



Bullying and harassment have always been a major social problem in schools. They can be most effectively dealt with in an open and informed atmosphere. This programme of lessons encourages students to discuss, research and therefore de-mystify bullying in just such an atmosphere.

These lessons also link to 'Every Child Matters' under the 'Stay safe' banner. The lessons are for age 11-14, specially year 7 classes of all abilities.

Resources

The novel upon which this mini-scheme is based is *The present takers* by Aidan Chambers (Random House, ISBN 0-09-999160-8). The extracts used in this series of lessons are taken from pages 51-52 ('The front door slammed ... find somewhere more exciting than that dead hole.') and pages 74-75 ('"Let me in" ... "Let them rot, Cynthia"').

Overview

The lessons are loosely planned and informal in style so as to encourage free discussion, and different classes will take different amounts of time to complete them. Therefore no follow-on lessons are suggested here.

Students are to be encouraged to learn *about...* bullying and its surrounding issues rather than to learn *from...* teachers or texts. The *Present takers* novel is a 'springboard' which may be read in part or whole as time or ability level allows. Summaries are given under Resources after the lessons themselves.

Links with influential individuals need to be genuinely made in order to instil a sense of empowerment in the students. Therefore the letters written in lesson 5 should be sent to their addressee if possible, and students should deliver their lesson 6 presentation to a senior member of staff or a representative of the student council/forum.

Learning objectives

- To teach students that bullying has far-reaching effects extending beyond school into the adult and political world
- To encourage students to see bullying as a problem for all involved
- To allow students to develop their empathy skills so as to see the problem of bullying from multiple and unusual perspectives
- To give students an opportunity to create and discuss possible solutions to social problems
- To give students a sense of empowerment through opportunities for their ideas to be heard.

Lesson 1 Thinking about bullying

Aims

- To start pupils thinking about the issue of bullying.
- To discuss different individuals' views about bullying.

Starter

The words 'bullying' and 'bully' are displayed. In pairs or small groups, the class write down as many words or phrases as they can which they associate with these two words (an 'ideas shower').

The teacher takes feedback from students whose ideas are discussed.

Development

The class reads and discusses *The present takers* Chapter 1.

Students complete two spider diagrams to give possible answers to the following questions: 'For what reasons are people bullied?' and 'Why do people bully?'

Feedback is taken and discussed.

Plenary

The class discuss their own experiences of bullying. Has anyone ever been bullied or seen bullying happening? Has anyone ever been a bully?

Homework

Students are to use the Internet (or any other means available to them) to research the issue of bullying. They should come to the next lesson with facts and statistics about bullying in the United Kingdom *and* bring in an article, report or problem-page letter related to bullying. See Resources for useful websites.

Lesson 2 Studying statistics about bullying

Aims

- For pupils to understand how far-reaching and important an issue bullying is by discussing relevant facts and statistics.

Starter

In groups of about four, students discuss the facts and statistics they found for their homework.

As a group, they are asked to compile a list of the three most shocking or disturbing facts / statistics they have discussed.

Development

Groups feed back to the class by writing their three facts on the board.

When each group has fed back, the class discusses these facts. How do they feel about this? This could be done as a written exercise if preferred.

Lesson 3 Reasons for bullying

Aims

- To look at possible reasons for bullying from the point of view of the bully.
- To develop students' empathy skills.

Starter

The class recaps the reasons they think people bully others from lesson 1.

It is pointed out that sometimes the bully is himself / herself a victim of bullying.

Development

Students read and discuss *The present takers* pages 51-52 and 74-75.

Students annotate copies of the extracts to show how Melanie's home life is unhappy.

The class feed back and discuss their answers.

Students provide a written answer to the question; *Why do you think Melanie bullies Lucy?* Answers should be as detailed as possible and use quotations to support the points made.

Plenary

If they do not already have this idea, students should complete their second spider diagram from lesson one to include the possibility of the bully being bullied or abused themselves.

This idea should be related to everyday life in terms of the need to help bullies, as well as their victims. What do the class think about this?

Lesson 4 Encouraging teamwork and empathy: drama-based lesson

Aims:

- To encourage empathy, tolerance and understanding with those who bully because they are bullied themselves.
- To promote teamwork.
- To encourage creative expression.

Starter

The framework and concepts of writing a diary entry are discussed (first person, private, assumption of prior knowledge, and so on).

Students write a short diary entry from Melanie's point of view, using the knowledge they have about her personality and life.

Examples are read to the class.

Development task 1

In pairs, students improvise a short role-play where one of them is a bully and the other a teacher who has witnessed an incident of them bullying. In the role-play, the teacher must 'get to the bottom' of the incident, and discovers that the bully is himself/ herself being bullied or abused either in or out of school.

Pairs perform their role-plays.

Development task 2

In groups of three or more, students improvise two short scenes of spoken drama or mime which show a person or a group of people bullying someone. In the next scene, an explanation for their behaviour is shown in which the bully being treated badly himself or herself in some way.

Groups perform their pieces of drama.

Plenary

An atmosphere tunnel is created to demonstrate bullying. The class forms two lines facing each other, raising their arms and joining hands to form a 'tunnel'.

Each student thinks of something that might be said by a bully to his or her victim and keeps repeating it, in character, over and over again. Examples could include, 'We're gonna get you later!' and 'Shh, he/she's coming!'

One at a time, students walk slowly through the tunnel to appreciate the atmosphere it evokes.

Homework

Students write another diary entry, this time from Lucy's point of view as if it had been written on her birthday (at the end of *The present takers* Chapter 1).

Lesson 5 Taking responsibility and writing a letter

Aims:

- To encourage students to take responsibility for finding solutions to problems in society.
- To strengthen students' relationship with political authority figures, encouraging them to see politics as a route to change and improvement in society.
- To consider and convey their own opinions.
- To practise formal and letter-writing skills.

Starter

Ideas shower: students complete a spider diagram or list of bullet-points showing how they think bullying could be stopped and how they think bullies should be dealt with.

The class discusses the pros and cons of some of these ideas.

Development

Elements of formal letter writing are discussed (see resources).

Individually, students are to draft a letter to an influential political figure such as the Prime Minister, the minister for education or a local MP, to do the following:

- 1 Introduce themselves
- 2 Explain the magnitude and effects of the problem of bullying (using the facts and statistics they have collected)
- 3 Discuss how bullying makes them feel and why people are bullied (from the ideas shower in lesson 1)
- 4 Explain why some people become bullies (from the ideas shower in lesson 1)
- 5 Give suggestions for improving the situation (from the ideas shower in this lesson's starter)

Firmly but politely explain that action needs to be taken by those able to influence change

Plenary

Students read out the part of their letter with which they are most pleased.

Lesson 6 Making a presentation about bullying

Aims:

- To strengthen students' relationship with school-based authority figures, encouraging them to see local politics as a route to change and improvement in society.
- To encourage students to take an interest in and ownership of how their community (school) is run.
- To develop skills in ICT
- To develop self-confidence and oratory skills.

Starter

The class discusses the nature of bullying in their particular school. How and where does bullying typically happen? Whom does the victim speak to in order to solve the problem? Is this always an easy thing to do? Where does a victim of bullying go for support? What happens to the bully?

Is the bully offered any support?

How could the school's response to bullying be improved?

(It may be possible to use your school's bullying policy for guidance here.)

Development

Students work in pairs, groups or individually to create an oral presentation and an accompanying slide presentation to give to the head teacher (or other member of the senior leadership team) or student council. The presentation should aim to persuade their audience to put in place the measures from which the group feel the school would benefit.

Plenary

Students feed back their ideas for improving the school's response to bullying. The teacher writes a bullet-pointed list of ideas on the board.

Homework

Complete and practise the presentation.

Write an evaluation of their performance.

Bullying and harassment: resources

The novel upon which this mini-scheme is based is *The present takers* by Aidan Chambers (Random House 1994, ISBN 0-09-999160-8).

The extracts used in this series of lessons are taken from pages 51-52 ('The front door slammed ... find somewhere more exciting than that dead hole.') and pages 74-75 (' "Let me in" ... "Let them rot, Cynthia." ')

Here are some points to consider.

Pages 51-52

- Bill Prosser's aggressive nature ('his tone changing to danger')
- Bill Prosser's rude attitude ("Who the devil are you?", "And you – out!")
- The lack of respect for others evident in the Prosser household ("What are you going on about now, you great lump?")
- The dominating presence of alcohol in the house ('opening the drinks cabinet and pouring herself a large tumblerful')
- The lack of parental responsibility in the household ("You'll have to talk to her" ... "Talk to her yourself")
- Possible neglect – they prefer to go out and enjoy themselves to staying at home with their daughter ("find somewhere more exciting than that dead hole")

Pages 74-75

- The lack of respect Melanie has for her parents ("No!" Melanie yelled back')
- Melanie's fear of what her father will do to her ('Apart from the lock, she had wedged a chairback under the door handle')
- The rude and inappropriate language used by the parents about their daughter ("Silly twit", "Stupid bitch")
- Aggression ('Bill Prosser fumed', 'he bellowed')
- The presence of alcohol ('poured herself another drink')