the interviews in January and February 2014.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan Barron

To reply or obtain further information contact Damhnait O' Malley at [dmomalley@nda.ie](mailto:dmomalley@nda.ie) or 01 608 0405 (direct phone line)

**Letter Ends.**

**The interviews were held in primary, post primary and special schools as follows:**

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

1. Co-educational Primary school with 750 pupils in a large town
2. Co-educational Primary School with 86 children in a rural area
3. Co-educational Primary School with 180 pupils in a suburb (City 3)

**SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

1. Co-educational Special school with more than 40 pupils in a rural area
2. Co-educational Special school with 65 pupils in a suburb (City 1)
3. Co-educational Special School with 180 pupils in a small town

**POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

1. Co-educational Sec. School, interdenominational, with more than 1,300 pupils in a satellite town (City 4)
2. Co-educational Sec School, interdenominational, with more than 1,300 pupils in a small town
3. Co-educational Sec. School, with more than 1, 200 pupils, in a large town
4. Co-educational Sec School, multidenominational, VEC, with 400 pupils, in a new residential area

5. Sec. School with more than 700 pupils, boys, in a city suburb (City 2)
6. Sec. School (DEIS) with 370 pupils, girls, in a city suburb (City 3)
7. Sec. School (DEIS) with 280 pupils, girls, in a city suburb (City 4)

## **Appendix 5: Further observations from school visits**

There are a number of issues that were raised in the school visits and interviews that warrant further research.

According to staff in primary and post-primary schools, children with Asperger's Syndrome are often at highest risk of 'being bullied.' Children more at risk of bullying are not children with severe disabilities or those with obvious needs. The children at risk are those who have no obvious disability or difficulty but are off the norm in some way. For example, a child with ASD who is doing ok academically, but not socially, is at high risk.

In the school visits, it would appear that larger schools that were proactive around addressing the needs of children with SEND, and had significant numbers of children with SEND, were able to develop expertise and draw down the resources to address the needs of children with SEND, in one way or another.

However, other schools, with few children with SEND may have no experience of children with particular conditions. Such schools may delay in identifying their need for help and may find it difficult to access the expertise needed to formulate plans to address the specific needs of particular children. In schools, that had implemented school wide positive behavioural approaches, staff and surveys indicated that the general school environment/ culture had improved with a decrease in bullying behaviours. However, there could still be a child/ children with SEND, in these schools, who is/are isolated because staff members do not have the ability to identify or address specific needs. This underlines the need for individual and differentiated approaches in particular cases and raises the question of how schools with few pupils with SEND, can best access appropriate expertise for children who require specific supports and interventions. These schools may tend to use suspension for children with particular issues because they lack expertise or access to expertise to handle these children in constructive ways. Schools may not have the classroom management skills to handle anger and aggressive behaviour or experience in tutoring such children or of providing school-wide positive behavioural supports etc. Children with conditions including Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) may be more at risk of suspension and failure to develop in school.

Parents/guardians, who had moved their children with SEND to special schools articulated differences in approaches and identified what they considered worked well for their children. Similarly, teachers described why children who had bad experiences in a mainstream school were thriving in special schools. They gave their opinions on why children with SEND may not do well in a mainstream schools and made suggestions:

- “There can be a lack of understanding of the issues at stake and a lack of special education expertise on the part of mainstream staff. Staff here have expertise and are encouraged to learn all the time. Staff members do SESS courses, which are very good on autism, for example. SESS have an online Library and a local facilitator. Nine teachers have postgraduate Special Education Qualifications. We design materials and share resources. We teach, for example, the North Carolina Structured Approach which works so well for children with ASD<sup>436</sup>
- “Sometimes the required expertise around choosing a placement is lacking on the part of the Early Intervention Team (EIT). EIT may push a mainstream school, no matter what. The team here does not refer any child with SEND to a special school. A NEPS psychologist has recognised the need for a special school in some instances. However, other psychologists have said that, “a child deserves the chance to fail”. The input of a Special Education teacher into the EIT would help but, currently, this does not happen. Professionals should consider carefully what is best for each child. SENOS skills and roles can vary. They can have little flexibility in situations that do not fit into a box”
- “Sometimes EIT and School aged teams give inappropriate advice to parents/guardians because they don’t have appropriate educational input. For example, an Occupational Therapist gave a boy, with Down’s Syndrome, a workbook and schedule for intensive work on fine motor skills during summer to prepare for school. However, educators know too well that you must work from gross motor to fine motor, from left to right, and from top to bottom. It is a staged process and can be learned well. Unfortunately, once learned incorrectly, it is almost impossible to undo it. Sometimes the attitude is that teachers must listen to “health” professionals. There is a need for the Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) to work together with the teachers who are trying to deliver a curriculum. Otherwise, the MDT prescribes IEP goals that contradict the educational ones! Within the landscape of Allied Health Professionals, teachers should be recognised as professionals. Those in state bodies, especially those that head them up, could benefit from listening to educators with experience. Sometimes, parents/guardians visit the special schools, if their child is not going to get the input of an SNA in the mainstream school This tends to happen with strong, independent

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<sup>436</sup> The TEACCH philosophy works from the premise that people with autism are visual learners so strategies are based around physical and visual structure, schedules, work systems and task organisation. Individualised systems address difficulties with communication, organisation, generalisation, concepts, sensory processing, change and relating to others. The TEACCH approach works with existing strengths and emerging skill areas.

parents/guardians while other parents/guardians always go along with whatever the EIT say until there is catastrophic failure.”

- “To review possible placements with both the EIT and the School age team would be good. A Special Education teacher can be helpful around the educational context and Individual Education Plan but this does not happen. Options can include, for example:
  - A mainstream school that is further away distance wise but that has more children with SEND and more expertise and resources for them
  - A dual placement in a mainstream local school and a special school can work well with great academic achievement once the required support is available. This is because some students in special schools struggle socially but have educational ability and dual placements work well for them. It is a lot of work on the part of the special school to prepare the student, support the student, and support the mainstream school, step by step, with a structured training programme around how to proceed. There needs to be flexibility around the use of SNAs. From the point of view of the SNAs from special schools, a dual placement is fine. There can be a SNA in the mainstream school for the two days that the students are there”
- Children with SEND who have come from mainstream schools can feel more at home. It is “normalisation” for them. In mainstream schools, they can be the bottom of the pile and they express this new experience in different ways. One child said, “I became normal here and I have friends”. Another child said, “Here there are children better than me, the same as me and worse than me”. Other children who come from mainstream have wondered why it is not a problem that they walk around the classroom here when it was such an issue in the mainstream schools

## **Appendix 6: Examples of anti-bullying programmes**

### **The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), Norway**

The OBPP was first developed and evaluated in Norway<sup>437</sup>. The original study in Norway involved 2500 children in 42 schools<sup>438</sup>. Results indicated a 50 percent reduction in child bullying behaviour after two years of program implementation.<sup>439</sup>

OBPP is designed to reduce existing bullying problems, prevent new bullying problems, and improve peer relations.<sup>440</sup> Instead of implementing a classroom curriculum to meet these goals, the OBPP is a school-wide program to address the issue at all levels by focusing on known risk factors for bullying behaviour and building up protective factors.<sup>441</sup> Although it has been adapted for use in high schools, OBPP is designed for schools with children 5 to 15 years old.

OBPP includes components at school, classroom, individual and community levels. At the school level, the program involves the development of a committee, staff training, and school-wide data collection, introduction of school rules against bullying and refinement of the school's supervision system.<sup>442</sup> Classrooms, as part of the program, must post and enforce school rules, and hold regular meetings as a class to discuss the subject.<sup>443</sup> On an individual level, child activities must be supervised and staff must intervene immediately when bullying occurs. In addition, meetings are held with children involved in bullying and individual intervention

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<sup>437</sup> Limber, S.P. (2006). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: An overview of its implementation and research basis. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 293- 307). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. (as cited by Kristen Girard, 2012 as above)

<sup>438</sup> Olweus, D. (1994). Bullying at school: Basic facts and effects of a school based intervention program, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 35, pp1171-1190 [wiley.com](http://wiley.com) Limber, S.P. (2006)

<sup>439</sup> *ibid*

<sup>440</sup> Hazelden Foundation (2011). Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Retrieved from [violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus\\_bullying\\_prevention\\_program.page](http://violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_bullying_prevention_program.page)

<sup>441</sup> Limber, S.P. (2006). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: An overview of its implementation and research basis. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 293- 307). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc and Hazelden Foundation (2011). Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Retrieved from [violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus\\_bullying\\_prevention\\_program.page](http://violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_bullying_prevention_program.page)(as cited by Kristen Girard, 2012 as above)

<sup>442</sup> *ibid*

<sup>443</sup> *ibid*

plans can be developed.<sup>444</sup> Finally, the OBPP stresses the involvement of the community as part of the committee and to develop partnership with community members to help support and spread the school's program<sup>445</sup>. Although not identified as core components, it is highly desirable to also hold meetings with staff and parents/guardians.<sup>446</sup>

The implementation of a school-wide program allows for restructuring of the school's social environment to reduce bullying opportunities and consistently reward positive behaviour in order to redirect behaviour to be more pro-social.<sup>447</sup> The school environment must be structured in order that adults become figures who provide firm limits for behaviour and negative consequences to rule violations while also serving as positive role models who are warm, positive and involved.<sup>448</sup>

OBPP has been examined through research for over 35 years on its implementation around the world. There have been six comprehensive studies of the program in Norway in addition to replication studies that have been conducted in Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.<sup>449</sup> The program has also been studied in the United States. These studies examine the effectiveness of the program in the context of "real-world" school implementation. OBPP was first evaluated in the United States after being implemented in 18 middle schools

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<sup>444</sup> *ibid*

<sup>445</sup> *ibid*

<sup>446</sup> Olweus, D., Limber, S., Mihalic, S.F. (1999) Blueprints for violence prevention, book nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

<sup>447</sup> Limber, S.P. (2006). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: An overview of its implementation and research basis. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 293- 307). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Olweus, D., Limber, S. & Mihalic, S.F. (1999). Blueprints for violence prevention, book nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (as cited by Kristen Girard, 2012 as above)

<sup>448</sup> Olweus, D., Limber, S. & Mihalic, S.F. (1999) Blueprints for violence prevention, book nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. (as cited by Kristen Girard, 2012 as above)

<sup>449</sup> Limber, S.P. (2006). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: An overview of its implementation and research basis. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 293- 307). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc

in South Carolina in the mid-1990s.<sup>450</sup> The program was implemented over the course of one year and evaluated by examining child reports of bully behaviour, victimization, social isolation, and attitudes about bullying.<sup>451</sup> The researchers found significant decreases in boys' and girls' reports of bullying behaviour and also significant decreases in boys' reports of being bully victims and feeling socially isolated.<sup>452</sup> These additional decreases were not found among girls' reports and there were no significant changes in children's attitudes.<sup>453</sup> The program was also evaluated after being implemented in 12 elementary schools in Philadelphia.<sup>454</sup> Significant decreases in children's reports of bullying and victimization and adults' observations of bullying were found in schools that implemented OBPP with moderate fidelity.<sup>455</sup> These initial studies highlighted the potential positive effects of the program. More recent research has found much less positive results.

### **Steps to Respect (STR) an anti-bullying and social emotional intervention (USA)**

Like the OBPP this is a school-wide program that tackles bullying on multiple levels. It addresses bullying by fostering the social and emotional development, safety, and wellbeing of children.<sup>456</sup> However, STR was identified by CASEL (2013) as an effective social-emotional program because, while it is designed specifically for bullying prevention, it promotes the acquisition of general socio-emotional competence among children.<sup>457</sup> STR is designed for elementary schools i.e., grade three through six and it emphasizes classroom instruction.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> Limber, SP., Nation, M., Tracy, AJ., Melton, GB., Flerx, V. (2004). Implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention programme in the southeastern United States. In P.K. Smith, D. Pepler, & K. Rigby (Eds.), *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?* (pp. 55-79). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>451</sup> *ibid*

<sup>452</sup> *ibid*

<sup>453</sup> *ibid*

<sup>454</sup> Black, SA. (2003, April) An ongoing evaluation of the bullying prevention program in Philadelphia schools: Child survey and child observation data. Paper presented at the Safety in Numbers Conference, Atlanta, GA

<sup>455</sup> *ibid*

<sup>456</sup> Committee for Children (2012). Steps to Respect. [cfchildren.org/steps-torespect.aspx](http://cfchildren.org/steps-torespect.aspx)

<sup>457</sup> *ibid*

<sup>458</sup> Hirschstein, M., Frey, KS. (2006). Promoting behavior and beliefs that reduce bullying: The Steps to Respect program. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 309-323). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc

The classroom lessons focus on teaching children to make friends, recognize feelings, and recognize, refuse and report bullying.<sup>459</sup> This format increases staff awareness of and responsiveness to bullying and fosters social responsibility among children and teaches children specific skills to solve these problems.<sup>460</sup> The STR program is implemented in three phases:

- In the first phase school administrators use surveys to gather baseline data and examine current bullying policies and procedures<sup>461</sup>
- The second phase involves training adults in the school to recognize and handle bullying<sup>462</sup>
- In the third phase, classroom lessons are used to foster the development of socio-emotional skills such as making friends and understanding and recognizing feelings and also to build children's specific skills in handling bullying.<sup>463</sup> There are 11 lessons on three different levels. The topics covered by the lessons also attempt to address the children's beliefs and peer-group norms related to bullying.<sup>464</sup>

One study on the STR examined playground bullying and pro-social beliefs in elementary children in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>465</sup> The STR program was implemented in three schools for one year compared to three matched control schools. The schools implementing STR did not see the increases in playground bullying across the school year that were found in the control schools. Although differences were not significant, there were positive trends. Children in intervention schools reported a stronger sense of responsibility to intervene as bystanders, less tolerance of bullying, and more adult responsiveness to bullying

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<sup>459</sup> Committee for Children (2012). Steps to Respect [cfchildren.org/steps-torespect.aspx](http://cfchildren.org/steps-torespect.aspx)

<sup>460</sup> Hirschstein, M., Frey, KS. (2006). Promoting behavior and beliefs that reduce bullying: The Steps to Respect program. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 309-323). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc

<sup>461</sup> Committee for Children (2012). Steps to Respect. [cfchildren.org/steps-torespect.aspx](http://cfchildren.org/steps-torespect.aspx)

<sup>462</sup> *ibid*

<sup>463</sup> *ibid*

<sup>464</sup> Hirschstein, M., Frey, KS. (2006) Promoting behavior and beliefs that reduce bullying: The Steps to Respect program, In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 309-323), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc

<sup>465</sup> Frey, KS., Hirschstein, MK., Snell, JL., Van Schoiack Edstrom, L., MacKenzie, EP., Broderick, CJ. (2005) Reducing playground bullying and supporting beliefs: An experimental trial of the Steps to Respect program, *Developmental Psychology*, 41, 479-491

problems compared to children in control schools. Children self-reported less victimization, but not less bullying, compared to children in control schools. Teachers did not indicate any difference in child interpersonal skills in their ratings. However, observations showed a decrease in argumentative interactions and increased agreeable interactions among children in the schools implementing STR.

A larger study in 33 elementary schools in California randomly assigned to intervention or waitlist control groups and then examined the outcomes of implementing STR in schools.<sup>466</sup> Results indicated that the STR program had significant positive effects on the school environment specifically school anti-bullying policies and strategies, child and staff climate, and school bullying problems. There were significant increases in teacher assessments of child social competency and decreases in teacher assessments of physical bullying perpetration. Child surveys indicated that children noticed the improvements in child and teacher bullying intervention, positive bystander behaviour and child climate.<sup>467</sup>

### **The WHO-backed FRIENDS or Friends for Life cognitive behavioural programme**

Cognitive behavioural programmes can be universal and ‘whole school’ and, therefore, support all children as well as being particularly effective for children with social emotional and behaviour difficulties (SEBD). The FRIENDS programme backed by the WHO is such a programme.<sup>468</sup> It is widely used internationally and, for example, British Columbia has been using the programme for 10 years now.<sup>469</sup> The word ‘FRIENDS’ is an acronym that helps children and adolescents to remember the coping steps to follow; F-Feeling Worried?, R-Relax and feel good, I – I can do it!, E- Explore solutions and coping step plans, N- Now reward yourself, D – Don’t forget to practice and S- Stay cool!

First called the FRIENDS programme, it was renamed the ‘FRIENDS for Life’ programme. This came about as when research showed that the programme produces durable reductions in anxiety up to four years after completing the

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<sup>466</sup> Brown, EC., Low, S., Smith, BH., Haggerty, KP. (2011) Outcomes from a school-randomized controlled trial of Steps to Respect: A bullying prevention program, *School Psychology Review*, 40(3), 423-443 [nasponline.org](http://nasponline.org)

<sup>467</sup> *ibid*

<sup>468</sup> Department of Education and Skills (2013) Action Plan on Bullying: Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills. [education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf)

<sup>469</sup> See, for example, [mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental\\_health/friends.htm](http://mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/friends.htm)

programme.<sup>470</sup> The new name highlights the positive impact of the programme, and the research results have also led the World Health Organisation to cite 'FRIENDS for Life' as the only evidence-based programme effective at all levels of intervention for anxiety in children.<sup>471</sup>

The 'FRIENDS for Life' programme is a group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) intervention that builds up emotional resilience and reduces anxiety. It is a structured, ten-session CBT programme, based on the 'Coping Cat' programme developed in Australia. The components of the programme are based on the three CBT principles. The Learning/ Behaviour component helps children and adolescents to problem solve, use coping skills, expose themselves gradually to feared situations, reward themselves for brave behaviour, and identify positive role models and support networks. The Cognitive component helps children and adolescents to use positive self-talk (green thoughts), challenge negative self-talk (red thoughts), evaluate themselves realistically and reward themselves. The Physiological component teaches children and adolescents to be aware of their body clues, to use relaxation techniques and to self-regulate.

The programme has been evaluated. In Australia, where the programme was first developed, a randomized clinical trial evaluated the efficacy of the program among anxious children. Children were randomly allocated to FRIENDS or to a 10-week wait-list control group. A total of 71 children, ranging from 6 to 10 years of age, who fulfilled diagnostic criteria for separation anxiety (SAD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), or social phobia (SOP). Results indicated that 69% of children who completed the programme were diagnosis-free post-

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<sup>470</sup> Dadds, MR., Spence, SH., Holland, DE., Barrett, PM., Laurens, KR (1997). Prevention and early intervention for anxiety disorders: A controlled trial, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65, 627–635

Dadds, MR., Holland, D., Barrett, PM., Laurens, K., Spence, S. (1999) Early intervention and prevention of anxiety disorders in children: Results at 2-year follow-up, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 67, 145–150

Barrett, PM., Sonderegger, R., Xenos, S. (2003). Using 'FRIENDS for Life' for Life' to combat anxiety and adjustment problems among migrants to Australia: A national trial. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 8, 241-260 as cited in National Behaviour Support Service (2013) 'FRIENDS for Life': a School-based Positive Mental Health Programme Research Project Overview and Findings. [nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends\\_report\\_final\\_lr.pdf](http://nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends_report_final_lr.pdf)

<sup>471</sup> World Health Organization Report on Prevention of Mental Disorders. (2004). Effective interventions and policy options summary report. Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the Prevention Research Centre of the Universities of Nijmegen and Maastricht as cited in National Behaviour Support Service (2013) 'FRIENDS for Life': a School-based Positive Mental Health Programme Research Project Overview and Findings. [nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends\\_report\\_final\\_lr.pdf](http://nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends_report_final_lr.pdf)

treatment, compared to 6% of children completing the wait-list condition. At 12-month follow-up, 68% of children were diagnosis-free. Beneficial treatment effects were also evident on the self-report measures completed by the children and their mothers.<sup>472</sup>

In England (Bath and Somerset), an evaluation of the FRIENDS programme<sup>473</sup> suggested that it was an effective and acceptable way to promote emotional resilience (reduced anxiety and increased self-esteem) in primary school aged children, consistent with previous studies in Australia. The evaluation consisted of uncontrolled before and after assessment of the FRIENDS programme among 213 children, aged 9–10 years, from six primary schools.

In Ireland, a 'FRIENDS for Life' programme was carried out with first year post primary children in Dublin City. An evaluation, completed in 2010, found that 'overall anxiety' and specifically 'separation anxiety' was significantly reduced in the intervention group in comparison to the control group. Respective parents/guardians confirmed that positive reductions in 'overall anxiety' levels of children in the intervention groups took place.<sup>474</sup>

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme in primary schools, in Carlow and Kilkenny in 2011, found that there were significant improvements in anxiety and self-esteem measures on completion of the programme. These improvements were maintained 3 months after the programme was completed.<sup>475</sup>

The National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) in collaboration with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Social, Personal and

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<sup>472</sup> Shortt, AL., Barrett, PM., Fox, TL (2001) 'Evaluating the FRIENDS Program: A Cognitive-Behavioural Group Treatment for Anxious Children and Their Parents/guardians', *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 30: 4, 525 -535. [pathwayshrc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Shortt-et-al-2001-Evaluating-the-FRIENDS-program\\_JClinicalChildPsychology.pdf](http://pathwayshrc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Shortt-et-al-2001-Evaluating-the-FRIENDS-program_JClinicalChildPsychology.pdf)

<sup>473</sup> Stallard, P., Simpson, N., Anderson, S., Carter, T., Osborn, C., Bush, S (2005) An evaluation of the FRIENDS programme: a cognitive behaviour therapy intervention to promote emotional resilience *Arch Dis Child*, 90(10),1016–1019

<sup>474</sup> Rodgers, A. (2010). The Impact of the 'FRIENDS for Life' Emotional Resiliency Programme on Anxiety and School Adjustment. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University College London, UK as cited in National Behaviour Support Service (2013) 'FRIENDS for Life': a School-based Positive Mental Health Programme Research Project Overview and Findings. [nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends\\_report\\_final\\_lr.pdf](http://nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends_report_final_lr.pdf)

<sup>475</sup> Crosbie, G., Charles, E., Peel, R., Moran, J., Cullen, A., Carroll, D., Buckley, C. (2011) An Evaluation of the FRIENDS for Life Programme in Irish Schools. *The Irish Psychologist*, 38 (1), 14-20

Health Education (SPHE) Support Service also conducted an evaluation of the 'FRIENDS for Life' programme. Fourteen post-primary NBSS partner schools use the programme. Two schools taught the programme to all 1st year students and the remaining 12 schools focused on groups of 1st year students, some of whom had elevated anxiety levels. Forty-two teachers attended a three-day training session to become accredited 'FRIENDS for Life' facilitators and subsequently delivered the programme within their respective schools. Before the programme, 19% of the 244 students who participated in the project rated themselves within the 'elevated' anxiety level (1 in every 5 students). This reduced to 10% of students (1 in every 10 students) following completion of the 'FRIENDS for Life' 10-session programme. Continued improvement has been recorded following completion of the two booster sessions four months later.<sup>476</sup>

#### **4Rs Program: Reading, Writing, Respect and Resolution (USA)**

This program is a universal, school-based intervention that treats bullying as a problem of communication and emotional literacy. It integrates social and emotional learning into the language arts curriculum for kindergarten through Grade 5. While it is a universal intervention it focuses on children at risk of trauma, lower social competence and on children with externalizing problems, lower language and literacy skills. An evaluation of the programme shows both short-term and longer term impacts of the 4Rs program both for the general population of children as well as for those children at highest behavioural risk as perceived by their teachers.<sup>477</sup> Downes (2012) summarises the research that has been done on this programme and outlines the main features of the programme.<sup>478</sup>

The 4Rs Program uses high-quality children's literature to help children gain skills and understanding in areas including handling anger, listening, cooperation, assertiveness, and negotiation. It has two main components:

- A comprehensive seven-unit, 21-lesson, literacy-based curriculum in conflict resolution and social-emotional learning for K to Grade 5
- Intensive professional development and training in 4Rs for teachers.

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<sup>476</sup> NBSS (2013) FRIENDS for Life': a School-based Positive Mental Health Programme Research Project Overview and Findings [nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends\\_report\\_final\\_lr.pdf](http://nbss.ie/sites/default/files/friends_report_final_lr.pdf)

<sup>477</sup> Aber, L., Brown, J.L., Jones, S.M., Berg, J. & Torrente, C. (2011) School-based strategies to prevent violence, trauma, and psychopathology: The challenges of going to scale. *Development and Psychopathology*, 23 (2011), 411–421

<sup>478</sup> Downes, P (2012) Bullying Forum Consultation – A Focus on Bullying and Early School Leaving Prevention. [education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp\\_anti\\_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti\\_bully\\_sub\\_academic\\_educational\\_disadvantage\\_st\\_patricks\\_college.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp_anti_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti_bully_sub_academic_educational_disadvantage_st_patricks_college.pdf)

Each unit is organized around a specific grade-appropriate children's book and begins with a comprehensive book reading and discussion, ensuring children understand the primary themes of the story and allowing them to connect the themes to their own lives. This is followed by three to five social–emotional learning lessons. The curriculum provided to teachers includes a standardized, grade-specific teaching guide. Professional development for teachers in the 4Rs curriculum consists of a 25-hr training course, followed by ongoing classroom coaching throughout the year by a 4Rs staff developer.

## **Appendix 7: Bullying risk among children with different conditions**

Some of the evidence on bullying risk among children with different conditions is described here including research summarised by Campbell and Misiuna (2011).<sup>479</sup>

Carter and Spencer (2006) carried out an overview of research addressing bullying and children with disabilities and discussed studies within two disability categories: visible and non-visible. Disabilities that are overt and observable were determined by the researchers to be categorized as visible. In contrast, disabilities that are less obvious and require more time to observe and differentiate were categorized as non-visible. Results from eleven studies published from 1989 to 2003 indicated that children with disabilities, both visible and non-visible, experienced bullying more than their non-disabled general education peers and that boys were bullied more often than girls. The children with disabilities tended to be less popular, have fewer friends, and struggle with loneliness. In one study four factors were found to be predictive of children with physical disabilities being bullied: receiving extra help in school, being alone at playtime, having fewer than two good friends, and being male.<sup>480</sup>

### **Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

The three main areas of difficulty that children with autism experience are social interaction, social communication and social imagination. The condition affects people in different ways.

A 2013 USA study, involving 1,221 parents/guardians of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder selected from a national web-based registry, investigated risk factors for bullying among children with ASD. Children diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and attending a public school or a school with a general education population were at the greatest risk of being victimized in the past month. Children in full inclusion classrooms were more likely to be victimized than those who spend the majority of their time in special education settings. Children with co-morbid conditions and a high level of autistic traits were the most likely to be victims, bullies, and bully-victims.<sup>481</sup>

A 2012 US study of 900 children aged 13 to 16 showed that although 11% of typically developing children report having been bullied, 46% of autistic children

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<sup>479</sup> Campbell, W., Missiuna, C (2011) Bullying Risk in Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature. [canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying\\_risk\\_children\\_disabilities.asp](http://canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying_risk_children_disabilities.asp)

<sup>480</sup> Carter, BB., Spencer, VG. (2006) The fear factor: bullying and children with disabilities International Journal of Special Education 21 (1), 11-23

<sup>481</sup> Zablotzky, B et al (2013) Risk factors for bullying among children with autism spectrum disorders Abstract [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23901152](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23901152)

the same age have been bullied. The numbers are highest for children with autism who spend most of their time in a general education classroom. The study concluded that school-based bullying interventions need to target the core deficits of ASD (conversational ability and social skills) and co-morbid conditions for example, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Interventions need to address the higher rates of victimisation that occur in general education settings by increasing social integration into protective peer groups and increasing empathy and social skills of typically developing children toward their peers with an ASD.<sup>482</sup>

In 2012, the UK National Autistic Society (NAS) published its latest autism survey. The survey of young people about their experiences of bullying through school, found that of those who responded 63% said they have been bullied in school; 75% post-primary school-aged children said they have been bullied in school; 82% of children with high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome said they have been bullied in school. More than half of the children said they wanted to have more friends than they do. 78% of young people with autism felt that people outside their family do not know enough about autism and one in ten said that their friends are mainly adults.<sup>483</sup>

Little (2002) reported that 94% of parents/guardians of children with Asperger's Syndrome reported that their child had been bullied over the last year.<sup>484</sup> These children faced peer victimisation, with different types of victimization including emotional bullying (75%), gang attacks (10%) and non-sexual assaults to the genitals (15%).

### **Bullying risk for children with specific language impairment (SLI)**

Children who have specific language impairment (SLI) have significant difficulty learning spoken language even though they have average intelligence and no known sensory or neurological problems that might explain their delays<sup>485</sup>. SLI

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<sup>482</sup> Sterzing PR, Shattuck PT, Narendorf SC, Wagner M, Cooper BP (2012) Bullying Involvement and Autism Spectrum Disorders: Prevalence and Correlates of Bullying Involvement Among Adolescents With an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 2012; DOI: 10.1001/archpediatrics.2012

<sup>483</sup> The way we are: autism in 2012. [autism.org.uk/Get-involved/50th\\_birthday/Survey-report.aspx](http://autism.org.uk/Get-involved/50th_birthday/Survey-report.aspx)

<sup>484</sup> Little, L. (2002) Middle class Mothers' perceptions of peer and sibling victimisation among children with Asperger's Syndrome and non-verbal learning disorders, Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing, 25(1), 43-54 [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11934121](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11934121)

<sup>485</sup> Leonard, LB. (1998). Children with specific language impairment. Cambridge, MA:MIT Press as cited by Campbell, W., Missiuna, C (2011) Bullying Risk in Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature. [canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying\\_risk\\_children\\_disabilities.asp](http://canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying_risk_children_disabilities.asp)

affects about 7% of primary school children.<sup>486</sup> Young children with SLI may have trouble learning new words, putting words together to make complete sentences, understanding and following directions, and understanding or telling stories.<sup>487</sup> When they enter school, many children with SLI have difficulty learning to read and write.<sup>488</sup> Some school-age children with SLI also have trouble understanding and using non-literal language (for example, jokes, riddles, and sarcasm), which can impact negatively on their peer relationships.<sup>489</sup> Children with SLI are less skilled at many social activities that are important to developing peer relationships, including knowing how to join peer groups<sup>490</sup>, negotiating with peers and resolving conflicts<sup>491</sup> and taking part in group learning activities.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> Tomblin, JB., Records, NL., Buckwalter, P., Zhang, X., Smith E., O'Brien, M. (1997). Prevalence of specific language impairment in kindergarten children. *Journal of Speech, language, and Hearing Research*, 40, 1245-1260, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011) as above

<sup>487</sup> Paul, R. (2006). *Language disorders from infancy through adolescence: Assessment and intervention* (3rd ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby as cited by Campbell, W., Missiuna, C (2011) *Bullying Risk in Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature*. [canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying\\_risk\\_children\\_disabilities.asp](http://canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying_risk_children_disabilities.asp)

<sup>488</sup> Catts, HW., Fey, ME., Tomblin, JB., Zhang, X. (2002). A longitudinal investigation of reading outcomes in children with language impairments. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 45, 142-1157, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>489</sup> Plante, E. (1994). *Specific Language Impairment*. In A. DeFeo (Ed.). *Parent Articles II*. Tucson, AZ: Communication Skill Builders, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>490</sup> Brinton, B., Fujiki, M., Spencer, JC., Robinson, LA. (1997) The ability of children with specific language impairment to access and participate in an ongoing interaction. *Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research*, 40, 1011-1025.

Liiva, CA., Cleave, PL. (2005). Roles of initiation and responsiveness in access and participation for children with specific language impairment. *Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research*, 48, 868-883, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>491</sup> Brinton, B., Fujiki, M., McKee, L. (1998). Negotiation skills of children with specific language impairment, *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 41, 927-940. 28

Stevens, LJ., Bliss, LS. (1995). Conflict resolution abilities of children with specific language impairment and children with normal language. *Journal of Speech & Hearing Research*, 38, 599-611

Timler, GR. (2008) Social knowledge in children with language impairments: Examination of strategies, predicted consequences, and goals in peer conflict situations, *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, 22, 741-763 as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>492</sup> Brinton, B., Fujiki, M., Higbee, LM. (1998) Participation in cooperative learning activities by children with specific language impairment, *Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research*, 41, 1193-1206

Studies suggest that children with SLI are at increased risk of being bullied.<sup>493</sup> For example, research in the UK found that the risk of peer victimization among 11-year-old children with SLI was 36%, three times larger than the level reported by children of the same age with no language difficulties.<sup>494</sup>

Adolescents with SLI reported a lifetime risk of being bullied that was nearly twice that of their age mates (49% vs. 27%), and five times as many reported being victimized throughout childhood (13% among children with SLI vs. 2% among typically developing peers).<sup>495</sup>

A Canadian study examining the relationship between stuttering and selection as a target for bullying, found that at least 59% of children studied were bullied about their stuttering, 69% of children who stutter were also bullied about other things and said that bullying took place on at least a weekly basis.<sup>496</sup>

### **Children with Intellectual (Learning Disability)**

Available research indicates that children with Learning Disability are at greater risk of being teased and physically bullied.<sup>497</sup>

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Brinton, B., Fujiki, M., Montague, EC., Hanton, JL. (2000). Children with language impairment in cooperative work groups: a pilot study. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 31, 252-264 as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>493</sup> Conti-Ramsden, G., Botting, N. (2004). Social difficulties and victimisation in children with SLI at 11 years of age. *Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research*, 47, 145-161

Knox, E., Conti-Ramsden, G. (2003). Bullying risks of 11-year-old children with specific language impairment (SLI): Does school placement matter? *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 38, 1-12

Knox, E., Conti-Ramsden, G. (2007). Bullying in young people with a history of specific language impairment (SLI). *Educational & Child Psychology*, 24, 130-141 as cited by Campbell, W., Missiuna, C (2011) *Bullying Risk in Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature*. [canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying\\_risk\\_children\\_disabilities.asp](http://canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/bullying_risk_children_disabilities.asp)

<sup>494</sup> *ibid*

<sup>495</sup> *ibid*

<sup>496</sup> Langevin, M., Bortnick, K., Hammer, T., Wiebe, E. (1998) Teasing/bullying experienced by children who stutter: Toward development of a questionnaire. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders*, 25, 12-24

<sup>497</sup> For example, Mishna, F. (2003), Learning disabilities and bullying: Double jeopardy. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 1-15

Thompson, D., Whitney, I., Smith, P. (1994). Bullying of children with special needs in mainstream schools. *Support for Learning*, 9, 103-106

Nabuzoka, D. Smith, PK. (1993). Sociometric status and social behaviour of children with and without learning difficulties. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 34, 1435-1448 and

The National Institute of Intellectual Disability in Trinity reviewed research on intellectual disability and bullying.<sup>498</sup> The literature can be broadly classified as comprising large scale prevalence studies, typically undertaken in the UK; smaller scale inclusive projects, typically undertaken in Ireland; and a variety of educational studies conducted internationally which cover the experiences of children with a broad range of disabilities. The literature reveals that bullying for people with intellectual disabilities is a pervasive problem. Bullying of children with intellectual disability is highly prevalent in schools and extends to community-based locations for both children and adults.<sup>499</sup>

A meta-analysis of 152 studies found that 8 of 10 children with a learning disability (LD) were peer-rated as rejected; that 8 of 10 were rated as deficient in social competence and social problem solving; and that LD children were less often selected as friends by their peers.<sup>500</sup>

A 2004 study investigated the views of 101 boys and girls aged 10 to 11 and 13 to 14 with moderate learning (intellectual) difficulties. The children reported a high level of bullying, irrespective of gender and whether placement was mainstream or special school (83% of overall sample reported bullying). In relation to forms of bullying: 68% reported a mixture; 24% mainly verbal; 5% mainly physical, 3% mainly teasing. Almost half of the reported bullying related to the children's learning difficulties. About half the children reported bullying by children in their own school while children in special schools reported significantly more bullying by neighbours and people outside of school, including other mainstream children.<sup>501</sup>

### **Bullying risk among children with ADHD**

ADHD affects approximately 3 to 7% of all school-age children.<sup>502</sup> Children who have ADHD have difficulty staying focused and appropriately regulating their

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others as cited in Impact Newsletter, Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs. [ici.umn.edu/products/impact/241/15.html](http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/241/15.html)

<sup>498</sup> The NIID (2012) The Anti-bullying research project. [nda.ie/website/nda/.../0/.../The\\_AntiBullying\\_Research\\_Project.doc](http://nda.ie/website/nda/.../0/.../The_AntiBullying_Research_Project.doc)

<sup>499</sup> *ibid*

<sup>500</sup> Baumeister, A., Storch, E., Geffken, G. (2008) Peer victimization in children with learning disabilities. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 25, 11–23

<sup>501</sup> Norwich, B., Kelly, N. (2004) Children' views on inclusion: moderate learning difficulties and bullying in mainstream and special schools, *British Educational Research Journal*, 30 (1), 43-65

<sup>502</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-IV-TR (4th ed. text revision)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

emotions and behaviour,<sup>503</sup> which can put them at risk for academic and social problems.<sup>504</sup> Due to their difficulties, children with ADHD often behave in ways that their peers view as disruptive and aggressive.<sup>505</sup> In some cases, their behavioural difficulties may trigger peer victimization and social exclusion.<sup>506</sup>

Children with ADHD may be up to four times more likely to be bullied than their peers.<sup>507</sup> They also report more verbal, physical and relational victimisation than do children without ADHD.<sup>508</sup> In fact, the risk of being frequently bullied may be as much as 10 times greater among children with ADHD.<sup>509</sup>

In a qualitative study of peer victimisation among four boys with ADHD, Shea and Wiener<sup>510</sup> describe how chronic bullying led to feelings of powerlessness and severe psychological distress. The boys, along with their parents/guardians, talked about feeling "beaten down". They reported being unable to stop the vicious cycle of verbal bullying and social exclusion that thwarted the boys' attempts to make new friends.

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<sup>503</sup> Knox, E., Conti-Ramsden, G. (2007). Bullying in young people with a history of specific language impairment (SLI), *Educational & Child Psychology*, 24, 130-141, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>504</sup> DeShazo, TB., Lyman, RD., Klinger, LG. (2002). Academic under-achievement and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: The negative impact of symptom severity on school performance, *Journal of School Psychology*, 40, 259-283

Stormont, M. (2001) Social outcomes of children with AD/HD: Contributing factors and implications for practice, *Psychology in the Schools*, 38, 521-531, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>505</sup> Humphrey, JL., Storch, EA., Geffken, GR. (2007) Peer victimisation in children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Child Health Care: For Professionals Working with Children in the Hospital and Community*, 11, 248-260, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>506</sup> Van Cleave, J., Davis, MM. (2006). Bullying and peer victimisation among children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics*, 118, e1212-e1219, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>507</sup> Van Cleave, J. Davis, M.M. (2006). Bullying and peer victimisation among children with special health care needs. *Pediatrics*, 118, e1212-e1219, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>508</sup> Shea, B., Wiener, J. (2003). Social exile: The cycle of peer victimisation for boys with ADHD. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 18(1-2), 55-90

Wiener, J., Mak, M. (2009). Peer victimisation in children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(2), 116-131 as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>509</sup> Holmberg, K., Hjern, A. (2008) Bullying and attention-deficit- hyperactivity disorder in 10-year-olds in a Swedish community, *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 50(2), 134-138.42, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

<sup>510</sup> Shea, B., Wiener, J. (2003) Social exile: The cycle of peer victimisation for boys with ADHD. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 18(1-2), 55-90, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

A 2003 study found that 34% of children who reported taking medication for ADHD face bullying victimization at least 2-3 times a month, a substantial increase over the rate of bullying victimization from other children surveyed.<sup>511</sup> Another study found high rates of victims among girls with ADHD.<sup>512</sup>

### **Bullying Risk among Children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)**

DCD is a movement disorder that affects 5 to 6 % of school-aged children.<sup>513</sup> Children who have DCD struggle to learn and perform age-appropriate motor skills despite having normal intelligence and no other neurological disorders. A child with DCD may demonstrate significant difficulty with self-care tasks (e.g., dressing, using utensils, tying shoes); academic tasks (e.g., printing, handwriting, copying, completing activities in gym class); and/or extracurricular activities (e.g., taking part in sports and playground activities). In addition to their motor difficulties, many children with DCD have trouble fully participating in social and recreational activities so that they become isolated from their peers.<sup>514</sup>

Research with parents/guardians of children with DCD indicates that families describe concerns about bullying by the time their children reach 9 or 10 years of age.<sup>515</sup> Children with DCD have several physical traits that might increase their vulnerability to being bullied. They may look clumsy and awkward when they move. They struggle with simple motor-based self-care and academic tasks more than other children their age can do.

Piek and her colleagues<sup>516</sup> compared 43 seven to eleven year-old Australian children who scored as being "at risk" for DCD on a screening measure to a control group of 43 children of the same age. Children at risk for DCD did not

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<sup>511</sup> Unnever, JD. Cornell, DG. (2003). Bullying, Self-Control, and ADHD, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 81(2), 129-147

<sup>512</sup> Wiener, J., & Mak, M. (2009). Peer victimisation in children with Attention- Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(2), 116-131.

<sup>513</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-IV-TR* (4th ed. text revision). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association

<sup>514</sup> Missiuna, C., Moll, S., King, S., King, G., Law, M. (2007). A trajectory of troubles: Parents/guardians' impressions of the impact of developmental coordination disorder. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, 27, 81-101

<sup>515</sup> *ibid*

<sup>516</sup> Piek, JP., Barrett, NC., Allen, LS., Jones, A., Louise, M. (2005). The relationship between bullying and self-worth in children with movement coordination problems. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75(Pt 3), 453-463, as cited by Campbell and Missiuna (2011)

report being bullied more often than their peers, but bullying did have a greater impact on their self-esteem. This was found to be true particularly for girls at risk of having DCD.

In Canada, research found that 159 ten year-old Canadian children at risk for DCD reported more verbal and relational bullying than a comparison group of 159 same-age peers. Being at risk for DCD and being bullied, predicted children's reports of being depressed.<sup>517</sup> Unlike the study by Piek et al in Australia, as cited above, this research did not find that the impact of being bullied was different for boys and girls.

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<sup>517</sup> Campbell, WN., Missiuna, C., Vaillancourt, T. (2012) Peer victimisation and depression in children with and without motor coordination difficulties. *Psychology in the Schools*, 49 (4), 328–341

## **Appendix 8: Bullies, victims and bystanders**

### **Bullies**

Information suggests three interrelated reasons why children bully:<sup>518</sup>

- They have strong needs for power and (negative) dominance
- They find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to other children
- They are often rewarded for their behaviour with material or psychological rewards

Some research suggests that bullies can display deficiencies in social problem solving<sup>519</sup> and are more likely than children who do not bully to:

- Get into frequent fights<sup>520</sup>
- Steal and vandalise property<sup>521</sup>
- Drink alcohol and smoke<sup>522</sup>
- Carry weapons<sup>523</sup>
- Engage in high risk gun ownership<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, [olweus.org](http://olweus.org)

<sup>519</sup> Slee, PT. (1993). Bullying: A preliminary investigation of the nature and effects on social cognition. *Early Child Development and Care*, 87, 47-57 and Warden, D., Mackinnon, S. (2003), Pro-social children, bullies and victims: An investigation of their sociometric status, empathy and social problem-solving strategies. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 21, 367-385

<sup>520</sup> Nansel, TR., Overpeck, M., Pilla, RS., Ruan, WJ., Simons-Morton, B., Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behavior among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285, 2094-2100 and Nansel, TR., Overpeck, MD., Haynie, DL., Ruan, WJ., Scheidt, PC (2003). Relationships between bullying and violence among U.S. youth. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 157, 348-353. (As quoted in APA Resolution on Bullying Among Children and Youth (2004) [apa.org/about/policy/bullying.pdf](http://apa.org/about/policy/bullying.pdf))

<sup>521</sup> Solberg, M., Olweus, D. (2003). Prevalence estimation of school bullying with the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. *Aggressive Behavior*, 29, 239-268 (As quoted in APA Resolution on Bullying Among Children and Youth (2004) [apa.org/about/policy/bullying.pdf](http://apa.org/about/policy/bullying.pdf))

<sup>522</sup> Nansel, TR., Overpeck, M., Pilla, RS., Ruan, WJ., Simons-Morton, B., Scheidt, P. (2001) Bullying behavior among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285, 2094-2100

<sup>523</sup> Nansel, TR., Overpeck, MD., Haynie, DL., Ruan, WJ., Scheidt, PC. (2003) Relationships between bullying and violence among U.S. youth. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 157, 348-353. (As quoted in APA Resolution on Bullying Among Children and Youth (2004) [apa.org/about/policy/bullying.pdf](http://apa.org/about/policy/bullying.pdf))

- Play truant<sup>525</sup>
- Drop out of school<sup>526</sup>

However, not all children who bully have behavioural problems or engage in rule-breaking activities. Some bullies are skilled socially and good at ingratiating themselves with teachers and other adults. This is true of some boys but may be more common among bullying girls. It can be difficult for adults to discover or to imagine that these children engage in bullying behaviours.<sup>527</sup> Studies have linked bullying behaviour to high social intelligence<sup>528</sup> and perceptions by peers that the person bullying is powerful and popular.<sup>529</sup>

Aggression is sometimes classified as proactive or reactive aggression. This has led to distinctions being made between proactive bullies who engage in unprovoked bullying and reactive bullies who engage in aggressive behaviour to protect themselves.<sup>530</sup>

### **Reactive bullies**

Reactive aggression can be a protective reaction, an effort to cope and defend against unpleasant experiences.

Children with learning problems may be motivated to avoid and protest against situations in which they cannot cope effectively. For these children, teaching may be perceived in this way. Under such circumstances, some children react aggressively to protect themselves from feelings of incompetence, loss of

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<sup>524</sup> Cunningham, PB., Henggeler, SW., Limber, SP., Melton, GB., Nation, MA. (2000). Patterns and correlates of gun ownership among non metropolitan and rural middle school children *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 29, 432-442

<sup>525</sup> Byrne, BJ. (1994) Bullies and victims in school settings with reference to some Dublin schools *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 15, 574-586

<sup>526</sup> Byrne, BJ. (1994) Bullies and victims in school settings with reference to some Dublin schools *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 15, 574-586

<sup>527</sup> The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, [olweus.org](http://olweus.org)

<sup>528</sup> Kaukiainen, A., Bjorkqvist, K., Lagerspetz, K., Osterman, K., Salmivalli, C., Rothberg, S., et al. (1999). The relationships between social intelligence, empathy, and three types of aggression. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 25, 81-89

<sup>529</sup> Rodkin, PC., Farmer, TW., Pearl, R., Van Acker, R. (2006) They're cool: Ethnic and peer group supports for aggressive boys and girls. *Social Development*, 36, 14-24

Thunfors, P., Cornell, D. (2008) The popularity of middle school bullies. *Journal of School Violence*, 7, 65-82

<sup>530</sup> Salmivalli, C. (2010) Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 15, 112-120

autonomy and negative relationships.<sup>531</sup> These children are different from bully-victims who are first victimised and then bully others.

Bully-victims are not skilful and strategic but hot-tempered and high on proactive and reactive aggression.<sup>532</sup> They bully others and are also bullied themselves. They are found more often in primary than in post-primary schools.<sup>533</sup> They are more likely to have poor social skills and act in ways that go against peer group norms e.g., behaving aggressively and interrupting other children.<sup>534</sup> They may have attention difficulties, poor problem-solving abilities, social maladjustment and low self-esteem.<sup>535</sup>

Bully/victims are less likely to have social support than 'passive' victims of bullying, and therefore may also be at greater risk of more severe psychological problems resulting from it.<sup>536</sup> There is evidence that they are more likely to come from

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<sup>531</sup> The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, [olweus.org](http://olweus.org)

<sup>532</sup> Salmivalli, C. (2010) Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 15, 112–120

<sup>533</sup> Roland, E., Idsoe, T. (2001) Aggression and bullying *Aggressive Behavior*, 27,446-462

Schafer, M., Korn, S., Brodbeck, FC., Wolke, D., Schulz, H (2005) Bullying roles in changing contexts: The stability of victim and bully roles from primary to post-primary school. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 29:323-335 as cited in James, A (2010) School Bullying. [nspcc.org.uk/inform/school\\_bullying\\_pdf](http://nspcc.org.uk/inform/school_bullying_pdf)

<sup>534</sup> Greene, MB. (2000) Bullying and harassment in schools In RS. Moser, and CE. Franz (Eds), *Shocking violence: youth perpetrators and victims – a multidisciplinary perspective*. (pp 72-101). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas as cited in James, A (2010) School Bullying [nspcc.org.uk/inform/school\\_bullying\\_pdf](http://nspcc.org.uk/inform/school_bullying_pdf)

Griffin, RS., Gross, AM. (2004) Childhood bullying: current empirical findings and future directions for research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9, 379-400

<sup>535</sup> Mynard, H., Joseph, S. (1997) Bully victim problems and their association with Eysenck's personality dimensions in 8 to 13 year olds. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67, 51-54

Carney, AG., Merrell, KW (2001) Perspectives on understanding and preventing an international problem. *School Psychology International*, 22, 364-82

Andreou, E. (2001) Bully/victim problems and their association with coping behaviour in conflictual peer interactions among school-age children *Educational Psychology*, 21,59-66

<sup>536</sup> Griffin, RS., Gross, AM. (2004) Childhood bullying: current empirical findings and future directions for research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9,379-400

Smith, PK (2004) Bullying: recent developments *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 9(3), 98-103

families where parenting is inconsistent, sometimes abusive, and low in warmth.<sup>537</sup>

### **Pro-active bullies**

Some research supports the assumption that non-victimised bullies are driven by a quest for high social status and skilfully use proactive aggression to achieve group related status.<sup>538</sup> The bullying of proactive bullies is related to the self-reported goals of being respected, admired and dominant.<sup>539</sup> Proactive, disruptive, non-cooperative, and aggressive behaviour patterns can be satisfying to an individual because the behaviour is exciting or leads to desired personal and subgroup outcomes, e.g., peer recognition, enhanced status within a subgroup and feelings of competence and autonomy.<sup>540</sup> Research has shown that adolescent bullies can be perceived by their peers as attractive, popular and leaders in the school.<sup>541</sup> In this context bullying can be seen as learned behaviour rooted in the desire to experiment with social power and which focuses on the perceived 'differences' of a victim.<sup>542</sup>

### **Victims**

Much less research has been done on the characteristics and behaviour of children who serves as the victims in bully-victim relationships. Victimised children often attempt to resolve conflict by avoidance while bullies are

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<sup>537</sup> Bowers, L., Smith, PK., Binney, V. (1994) Perceived family relationships of bullies, victims and bully/victims in middle childhood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 11, 215-232

Schwartz, D., Dodge, KA., Pettit, GS., Bates, JE. (2000) Friendship as a moderating factor in the pathway between early harsh home environment and later victimisation in the peer group *Developmental Psychology*, 36, 646-662

<sup>538</sup> Salmivalli, C. (2010) Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 15, 112-120

<sup>539</sup> Salmivalli, C. (2010) Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 15, 112-120

<sup>540</sup> Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA (2011) A Center Policy and Practice Brief: Embedding Bullying Interventions into a Comprehensive System of Child and Learning Supports [smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingbullying.pdf)

<sup>541</sup> Vaillancourt, T., Hymel, S., McDougall, P. (2003) Bullying is power: Implications for school-based intervention strategies. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 19, 157-176

Vaillancourt, T., McDougall, P., Hymel, S., Krygsman, A., Miller, J., Stiver, K., et al. (2008) Bullying: Are researchers and children/youth talking about the same thing? *International Journal of Behavior*, 32, 486-495

<sup>542</sup> Department for education (2011) Reducing bullying amongst the worst affected. [dera.ioe.ac.uk/10364/1/Reducing\\_Bullying\\_Amongst\\_the\\_Worst\\_Affected.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10364/1/Reducing_Bullying_Amongst_the_Worst_Affected.pdf)

aggressive. As a group, victims cry easily, are anxious and lonely and may be disliked by their peers.

### **Bystanders**

Bystanders are indirectly involved in the bullying process.

Children', who witness bullying, can have positive or negative effects on bullying.<sup>543</sup> According to Olweus<sup>544</sup> there are different levels within the bullying ladder and dismantling the aggressive portion of the ladder and shifting children to a deterring mindset must be a part of any prevention program.<sup>545</sup> Olweus describes seven levels as follows:

- Children who want to bully and initiate the action
- Followers or henchmen
- Supporters or passive bullies
- Passive supporters or possible bullies
- Disengaged onlookers
- Possible defenders
- Defenders who dislike the action of bullying and help those that are victimised

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<sup>543</sup> Swearer Napolitano, SM., Espelage, DL., Vaillancourt, T., Hymel, S. (2010) "What Can Be Done About School Bullying"? Linking Research to Educational Practice, Educational Psychology Papers and Publications: Paper 141 [digitalcommons.unl.edu/edpsychpapers/141](http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/edpsychpapers/141)

<sup>544</sup> Olweus, D. (2001). Peer harassment: a critical analysis and some important issues. (pp. 3-20). New York: Guilford Publications. [olweus.org/public/bullying.page](http://olweus.org/public/bullying.page)

<sup>545</sup> Donegan, R (2012) Bullying and Cyber bullying: History, Statistics, Law, Prevention and Analysis, Strategic Communication, Elon University [elon.edu/docs/e-web/academics/communications/research/vol3no1/04DoneganEJSpring12.pdf](http://elon.edu/docs/e-web/academics/communications/research/vol3no1/04DoneganEJSpring12.pdf)

## Appendix 9: Current approach to bullying in Irish Schools

### 2013 Anti-bullying Procedures

The Department of Education and Skills has taken an active role in understanding and combating bullying for many decades. Their goal is to empower schools to create school environments nationwide that are inclusive, friendly and safe for all children including children with SEND and where bullying behaviours are not supported.

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 primary and post-primary schools in Ireland are required to develop a code of behaviour, including a policy on bullying. The code should be in accordance with guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). A code of behaviour, 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', was published by NEWB in 2008 (Note: NEWB is now part of TUSLA).

In September 2013, the Department of Education and Skills published '**Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools**'.<sup>546</sup> The anti-bullying procedures result from a review of the 1993 guidelines and the implementation of the 2013 **Action Plan on Bullying** – Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills. Students with SEND are included under identity based bullying (page 8 of the 2013 procedures).

The 2013 procedures outline key principles of best practice for both preventing and tackling bullying and require all schools to commit to these principles in their anti-bullying policy. The key principles are:

- A positive school culture and climate
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)
- Effective supervision and monitoring of children
- Supports for staff

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<sup>546</sup> Department of Education and Skills (2013), Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, [education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf)

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

The 2013 procedures require that all Boards of Management adopt and implement an anti-bullying policy that complies with the requirements of these procedures include a standardised recording template which must be completed by the relevant teacher:<sup>547</sup>

- In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred
- Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal, as applicable

The 2013 anti-bullying procedures also include oversight arrangements. These require that, at least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management. The report must set out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the bullying recording template to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures.<sup>548</sup>

- The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school<sup>549</sup>
- "The Board of Management of each school in developing its anti-bullying policy must formulate the policy in co-operation with both teaching and non-teaching school staff under the leadership of the Principal and in consultation with parents/guardians and children. In this way, the development of school-wide strategies for dealing with bullying is shared by all concerned"<sup>550</sup>

### **Special Education Support Service (SESS) and government agencies**

There is support, resources and material available from the Department of Education and Skills and from various government agencies to address disruptive behaviour in schools and to address the needs of children with SEND.

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<sup>547</sup> *ibid*, page 7

<sup>548</sup> *ibid*, page 7

<sup>549</sup> *ibid*

<sup>550</sup> *ibid*, page 17

The SESS, for example, operates under the remit of the Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department of Education and Skills. The aim of the service is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning with particular reference to special educational provision.<sup>551</sup> The SESS facilitates a partnership approach involving support teams of practising teachers, Education Centres, the Inspectorate, National Educational Psychological Service, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the National Council for Special Education, Third Level Colleges, Health Board Personnel and Teacher Unions and other relevant bodies and services. In a similar spirit of partnership the SESS maximises the benefits of North-South co-operation.<sup>552</sup>

SESS works closely with the following government agencies:

- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) - the National Educational Welfare Board is now part of Tulsa)
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has guide-lines for schools which set out three levels or continuum of support and intervention available for children with special educational needs in primary and post-primary schools. The NEPS psychologist can get involved in bullying at any one of 3 stages. In primary schools this continuum of support is called Classroom Support, School Support, School Support Plus while in post-primary schools it is called Support for all, Support for some, Support for a few:<sup>553</sup>

- Classroom Support (Support for All) is a process of prevention, early identification and effective mainstream teaching
- School Support (Support for Some) is an assessment and intervention process directed at some children, or groups of children, who require additional input
- School Support Plus (Support for a Few) generally characterised by more intensive and individualised support

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<sup>551</sup> [sess.ie/about-sess/about-sess](http://sess.ie/about-sess/about-sess)

<sup>552</sup> *ibid*

<sup>553</sup> See, for example, Department of Education and Science (2007) Special Educational Needs: A continuum of support [www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Educational-Psychologist-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_resource\\_pack.pdf](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Educational-Psychologist-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf)

There is an abundance of material available for schools; teachers and parents/guardians from the SESS website<sup>554</sup> as well as on the government agencies websites include the following:

- NCSE 2011 **Inclusive Education Framework**: A guide for schools on the inclusion of children with special educational needs<sup>555</sup>
- NEPS 2010 A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers
- NEPS 2010 Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties - A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers
- NEPS 2010 A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Resource Pack for Teachers
- SESS 2008 CABHAIR Insert - Issue 3: Inclusive Schools: Developing a Practical Approach
- SESS 2008 CABHAIR Newsletter- Issue 2: Supporting Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in School
- SESS 2008 Special Education Support Service: **'SIGNPOSTS'**

### **The National Behaviour Support Services (NBSS)**

The Department of Education and Skills established the NBSS in 2006 in response to the recommendation in School Matters: The Report of the Task Force on Child Behaviour in Second Level Schools (2006). The role of the NBSS is to assist partner schools in addressing current behavioural concerns on three levels. The NBSS works with schools in addressing children's social, emotional, academic and behavioural needs at The NBSS works with Behaviour Support Classrooms in post-primary schools throughout the country to implement intervention programmes which have the overarching aim of promoting positive behaviour in schools. Their programmes are detailed on the NBSS website ([www.nbss.ie](http://www.nbss.ie)).

### **Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum**

All post-primary schools provide teaching in SPHE which focuses on health, well-being, and personal development and addresses bullying directly. The classroom teacher is responsible for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum. It aims to provide children with the necessary skills to develop positive relationships. Active learning is the principal teaching and learning approach recommended for the

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<sup>554</sup> [sess.ie/documents-and-publications/government-agencies](http://sess.ie/documents-and-publications/government-agencies)

<sup>555</sup> [ncse.ie/uploads/1/1/InclusiveEducationFramework\\_1.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/1/InclusiveEducationFramework_1.pdf)

implementation of SPHE and individual themes should be treated in the context of the overall SPHE curriculum.<sup>556</sup>

The SPHE 'Cool schools' programme addresses bullying in schools. It should be part of the whole-school approach to SPHE planning and implementation.<sup>557</sup> It contains the following elements:

- Older children are peer mediators who patrol the playground at breaks and lunchtime. They are trained to mediate disputes between children and are overseen by the Cool Schools Coordinator, a nominated teacher
- The programme reflects the whole school-community approach and incorporates measures which can be taken at school, class and individual levels

The programme was developed in Ireland by the HSE Dublin North East's Child Psychiatric service. It is similar to the New Zealand model in terms of structure and objectives but is specifically tailored to the Irish context. The New Zealand school programme was set up to change the way conflict is handled and to create a better learning environment. Its goal is to give children the skills to mediate disputes and conflicts without physical or verbal violence and to reduce the stress on teachers by reducing the number of conflicts that they have to deal with inside and outside the classroom.

The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Support Service provides support for schools with the implementation of the SPHE in the curriculum in a whole-school context. It provides in-service courses, in school meetings, whole staff seminars and school based bullying support where needed.<sup>558</sup>

The SPHE Network includes Health Services Executive/Health Promotion Unit, Child Abuse Prevention Programme, Development and Intercultural Education, Amnesty Ireland, and lecturers in SPHE from a number of Teacher Education Colleges in Ireland.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Department of Education and Science (2010) Circular on Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Best Practice Guidelines for Primary Schools [circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2010/22.pdf](http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2010/22.pdf)

<sup>557</sup> *ibid*

<sup>558</sup> See SPHE Support Service. [www.sphe.ie/supportservice.aspx](http://www.sphe.ie/supportservice.aspx)

<sup>559</sup> SPHE Network (2012) Submission on Tackling Bullying in Schools [education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp\\_anti\\_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti\\_bully\\_sub\\_dept\\_agencies\\_sphe\\_network.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp_anti_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti_bully_sub_dept_agencies_sphe_network.pdf)

For meeting the needs of children with SEND, the SPHE Support Service could collaborate with NEPS and the SESS Support Service to support the adaptation of existing anti-bullying programme materials.<sup>560</sup>

### **Other Programmes**

The Safe School Programme was developed by the National Anti-Bullying Coalition (NABC) for post-primary schools. Like the Cool School programme, this programme reflects the whole school- community approach and incorporates measures which can be taken at school, class and individual level.<sup>561</sup> The Safe School programme is conducted through a series of modules by a trained team of teachers. A primary school version has yet to be developed.

The 'Friends for Life' programme is an evidence-based anxiety prevention programme and resiliency building tool specifically designed for use in schools. In 2011 it was introduced to 14 post-primary schools in Ireland as a joint project by the NBSS, NEPS and SPHE support service.<sup>562</sup>

### **Other resources available and used in Irish Schools**

The Anti-Bullying Research/Resource Centre was set up in the Education Department of Trinity College Dublin in 1996. The Centre gives advice and guidance to researchers, parents/guardians, teachers and schools organisations. It hosts training courses, for example, the EU-funded CyberTraining-4-Parents/guardians project (<http://cybertraining4parents/guardians.org>), provided in-service training courses on cyberbullying for adult educators working with parents/guardians. The UK version of the parents/guardians' course is available at <http://www.cybertraining4parents/guardians.org/ebook>.

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<sup>560</sup> National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)(2012) DES Consultation on Tackling Bullying in Schools Submission. [education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp\\_anti\\_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti\\_bully\\_sub\\_dept\\_agencies\\_neps.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp_anti_bullying/Anti-Bullying-Forum-Submissions/anti_bully_sub_dept_agencies_neps.pdf)

<sup>561</sup> The National Anti-Bullying Coalition, (2012). Safe School Programme. Presentation to Anti-Bullying Forum, 17th May, 2012 [education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp\\_anti\\_bullying/Presentation-for-the-National-Association-of-Principals-and-Deputy-Principals-NAPD-.pdf](http://education.ie/en/Press-Events/Conferences/cp_anti_bullying/Presentation-for-the-National-Association-of-Principals-and-Deputy-Principals-NAPD-.pdf)

<sup>562</sup> See [www.nbss.ie](http://www.nbss.ie) for more information

## **Appendix 10: Special class provision in Ireland<sup>563</sup>**

A national school survey was conducted on the prevalence of children with SEND in Irish schools, resources available for them and information on the special classes in each school 3,165 primary schools (response rate 80%) and 729 post-primary schools (response rate 74%) participated. The results of this survey include:

- There were 293 special classes in the 3,165 primary schools that participated (7%) and 216 special classes in the 729 post-primary schools that participated (24%)
- At post-primary school level, half of the special classes were established between 2009 and 2011 and have no specific SEND designation. They were created by pooling resource teaching hours
- At primary school level, 60% of special classes are designated as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classes while at post-primary school level, ASD classes account for less than one fifth of special classes. Many post-primary special classes encompass a wide range of different groups within the class
- At primary level, most special classes follow the single teacher model as their peers in mainstream. However, at post primary level, two-fifths of the special classes follow the one teacher model unlike their counterparts in mainstream classes
- Allocation to special classes appears to be a relatively permanent arrangement. Many special class children spend most if not all of the school week together as a group in both primary and post-primary schools. The perceived threshold for special class funding impacts on child mobility into mainstream
- School principals vary widely in their attitudes to and provision of special classes. This varied response implies a lack of understanding about the necessary criteria and eligibility for establishing a special class and how to set up a special class
- Urban band 1 DEIS schools at primary level and single sex boys schools at primary and post primary levels enrol disproportionate numbers of children with SEND. Smaller primary and post-primary schools also report higher levels of SEND

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<sup>563</sup> McCoy, S., Banks, J., Frawley, D., Watson, D., Shevlin, M. Smyth, F (2014) Understanding Special Class Provision in Ireland Phase 1: Findings from a National Survey of Schools A NCSE/ESRI Publication [ncse.ie/uploads/1/Report\\_16\\_special\\_classes\\_30\\_04\\_14.pdf](http://ncse.ie/uploads/1/Report_16_special_classes_30_04_14.pdf)

- There is a pattern of Irish exemptions for SEND children in the majority of primary school special classes and this follows into post-primary school. Curricular provision at post primary level relies on the JCSP at junior cycle and the LCA programme at senior cycle level. However, some schools do not offer the LCA programme because of their size or because of the perceived stigma around the programme

## **Appendix 11: Presentation on bullying based on Growing up in Ireland Data**

This is the text of a presentation give by Sophia Arabadjis, MSc Applied Social Research, Trinity College, who completed a placement in the NDA from April to June 2014.

Sophia analysed the 9 Year-Old Cohort of the Growing Up Ireland Data. Research questions included:

- What is the intersection of bullying/victimization and disability?
- What factors mediate this intersection?
- Can we model bullying/victimization?
- Does disability contribute to the models?

### **Growing Up Ireland 9 Year-Old Cohort Data**

A national longitudinal cohort study of both infants and nine-year-olds, Growing Up in Ireland, examines how children grow up in Ireland. The infant cohort has approximately 11,000 babies and their families. The nine-year-old cohort is slightly smaller but a nationally representative group of about 8,500 (n=8568)

In the nine-year-old cohort, children were asked to participate via a multi-layer clustering framework that sampled through a random selection of schools and continued down to individual nine-year-olds. (In this way not all schools participated, and not all nine-year old in Ireland.)

Children, parents, teachers, and principals all filled out quantitative surveys about various aspects of the study child's life and situation. It is from these quantitative data sets that this research stems.

### **Questions of Interest in GUI: On Bullying**

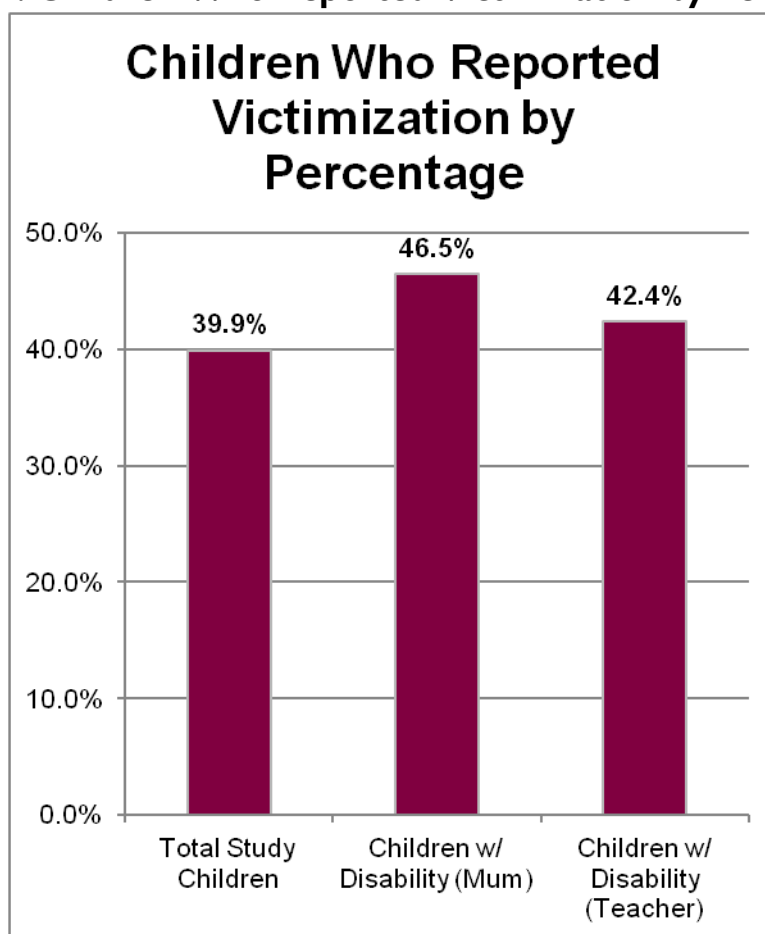
- Primary Caregiver (mum) asked if they child has been 'picked on' or 'picked on others' in the past year (CHECK) and if so how
- Child is asked if the he or she has 'picked on others' or been 'picked on' in the past month and if so how
- Principals/Teachers asked to what extent bullying exists in the classroom and school environment and if there are policies regarding bullying within the school
- Restrictions due to access.

### On Disability

- Primary Caregiver (mum) asked if child has any 'on-going chronic illness, mental health problems, or disability' and the nature and severity of the CI/MH/D
- Primary Caregiver (asked) if child has an 'identified learning difficulty', what the learning difficulty is, and if it was professionally diagnosed
- Teacher asked if child is limited by any physical/sensory disability, emotional behavioral issues, speech problems, or learning difficulties
- Restrictions due to access.

### Descriptive Statistics: What's the Story? Children Who Reported Victimization by Percentage

Figure 1: Children Who Reported Victimization by Percentage

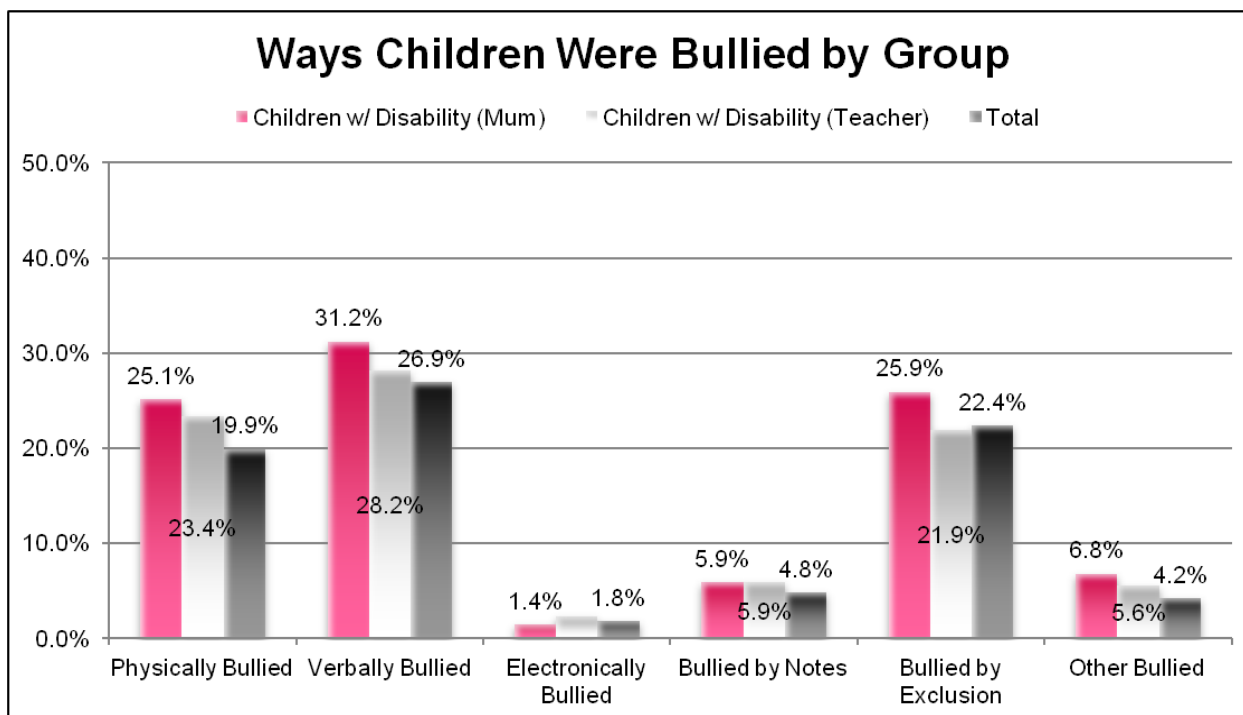


- Children with a disability, mental health problem, on-going chronic illness or learning difficulty seem to be more at risk for victimization
- For Children with a disability identified by their mum, the odds ratio is 1.17, or 1.17x more likely to be bullied

- For Children with a disability identified by their teacher, the odds ratio is 1.06, or 1.06x more likely to be bullied.

### Ways children were bullied by group

**Figure 2: Ways children were bullied by group**



- Approximately 26% of children with a disability identified by their mum (n=1128) reported being physically bullied
- Approximately 23% of children with a disability identified by their teacher (n=1208) reported being physically bullied
- Of all the children who participated in the study, approximately 20% (n=8568) reported being physically bullied
- The key observation is that the black bar (the total group) is almost always the lowest, which suggests that disability plays a role in becoming a victim of bullying.

### In other words

**Table 1: Ways children were victims (percentage and ratio)**

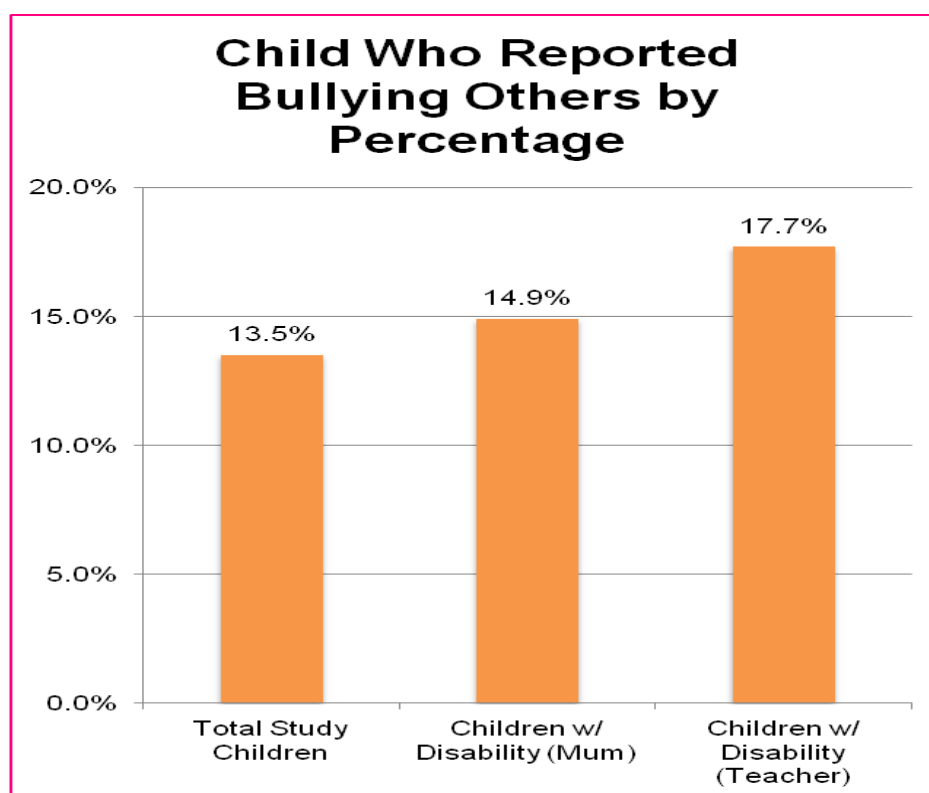
Ways Children were Victims	% Child Victims	%Child Victims w/ Disabilities <sup>^</sup>	Ratio
Physical Victims	19.9%	25.1%**	1.3
Verbal Victims	26.9%	31.2%**	1.2
Victims by	1.8%	1.4%	1.3

Ways Children were Victims	% Child Victims	%Child Victims w/ Disabilities <sup>^</sup>	Ratio
Electronics			
Victims by Notes	4.8%	5.9%	1.2
Victims by Exclusion	22.4%	25.9%**	1.2
Victims Other	4.2%	6.8%**	1.6

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level; <sup>^</sup> Mum Identified; \*There are not a huge number of children in this group (total = 142/8568 and CWD\*\* = 15/1128).

### What about the bullies? What's the story?

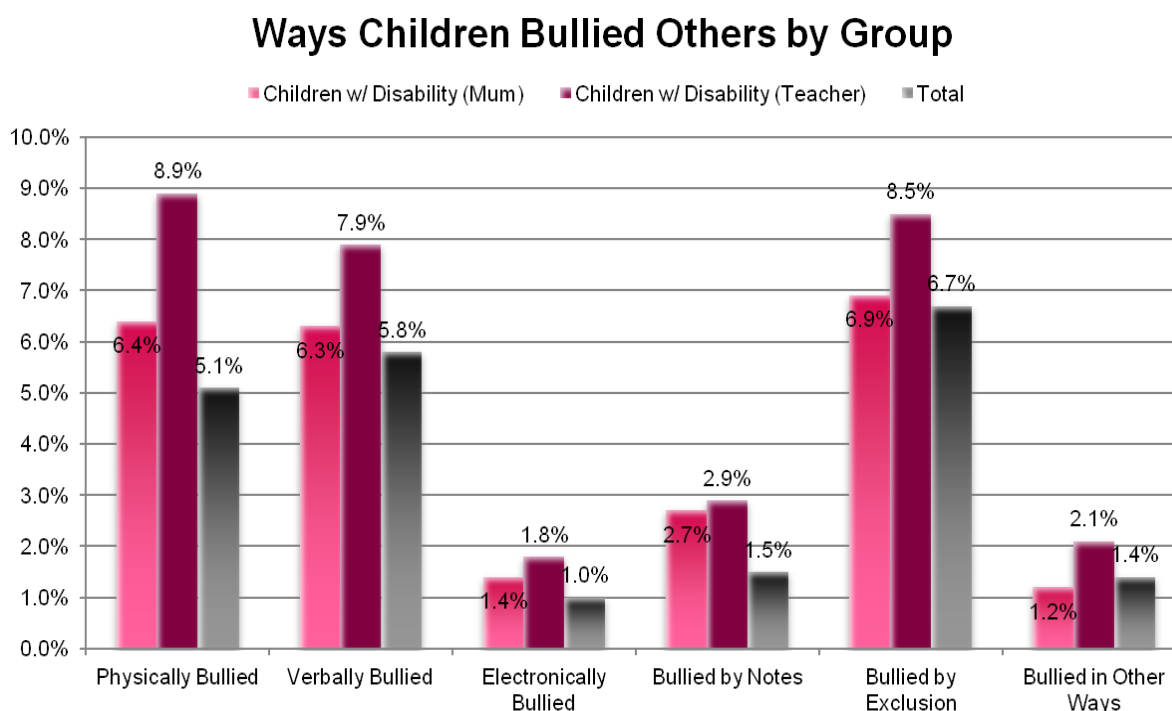
Figure 3: Child who reported bullying others by percentage



- Children with a disability, mental health problem, on-going chronic illness or learning difficulty seem to be more likely to bully others.
- Children with a disability identified by their mum are 1.1x more likely to bully than their peers.
- Children with a disability identified by their teacher are 1.3x more likely to bully than their peers.

## Ways children bullied others, by group

**Figure 4: Ways children bullied others, by group**



- Approximately 6.4% of children with a disability identified by their mum (n=1128) reported bullying others physically.
- Approximately 8.9% of children with a disability identified by their teacher (n=1208) reported bullying others physically.
- Of all the children who participated in the study, approximately 5.1% (n=8568) reported bullying others physically.
- The key thing to note is that the black bar (the total group) is almost always the lowest, which suggest that disability plays a role in bullying behavior.

## In other words

**Table 2: Ways children were bullies**

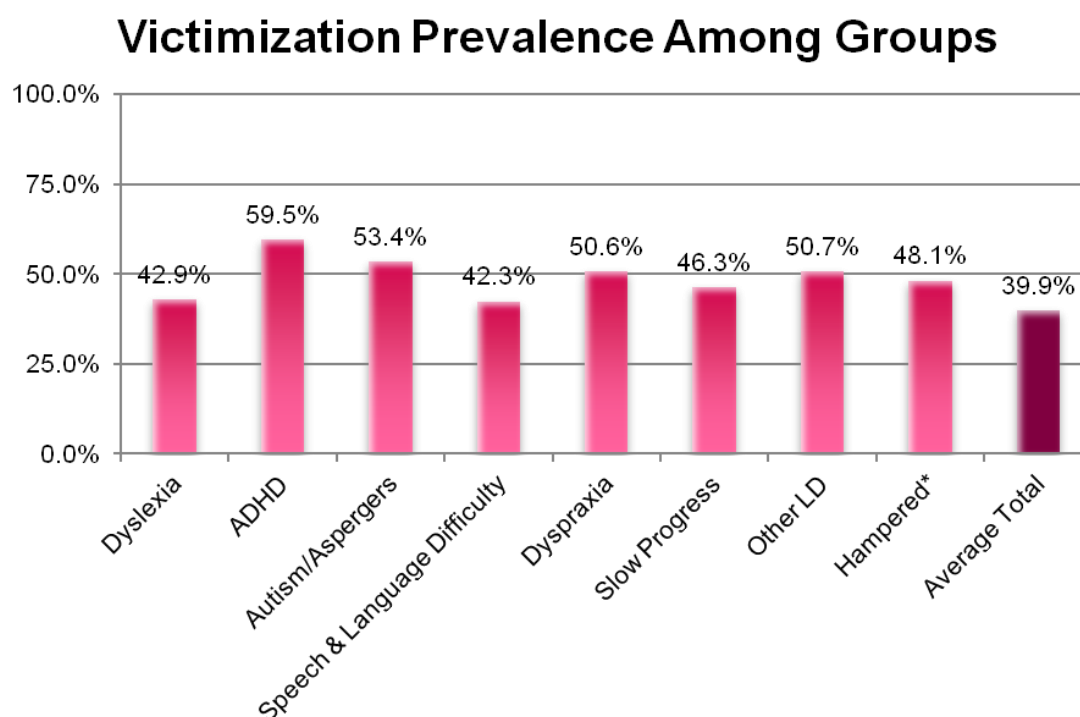
Ways Children were Bullies	% Child Bullies	% Child Bullies w/ Disability <sup>^</sup>	Ratio
Physically Bullied	5.1%	6.4%**	1.3
Verbally Bullied	5.8%	6.3%	1.1
Electronically Bullied	1.0%	1.4%	1.4*
Bullied By Notes	1.5%	2.7%**	1.8*
Bullied by	6.7%	6.9%	1.0

Ways Children were Bullies	% Child Bullies	% Child Bullies w/ Disability <sup>^</sup>	Ratio
Exclusion			
Bullied in Other Ways	1.4%	1.2%	0.9

\*\*Significant at 0.05 level: <sup>^</sup>Mum Identified disability: \* Again, sample size here was very small, total=65/8568, CWD\*\*=15/1128 for electronic and notes total=125/8568, CWD\*\*=30/1128.

## Type of Disability Victims

Figure 5: Victimization prevalence among groups



- The statistics suggests that children with learning difficulties or children who are hampered\* by CI/MH/D are more likely to be bullied (be victimized) than their peers.

**Odds Ratios: How are children with disabilities bullied if they are bullied?**

Table 3: Type of bullying of children with disability

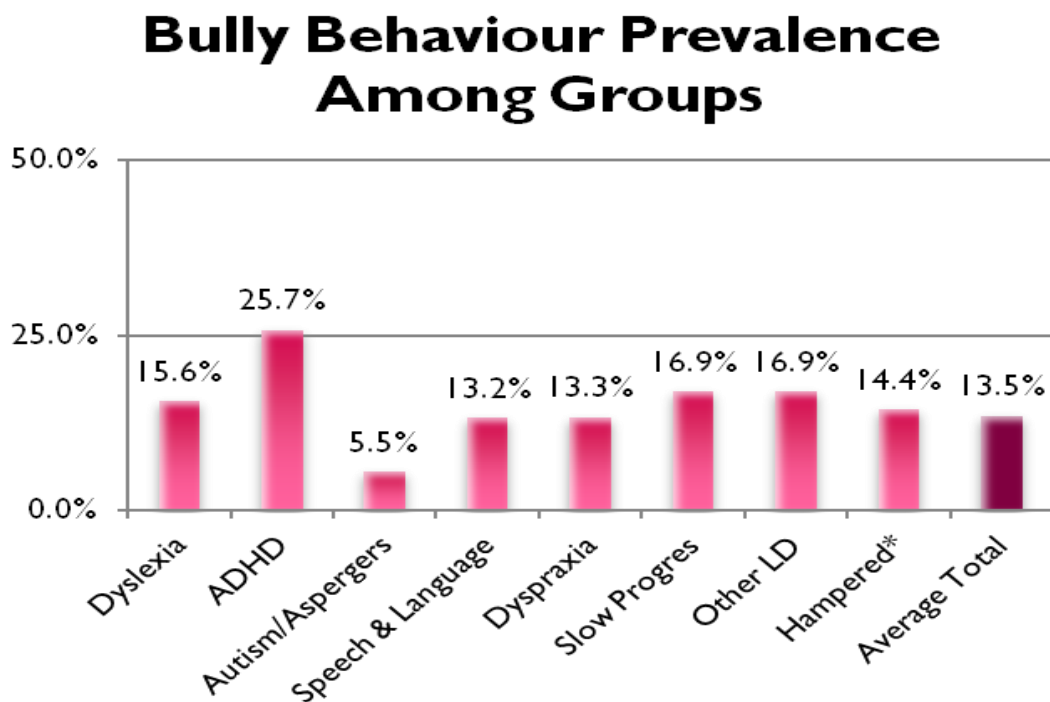
Victimization Prevalence	Total Children w/ Disability (n=1128)	Children w/ Learning Difficulty <sup>^</sup> (n=713)	Children w/ CI/MH/D <sup>^</sup> (n=221)	Children w/ Both (n=192)
Physical	1.3**	1.2**	1.1	1.6**

Victimization Prevalence	Total Children w/ Disability (n=1128)	Children w/ Learning Difficulty^ (n=713)	Children w/ CI/MH/D^ (n=221)	Children w/ Both (n=192)
Verbal	1.2**	1.1	1.2*	1.4**
Electronic	0.8	1.1	0.5	0
Notes	1.2	1.3	0.6	1.8*
Exclusion	1.1**	1.1*	1.4**	0.9
Other	1.6**	1.8**	1.0	1.7*

Learning Disability Mum Identified, ^ CI/MH/D hampered and mum identified. \*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level

## Type of Disability Victims

Figure 6: Bullying behaviour prevalence among groups



- With the exception of Autism/Aspergers, Speech & Language Difficulties, and Dyspraxia, children with learning difficulties or are hampered\* by CI/MH/D are more likely to bully.

## Odds Ratios: How do children with a disability bully, if they bully?

**Table 4: Type of bullying carried out by children with disability**

Victimization Prevalence	Total Children w/ Disability (n=1128)	Children w/ Learning Difficulty^ (n=713)	Children w/ CI/MH/D^ (n=221)	Children w/ Both (n=192)
Physical	1.3**	1.2**	1.1	1.6**
Verbal	1.2**	1.1	1.2*	1.4**
Electronic	0.8	1.1	0.5	0
Notes	1.2	1.3	0.6	1.8*
Exclusion	1.1**	1.1*	1.4**	0.9
Other	1.6**	1.8**	1.0	1.7*

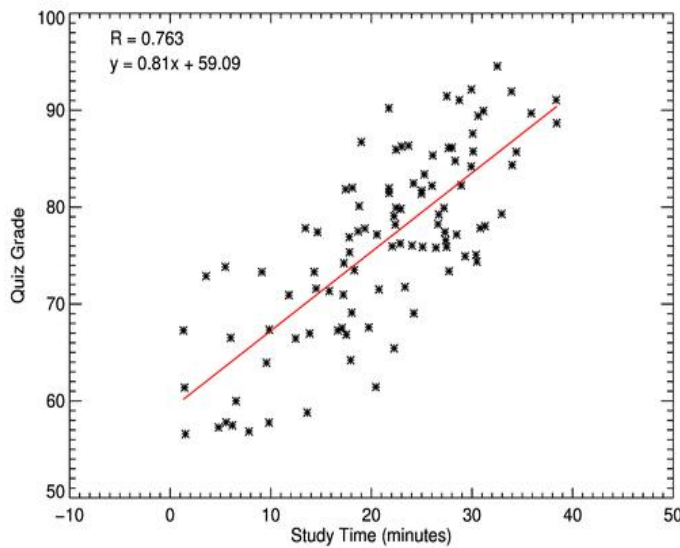
^Mum identified Learning Difficulty or CI/MH/D. \*Significant at 0.05 level, \*\* Significant at 0.01 level

## Summary... Five Key Points

1. The Growing Up Ireland, 9yr cohort study provides a few ways of identifying disability: primarily mum identified or teacher identified
2. Bullying is a very complex issue that has many different factors associated with it
3. Children with chronic illness, mental health problems, disability or learning difficulty seem to be more at risk for victimization *and* bullying behavior
4. Children with specific types of disabilities are more likely to bully and be bullied than others. (Children with ADHD, for example, are twice as likely to be bullies.)
5. These percentages suggest that disability plays a role in bullying behavior and necessitates further research

## (Logistic) Regression?

A regression analysis is essentially where we try to fit a line to the data we've collected.



### Why is it useful?

- It helps us understand what factors or independent variables (age, education, height) contribute to an outcome or dependent variable (income).
- It both ranks and controls for the effects of independent variables; it tells us how much each variable contributes and if, when other variables are included, a specific variable *still* contributes.
- Logistic regression works very similarly to a linear regression, except it helps us predict yes or no outcomes – dependent variables that only have 2 possible answers, yes or no.

### Our Logistic Regression

Dependent Variable (Outcome Variable): Was the child bullied? Yes=1, No=0.

### Independent Variables:

- If the child bullied
- The Strengths & Difficulties Test
- If the child had a disability identified by a professional\*
- Weight
- If the child liked their teacher
- If the child looked forward to going to school
- If the child liked school
- Region (urban/rural)
- Parenting style

- Household type
- Social class
- If the child had moved
- DEIS school indicator – school meals
- Gender
- Disability\*
- Et Cetera

### **Summary: 4 Key Points and an admission**

1. We used a logistic regression method to analyze the data.
2. This method allows us to see what factors contribute to victimization. It let's us **predict** victimization.
3. Our dependent variable (outcome variable) is whether or not the child was bullied (a victim) where yes=1 and no=0.
4. Our independent variables (predictors) were quite varied and ranged from child-level to school-level.

We are not so good at predicting bullying. Because it is such a complex issue, and because the Growing Up in Ireland study was not designed to specifically measure bullying or disability, our model – logistic regression – is not great.

### **In More Detail**

- Block Approach: Child-specific variables in block one, school-specific variable in block two.
- For Block One:
  - The model is significant [ $\chi^2 (14) = 945.33$   $p < 0.001$ ]
  - The model 'fits' the data significantly [ $\chi^2 (8) = 6.71$   $p = 0.569$ ]
  - Nagelkerke  $R^2$  suggests we can predict about 14.3% of the variance.
- For Block Two:
  - The model is significant [ $\chi^2 (16) = 968.04$   $p < 0.001$ ]
  - The model 'fits' the data significantly [ $\chi^2 (8) = 12.2$   $p = 0.142$ ]
  - Nagelkerke  $R^2$  suggests we can predict 14.2% of the variance.
  - $N = 8495$

## What we did find: Variables that significantly increased likelihood of being bullied

**Table 5: Variables that significantly decreased the likelihood of being bullied**

Variable Name	Odds Ratio
Bullying Others	<b>5.9x</b>
Top 9.6% of SDQ	1.8x
<b>Professionally Identified LD*</b>	<b>1.5x</b>
Overweight (Child Perspective)	1.4x
Injury/Illness in Family	1.3x
'Never liked teacher'	1.3x
Moved House	1.3x
'Never looked forward to school'	1.3x
Couple with 1 or 2 children	1.2x
No Valid Social Class	1.2x
School offered school meals (DEIS)	1.2x

## Variables that significantly decreased the likelihood of being bullied

**Table 6: Variables that significantly decreased the likelihood of being bullied**

Variable Name	Odds Ratio
Independent Parenting Style (neglectful*)	<b>0.5x</b>
<b>Teacher identified Disability AND Male Child</b>	0.7x
Child had many (6+) Friends	0.8x
'Always liked school'	0.9x
Region (Rural)	0.9x

\*Parenting style, GUI describes as 'neglectful'.

## Non-Significant Variables

- Mum Disability
- Mum Chronic Illness, Mental Health or Disability
- Child Disability (Mum)
- Child Disability (Teacher)
- Child Chronic Illness, Mental Health or Disability (Mum) \* Learning Difficulty
- Child Sex \* Learning Difficulty

### **Summary: Disability in Bullying**

- Disability does seem to play a part in victimization, but it is still unclear exactly what that part is.
- Having a professionally diagnosed learning difficulty seems to make children prone to victimization, but
  - This isn't particularly well correlated with SDQ
  - Nor is it well correlated with Teacher identified disability.
- Teacher-identified disability did not come up as significant, but the interaction between male children and disability did.
  - Teachers tend to identify more male children with disabilities than female children (Odds Ratio: 1.6 to boys with disability)

### **Back to the Beginning: Research Questions Answered**

- What is the intersection of bullying/victimization and disability?
- What factors mediate this intersection?
- Can we model bullying/victimization?
- Does disability contribute to the models?
- Bullying and Victimization are heavily entwined with disability. Children with certain disabilities seem to be more at risk for bullying/victimization.
- How disability is identified seems to make a difference in bullying/victimization.
- Our model is okay at predicting victimization, and it does appear that disability contributes to victimization.

### **Limitations, Implications & Further Research**

One implication is that being professionally diagnosed is associated with an increased chance of being victimized for children with disabilities.

#### **Further Research**

- Multi-Level Analysis to capture child level, class-level, school/policy level
- Exploration of bullying behavior within disability
- For My Thesis:
  - Using the same data
  - Looking at disability from the mum's perspective
  - Looking at bullying behavior too

#### **Limitations**

- AMF limited access
  - DEIS schools

- Weight
- Mum report Bullying
- Bullying at School Level
- Bullying Policy
- Multi-Level Nested Data
- Not designed for bullying or disability

**Presentation Ends.**