

by an individual who persistently bullies others. Such a person's bullying may be merely one manifestation of a plethora of problems.

Sometimes all that is needed is a simple word or two from a member of staff to make children realise what they are doing wrong. At the other extreme some bullying remains intractable.

As pupils feel safe to talk about bullying they are more likely to report incidents to staff, expecting some helpful intervention. The two main aims of intervention should be:

- To make the victim feel safe
- To encourage better behaviour from the bully, colluders and observers

Research has shown that where victims are encouraged to change their behaviour, to 'stand up for themselves', 'walk away' or 'pretend they don't care' each time they fail to do this makes their misery worse. They feel it is their fault that this is happening to them which it is not. Whatever their inadequacy or difficulty, it is not their fault and it is not their responsibility to stop it. It is the responsibility of the school who must give them that message loud and clear and not compound their unhappiness.

Punishing the bully rarely works; and in fact often makes things worse when the bully takes further revenge on the victim. If we want to encourage disclosure and want to work positively with bullies then everyone in the school must know that effective action will be taken that will not lead to punishment. Bullying is anti social behaviour resorted to by ordinary people and we must respond in a way which will be helpful to their learning of improved behaviour. Increasing their anxiety and alienation from us is not likely to work. However for very serious, intentional, repeated, physical bullying it is difficult to argue that this should not be met with the imposition of some sort of sanction which will be decided on a case by case basis by the Headmaster. For persistent cases of bullying a warning may be issued and if necessary the parents informed. In extreme cases the Headmaster may decide whether the bully stays in school or not.

The No Blame Approach (see Appendix 1)

This is an effective approach to dealing with bullying and does not put the victim at risk. As the name suggests, one of the most important things about this approach is that it deliberately avoids accusations, blame and punishment. The first step is to interview the victim with the aim of finding out how he/she feels. The victim will be asked to communicate their distress by drawing a picture, writing something or explaining verbally. With their full knowledge and approval, the next step involves getting together the children involved in the bullying (including bystanders) and perhaps some non-involved children. This group (which does not include the victim) will be made aware of the victim's distress and will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and come up with some ideas for making the bullied person happier.