

The Four Pillars Of Action:

The Role of Guidance Counsellors in developing and implementing the Whole School Community Approach in Tackling Bullying, both Traditional and Cyber.

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Summary

Bullying at school is a cause of considerable concern to young people and their families. The growth of cyber-bullying has caused further worry and unease. The reason for the growing concern is the impact which cyber-bullying has been shown to have on the mental and physical well-being of young people. The strong connection between ‘traditional’ and cyber-bullying which has the majority of young people involved in both forms means that strategies need to be implemented which are effective with the traditional forms of bullying as well as providing clear and consistent guidelines for healthy cyber-behaviour. The Whole School Community Approach has been identified as having the potential to reduce the prevalence of bullying at school. This article, therefore, raises the need to have Guidance Counsellors central to the development and delivery of the Whole School Community Approach which has been endorsed by the Department of Education and Skills’ 2013 *Action Plan on Bullying*. The Whole School Community Approach is collaborative and systematic and can embrace both ‘traditional’ and cyber-bullying. Its prevention and intervention strategies involve all school staff, parents, young people and the wider community.

Key words

Guidance counsellors, young people, ‘traditional’ bullying, cyber-bullying, the Whole School Community Approach.

Introduction

Tackling bullying saves lives. On an everyday basis making every effort to address bullying in school helps young people to feel safe and cared for. While there has been growing awareness of bullying in Ireland over the past twenty years since the then Department of Education launched in 1993 the *Guidelines on Countering Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, it continues to be a cause of considerable concern to young people and their parents. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, for example, in their 2012 *State of the Nations Report* reported an incidence rate of 24.3% of children aged 10-17 years.

We are seeing an increasing growth of cyber-bullying with one in five young people (one in four girls and one in six boys) reporting that they have been targeted (O'Moore, 2014). Social networking sites constitute the main platform for online forms of bullying. Instant messaging and gaming also provide a context for bullying (O'Neill, Grehan and Ólafson, 2011).

However, it is important to note that there is a strong interaction of cyber-bullying and traditional bullying. For example, we have found in Ireland that as many as 71% of cyber-victims were also traditional victims and that over two-thirds (67%) of young people who admitted to being cyber-bullies reported that they were also bullying others in the traditional way. In addition almost one third of cyber-bullies (32%) were also traditional victims and 29% of cyber-victims were traditional bullies (O'Moore, 2012).

By 'traditional' bullying we mean bullying which is predominantly face-to-face. This can be verbal (e.g. name calling, threats), physical (hitting, kicking), gesturing (threatening, ridiculing looks), extortion (personal property, anti-social behaviour) or it can be indirect and psychological (spreading rumours, graffiti and social exclusion). Cyber-bullying, on the other hand, is an aggressive wilful act carried out by an individual or group using electronic forms of communication (texting, emails, social networking) to threaten, harass, insult, embarrass and humiliate with words or images another individual or group. (Hinduja and Patchin, 2019; O'Moore, 2010)

There are distinguishing features between traditional and cyber-bullying. In contrast to traditional bullying, cyber-bullying:

- Has the potential to reach large audiences for an infinite period of time
- The perpetrator can be anonymous
- There is no safe haven for the victim
- The aggressor does not see the victim's reaction, at least not in the first instance thus providing little opportunity for empathy or remorse
- There is less opportunity for bystander intervention

To be bullied or to bully others in a traditional manner has been found to be associated with a wide range of psychiatric, psychosomatic and physical health problems (Sourander et al. (2000). The most troubled are those who are both bullies and victim. Sourander et al. (2010) have found similar psychosocial problems among adolescents who are involved in cyber-bullying and cyber-victimization.

To be both cyber and traditionally bullied has been found to increase the risk of depression and loneliness (Gradinger, Strohmeier & Spiel, 2009) and also suicide (LeBlanc, 2012).

However, it also needs to be noted that the vast majority of youth with suicide behaviours have pre-existing mental disorders (Nock et al. 2013). It is therefore critical that no incident of bullying should be glossed over. Examination of adolescents who reported that they bullied frequently (once a week and several times a week) revealed that only 21.3% of teachers had spoken to them about their behaviour (O'Moore, 2000).

Bullying must be seen from the young person's perspective. Adults are sometimes inclined to make value judgements in terms of what they regard as bullying which is worthy of their intervention and what they can afford to overlook or let the young person handle themselves. This is a dangerous precedent because while some young people can, with or without help from adults, cope and shrug off certain bullying behaviours there are others for whom the bullying, no matter how insignificant it may be on the face of it, are unable to put it behind them. Instead it may have the effect of heightening a young person's sense of isolation and rejection to the extent that it represents the final straw for them, causing them irreparable despair.

How bullying impacts on a young person will depend on the type of bullying, the duration, intensity, their psychological sturdiness, their attachment to parent and family, their connectedness to the school and their level of social support

As Guidance counsellors are tuned in to the sensitivities of young people they are in my opinion especially well positioned to take a strong lead in the prevention and intervention of bullying in their schools. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to provide an overview of the actions which Guidance Counsellors can take in preventing and tackling bullying at school. The focus will be on the implementation of the Whole School Community Approach and the four domains which are key to the success of the programme.

The Whole School Community Approach

Guided by international research the most effective way for schools to prevent and counter bullying behaviour is to implement *the whole school community approach*. (Farrington and Ttofi, 2009). The approach extends the prevention and intervention strategies to the entire school community giving them a high priority.

The approach has been endorsed by the Department of Education and Skills' Plan of Action on Bullying (DES 2013). While they prefer the term *A school wide approach* essentially the approach reaches out to all the members of the school community, i.e., management, staff, pupils, families and the wider community. This approach is also recommended in the recent European Guidelines on tackling cyber-bullying in a school environment (Välimäki et al. 2012).

Until such time as we have learned more about cyber-bullying, as has been pointed out by Riebel, Jaeger and Fischer (2009) we need to rely on the methods which have been developed to prevent and counter traditional bullying. Essentially traditional bullying is approximately twice if not three times as common as cyber-bullying and the young people involved in both types of bullying are for the most part the same. Also both forms of bullying rely on the same principles (intention to hurt, repetition, imbalance of power and helplessness). If young people learn to refrain from traditional bullying the chances are high that they will also refrain from online bullying. There are, of course, specific modules that will need to be incorporated into the whole school approach that will help focus on safe and healthy cyber-

behaviour. For more detail than is possible to give here on these see *Understanding Cyberbullying: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* (O'Moore, 2014)

Essentially the whole school community approach has 4 main pillars of action:

1. It builds and reviews annually its policy and practice so that bullying is consistently and effectively addressed,
2. It builds understanding and skills
3. It builds a positive and supportive school culture,
4. It builds on collaborative partnerships between staff (teaching and non-teaching), students, families, the wider community and external agencies and professional bodies.

The Guidance Counsellor should be central in the development and delivery of this programme They can take, for example, a leadership role in planning and co-ordinating the activities which will allow the members of the school community to become involved in the policy development process. Also they can educate parents and students and the wider school community towards a deeper understanding of the nature and impact of bullying. In addition, as the knowledgeable resource person, they can be a support for individual students who are involved in bullying, as bullies, victims and bully-victims and build positive relationships with their parents. Furthermore, they can identify helpful resources and communicate the information, e.g., helplines, counselling services, online internet safety programmes, to the entire school community.

The steps to be taken are as follows:

1. Developing / Revising / Reviewing the Anti-Bullying Policy and Practices.

It is important to ensure that the school policy is explicit in its message that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. A definition of bullying, both traditional and cyber must be reached and the school policy should apply to the whole school community, with all members expected to portray respectful behaviour.

In developing a new or revising/ reviewing an existing policy it would be wise to take note of the recommendations of the 2013 DES Action Plan on Bullying. It recommends that the definition in the new national procedures for schools should include a specific reference to the following forms and methods of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber-bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Identity based bullying (specifically including homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs)
- All grounds of harassment under the Equal Status Acts should be listed in anti-bullying policies (gender (including transgender), civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)

Account needs to be taken of the fact that under the nine grounds of harassment *one act is sufficient* for the legislation to apply because in dealing with ‘bullying’ it is generally accepted that it has to be ‘repeated’, as stated in the 1993 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying.

While the *Action Plan* has avoided saying that a single incident can be ‘bullying’, it wisely recommends, however, that in their Code of Behaviour, schools need to ‘be prepared to respond appropriately to once off incidents, including the misuse of social media’.

While cyber-bullying in contrast to traditional bullying does not need to be repeated in order to be defined as bullying, I believe that there are some ‘once off’ traditional bullying incidents which should be recognised as bullying, e.g. when a young person is threatened in a manner which serves to intimidate him/her on an on-going basis (see O’Moore, 2010, pp24-25 for other examples of once off incidents which I argue can be defined as bullying).

The policy should also take the opportunity to explain that bullying is a process by which children are constantly tested to see if they can be taken advantage of and so serve as a suitable victim. For this reason it is important that every isolated inappropriate aggressive act is nipped in the bud. Any anti-bullying policy or code of behaviour which makes provision for isolated acts of aggression in their definition will be afforded greater opportunities to address inappropriate aggression at an early stage before it escalates to a more serious and chronic level. Early intervention also has the benefit of identifying and providing early intervention for those most at risk of troublesome behaviour.

Other elements that need also to be covered in an anti-bullying policy are:

- To dispel the myths which so commonly are heard in school communities to justify bullying (see O’Moore, 2010, chapter 2).
- To state the ill-effects of bullying,
- To give the warning signs of victimization and bullying
- To explain the school’s procedures for reporting and investigating complaints and
- To give an account of the prevention and intervention strategies.

In developing, reviewing, revising or renewing a school’s anti-bullying policy and practices it is important that the school community is invited to contribute to the process. In allowing the staff (teaching and non-teaching) students, parents and representatives from the wider community to contribute to the process they will be more motivated to support it., To help with the development or review process there are self-auditing tools such as *Checkpoints* http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/downloads/checkpointsforschools_wdf48162.pdf and *VISTA*, (Violence in Schools Training Action, Module D) : www.vista.org.

2. Building Key Understandings, Skills and Competences

All the members of the school community need awareness raising programmes to help them understand how to prevent, identify and deal with bullying. The Guidance Counsellor can take a leadership role in providing this training. To help young people, in particular, to prevent and counter bullying they need to understand:

- What is bullying and the different forms it can take. One form of bullying should not be ignored for the sake of another.

- Participant roles in bullying and associated risks
- The damaging effects of bullying and the taboo of telling
- Digital safety, netiquette and the legal consequences and risks of prosecution.
- Coping strategies

Participant roles of bullying and associated risk factors

To prevent and counter bullying there needs to be an understanding of the participant roles in bullying. Most often, the prevalence of bullying is restricted to the percentage of children who bully others and who are bullied. The nationwide study conducted in Ireland indicated that at second level there were 11.5% pure victims, 10.8% pure bullies and 4.1% bully-victims (O'Moore, Smith and Kirkham, 1997) and in respect of cyber-bullying there were 9.8% pure cyber-victims, 4.4% cyber-bullies and 4.1% cyber bully-victims (O'Moore, 2012). While the three status groups share poor social problem-solving skills, unique predictors have been found that distinguish them (Cook et al. 2010).

Pure Victims: Any young person can become a pure victim by the mere fact of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and due to the circumstances in which they find themselves are unable to defend themselves. However, most at risk of victimization, are those who portray an anxious, sensitive, shy, insecure and cautious temperament. Low self-esteem, having few good friends and a passive, non-aggressive or non-assertive manner are also risk factors. They may also reflect a real difference to their peers, such as a different accent, religion, culture, race, sexual orientation and special needs. A further risk factor which has recently been found to be related to victimisation is that of body image (Reulbach et al., 2013). In contrast to traditional victimization it is worthy of note that having friends does not lower the risk of cyber-victimisation (Wang, Iannotti and Nansel, 2009).

Pure Bullies: Young people who bully tend to be tough-minded with a positive attitude to aggression. They have also a need to control and to dominate. In addition they are often loud, attention seeking with a desire to show off and to improve on their social status. They have low anxiety with a lack of sensitivity and empathy and most often will justify their behaviour by blaming the victim. They have been found to have a lower global self-esteem than their non-involved peers. They also have feelings of inadequacy in relation to their behaviour, intellectual and school status and happiness and satisfaction (O'Moore and Kirkham, 2001). The lower self-esteem which has been found to characterise the pure traditional bullies has not been found in cyber-bullies (Corcoran, Connolly and O'Moore, 2012).

Bully-Victims: Young people who are both bullied and who bully others are sometimes referred to as provocative victims. They share many of the traits of pure victims and pure bullies. They share with bullies negative attitudes and beliefs about others and poor academic performance. With victims they share the holding of negative attitudes and beliefs about themselves and by being rejected and isolated by their peers. Most characteristic of bully-victims is their tendency towards reactive aggression rather than the instrumental aggression which characterises the pure bully. Reactive aggression is a reaction to perceived provocation, threat or frustration and is accompanied by feelings of strong anger. Instrumental aggression, on the other hand, is premeditated and calculated in order to achieve a particular goal. Pleasure and stimulation are usually the dominant emotions associated with instrumental aggression.

Other participant roles in bullying

Salmivalli, Karhune and Lagerspetz (1996) have shown that in any school population there are more young people involved in bullying than are directly involved as victims, bullies and bully-victims, namely they identified the roles of reinforcer, assistant, defender and outsider.

The *assistants* actively assist the person who takes the lead and initiates the bullying. The *reinforcers* act in ways which reinforces or incites the bullying behaviour, for example, by laughing. The *defenders* tend to be supportive and make active efforts to have the bullying stopped. The *outsiders* stay out of the bullying situation altogether.

Any awareness raising exercises with young people need to include a discussion of these roles. The proportion of young people who would join in bullying a person of their own age who they don't like is far too high. From our nationwide study we learned that over half (56.5%) of our second level students (47.4% girls and 65.7% boys) would join in bullying a pupil whom they did not like. Little has changed in the intervening years as we found that less than half of second level students (47% girls and 43% boys) believed it was wrong to cyber-bully (O'Moore and Minton, 2011; O'Moore, 2012).

In our nationwide study we found less than half (47%) of the second-level students reported that they tried to help when they saw another student of their age being bullied (O'Moore, Kirkham and Smith, 1997). Indeed readiness to help others who were bullied dropped by 21% from our third class primary to our fifth year post-primary students showing how prosocial behaviour sadly diminishes with age. As these findings were based on self-reports rather than peer reports it is to be expected that the rate is exaggerated. Declaration and behaviour don't necessarily match. Salmivalli et al. (1996), for example, who used peer ratings found that only 19% of children were Defenders.

Reasons why young people do not act more readily as a Defender can be many, ranging from the situational context to personal factors. The factors which have been identified (Thornberg, 2007) are:

- Lack of empathy
- Selfish motives (the risk to themselves from intervening)
- Conflicting attitudes, social norms or moral ideas (loyalty to individual or group)
- Group processes and social influence (authority influence, group pressure and the bystander effect, i.e. presence of other people serves to inhibit or stop the desire to help)
- Lack of skills and competence (not knowing how to intervene)

While the best way to react as a defender in traditional bullying is to express disapproval of the behaviour and to support the victim, with cyber-bullying inaction can have a different meaning and can in effect represent a positive response. For example, a bystander when witness to humiliating and embarrassing words or images has the choice to delete it or post it or forward it on. By choosing to delete, h/she will help to prevent the audience for cyber-bullying from increasing.

Empathy, both cognitive and emotional has been shown to significantly diminish the likelihood of negative bystander behaviour (Barlińska, Szuster and Winiwski, 2013). However, as cyber-bullying is less obvious than traditional bullying there are less opportunities for bystander's empathic responses. In our Irish samples of second-level

students we found that there were, indeed, only 29 % who were witness to cyber-bullying (O'Moore, 2012) whereas twice as many (57%) reported witnessing traditional bullying (O'Moore et al., 1997).

There is strong evidence to show that the strongest predictor for receiving bystander support is direct requests for help (Máchačková, Dedkova, Sevcikova and Cerna, 2013). Young people must be encouraged, therefore, to confide in their peers when bullied. This requires that students are provided with opportunities to develop their social skills and strategies online and offline to enhance their confidence and ability to respond more effectively. The Guidelines for preventing cyber-bullying in the school environment (Välimäki et al.,2012) stress that “these strategies need to be embedded into the curriculum, rather than being ‘standalone ‘messages, so as to enable students to refine their skills over time and to foster lasting behaviour change”(p.8)

The damaging effects of bullying and the taboo on telling

The school must spare no effort in teaching young people and indeed their parents how damaging both victimization and bullying can be for their mental and physical health and educational achievements (Ttofi, Farrington and Loeber, 2011; Losel and Bender, 2011). Young people especially can be so wrapped up in themselves that they hardly notice the pain inflicted on others. Also what might seem like a bit of fun can deeply hurt.

One of the biggest challenges in tackling bullying is to have young people overcome their strong reluctance to report that they are bullied so that they can get the much needed support. Only 8% girls and 5% boys in our Irish cyber-bullying study told an adult at school that they were bullied. While 50% girls sought support from friends only 20% boys did so. It is, of note, that boys called for schools to have Guidance Counsellors to whom they could speak about their victimisation (O'Moore, 2012). As Guidance Counsellors cannot be available to their students at all times, it is important that they make young people and their parents aware of external agencies where they can seek information, advice and guidance and indeed counselling.

Contributing to the strong reluctance of young people to share their victimisation with adults is the stigma and shame that characterises society's attitude to victims. This finds support in the Ombudsman for Children's Office Report on Bullying (2012). Young people, for example, had concerns about “getting into trouble” with the principal or teacher for reporting bullying” and also of not feeling confident of being believed. Victimisation is often blamed on the victim and telling is perceived as a weakness. Guidance Counsellors, therefore, cannot stress often enough in their awareness raising campaigns to the school community that the problem lies with the aggressor and not the victim and that telling is acting responsibly. Parents, teachers and students need to work together to make bullying prevention a shared responsibility. This requires that members are educated to adopt an open, non-judgemental and restorative approach to problems of bullying.

Digital safety, netiquette and legal consequences of cyber-bullying

The EU Kids Online Report (Livingstone et al.,2011) has shown that the cyber-safety skills of Irish children and teens are not as advanced as their European counterparts.. Every young person must be given, therefore, the opportunity to explore their attitudes and to develop the technical skills necessary to stay safe when either online or using smart phones. They must know and have the confidence to:

- Not retaliate or reply
- Save the evidence
- Make sure they tell someone who can help or call a helpline
- Block the sender
- Report the incident to the provider of the service(e.g mobile phone operator or social networking operator) and if posing a serious threat report it to the Garda)

The above skills are critical in protecting young people from the ever increasing and potentially upsetting and harmful behaviours of sexual messages and grooming. Over one tenth (11%) of our 11-16 year olds have received sexual messages online. The different online activities, e.g. social networking, chat rooms and gaming (the most overlooked of online activity) all require specific skills. Especially important is that young people learn to appreciate that their identity can be traced even if they have used another name to their own. They need also to appreciate the damaging effects of cyber-bullying for their reputation, e.g. friendships, future employment prospects. In addition they need to understand that there is legislation which can take issue with behaviour which places information about a person online without their consent and also that it is an offence to prepare or to be in possession of material likely to stir up hatred. A detailed account of the legislation which is pertinent to traditional and cyber- bullying can be found in Smith (2013, 2014).

Also the principles of netiquette when communicating and socialising online cannot be over-emphasised. In essence all young people should observe the same standards of behaviour online as they do in real life. What gives them a licence to do otherwise should be a source of discussion with them.

There are good resources available which schools can avail of to enhance students' ability to protect themselves and their friends from cyber-bullying. For example, the resource, *ThinkB4Uclick* (www.thinkb4uclick.ie) jointly developed by the Centre for Technology in Education and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties has ten lessons for teachers which focuses on online privacy and on completion students will know how to assert their online rights and how to respect the rights of their peers in a technologically advanced global environment.

Guidance Counsellors should become the knowledgeable resource for cyber-safety and cyber-bullying, identifying and communicating helpful resources to management, staff, parents and students. They can also offer or arrange training to the school community to enhance their digital safety skills and knowledge of cyber-bullying.

Coping strategies

Nearly one-third (30%) of our 12-16 year olds have been found to use ineffective strategies in response to being cyber-bullied (O'Moore & Minton, 2011). Many students believe that cyber-bullying will stop on its own without them needing to do anything. However, young people need to be made aware that this avoidance strategy allows the cyber-bullying to escalate and sometimes to dangerous levels which can be damaging to students physical and emotional well-being (Hoff and Mitchell, 2009).

The following coping strategies have been identified:

- Social coping: seeking help from friends, peers, family, carers and teachers
- Aggressive coping: retaliation, physical attacks, verbal threats
- Passive coping: hopelessness, passive reactions such as avoidance, displays of emotion
- Cognitive coping: responding assertively, using reason, analysing the bullying incident
- Technical coping: applying technical skills to give protection from further attacks, e.g., switching of the computer, changing email address or nickname and only giving them to people that can be trusted.

Social coping, technical and cognitive coping are regarded as the most effective whereas aggressive coping serves to escalate the bullying (Perren et al., 2012). Passive coping is associated with the most mental health problems (Machmutow, Perren, Sticca and Alsaker, 2012).

The many factors which both cause and sustain traditional and cyber-bullying behaviour (see O'Moore, 2010 and O'Moore, 2014 for more detail) can be overcome with the help of Guidance Counsellors offering the following programmes:

- Social skills,
- Empathy
- Moral reasoning
- Conflict resolution skills
- Anger management

There is no reason why the above programmes cannot be incorporated into the SPHE programme or the programmes which may replace the new Junior Cycle Curriculum. Finding that time should be found within the broad curriculum as efforts to develop character traits such as empathy, respectful behaviour and dealing with conflict are more important than ever.

3. Collaborative School-Family Relations

One of the most important elements in reducing both bullying and victimisation as part of a whole school approach to bullying is that of parent information and training (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009).

School Counsellors can play a significant role by:

- Collaborating with parents and ensuring that they are involved in the whole school planning process. In this way they and their children will feel more connected to the school.
- Ensuring parents are aware of the school's prevention and intervention strategies to tackle bullying
- Encourage parents to contact the school when they have concerns about bullying.
- Contacting parents when there are issues in relation to bullying and helping them deal with overcoming the difficulties.
- Providing training and communicating helpful resources to assist parents in preventing and dealing with bullying. For example, the digital divide which commonly exists between young people, parents and teachers can be closed with appropriate information and training. The Office for Internet Safety have very good guidelines for Parents <http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/safety-guideparents-en>). There is also an online cyber training programme for parents (<http://cybertraining4parents.org/ebook/>). See www.abc.dcu.ie for further details.

4. A Positive and Supportive environment

McNeeley, Nonnemaker and Blum (2002) showed that when young people feel they belong to and are cared for by their schools they are more likely to achieve academically, hold positive attitudes towards self and others, to refrain from bullying, to skip or drop out of school and to have fewer health problems.

Guidance Counsellors can be especially active in creating a social environment which at all times is respectful of individual differences, positive and rewarding.

They need to take every opportunity to promote restorative approaches in dealing with young people who have been involved in bullying. Punishment is not the answer as it fuels resentment and revenge and as a result contributes to the reluctance of young people from reporting bullying. It may also cause the bullying to become more covert so as to be less easily detected by adults. A restorative approach, on the other hand, such as the No Blame Approach (Maines and Robinson, 1996) trains young people to become more empathic while also teaching them to take responsibility for their behaviour and to make good. It must always be remembered that to promote and reinforce respectful behaviour among students, they need to observe staff, at all times, both in and out of class, practice what they preach.

Discussion and Conclusions

To conclude, given the wide spread nature of 'traditional' bullying, the growth of cyber-bullying and the very damaging and long-lasting psycho-somatic problems and suicide associated with both forms, there can be no room for complacency. The strong connection of 'traditional' and cyber-bullying means that schools cannot afford to concentrate on one form of bullying to the exclusion of another.

Based on evidence to-date the whole school community approach must be implemented on a nationwide basis, with specific attention given to cyber-safety strategies and netiquette due to the growth of cyber-bullying in recent years. School Counsellors can play a significant role in its implementation by taking a leadership role in ensuring that:

- All members of the school community, from Boards of Management to students gain a thorough understanding of bullying, ‘traditional’ and cyber – Taking into account the new Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools attention needs to be given to identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of a Traveller Community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- All members of the school community gain the necessary knowledge to cope with bullying and to whom they can turn if in need of support
- All members of the school community become more willing and confident to take on the role of defender.

The increased understanding, competence and willingness to intervene among staff, parents and young people and the wider community which a whole school community approach has the power to give, will have schools see a significant reduction in the level of victimisation and bullying in all its forms.

Biography

Mona O'Moore is Fellow Emeritus and former Head of the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin. She is the Founding Director of the National Anti-Bullying Centre, formerly of Trinity College Dublin, but now located in the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, where she is Adjunct Professor.

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