Safe School Programme
National Anti-Bullying Coalition

Who We Are

&

Why?

Safe Students                 Safe Teachers                 Safe Schools                 Safer Future
The Problem of Bullying

• It has a devastating negative impact at a psychological level on those who are targeted.

• It is a social plague that “incubates” in schools and then goes on to infect workplaces causing untold damage in both.

• It is a huge hidden drain on our economy, as we shall see.

• It is a very serious public health problem.

But bullying is a pattern of behaviour that is not inevitable. It is one above which we can and must all rise. We can no longer be a nation of bystanders while our children or our friends struggle to endure the unendurable.
Why a Forum?

We need a National Anti-Bullying Programme, a National Anti-Bullying Action Plan.

We have the expertise in this country . . .

. . . a lot of it in this room today.
How Much is the Status Quo Really Costing . . . ?

National Anti-Bullying Coalition

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The Psychological Cost of Bullying

- Feelings of insecurity,
- Lowering of self-esteem,
- Behaviour changes,
- Extreme anxiety/panic attacks,
- Depression,
- Damage to self-confidence,
- Unexplained mood changes,
- Stress/distress,
- Nervous breakdown,
- Self-harm . . . . Suicide.

Result - many traumatised, hypervigilant, hypersensitive & often dysfunctional survivors . . .

And not all who are bullied survive . . .
The Economic Cost of Bullying - 1

60% of unreformed bullying students have at least 1 criminal conviction by age 24. 35% have 3 convictions - €30m.

9,600 cases of self-harming a year brought to A&E due to bullying, if they average a 3 night stay - €16m.

Substitution cost of each teacher absent due to bullying, at a rate of up to €50,000 per year

The Status Quo is costing in excess of € m. per year.
The Economic Cost of Bullying - 2

Students Absent from School - Increased demand on resources:

Staff Absent from School – Increased demand on resources:
Absenteeism/Replacement of Staff, Occupational Health Services, Medical expenses, HSE Psychiatric Services, Mediation costs, Employee Appeals Tribunal, Labour Relation Commission, Courts.

Fallout for Parents:
Addressing stress and anxiety throughout the family, time lost from work for school visits, relocation costs to other schools . . .
Wider Fallout - a Further Cost

Research Shows:

Increasing problem of all forms of bullying in the school setting
Increasing rate of mental health problems in 12–25 age profile
Increasing rate of self-harm in the 12–25 age profile
Increasing rate of suicide in the 12–25 age profile
Increasing rates of workplace bullying
Increasing rates of sick leave
Increasing rates of domestic violence
Increasing rates of anti-social behaviour
Increasing rates of drug/alcohol abuse
Bullying left unaddressed leads to . . .
School Bullying Relationships and the Ripple Effect . . .
National Anti-Bullying Coalition

Safe Students | Safe Teachers | Safe Schools | Safer Future

- Awareness Raising Events
- Parent Specific Modules
- Teacher & Management Specific Modules
- Training For All

Disclosure Strategies
Safe School Program

Reform – No Blame

Research shows this is most effective.

A student version is already available to secondary schools free of charge through the Anti-Bullying Campaign website. Fully implemented, it has a success rate of over 90% among second level students.

A primary school version needs to be developed. An adult version needs to be developed.

Can we work to put the meat on the bones of this framework for all school relationships, both adult and child?
Anti-Bullying Campaign Summary

Bullying is **Repeated** Targeted Hurtful Behaviour that is found at some level in every school

Secondary teachers change class every 40 minutes and cannot see the Repetition that indicates “Bullying”

**BUT**

They don’t **Recognise** it, they don’t **Understand** it so they don’t **Report** it

**BUT**

**Punishment*** is an **Obstacle** so they still don’t Report it

**AND**

There is **No Resolution**

**AND**

The bullying continues, leading to misery, low self-esteem, depression, self harm . . . even suicide

**SO**

Students see all this behaviour so we need them to report it

**SO**

Anti-Bullying Campaign - Strand 1

Raising Awareness /Understanding

Students Now **Recognise** Bullying

Students Now **Reject** Bullying

**AND**

Anti-Bullying Campaign - Strand 2

A “Reform, not Blame” Approach

Students see this as **Fair and Just**

Students Now Report the Bullying

**AND**

Our “Reform, Not Blame” Response offering over 90% Resolution is available to secondary schools free of charge - **NOW!**
Implementation - The Safe School Team

Representatives of the whole school community would form the Safe School Team. These would be led by an elected Safe School Coordinator, ideally a permanent member of the Teaching Staff and not the Principal or Deputy Principal.

This position could be linked to a Post of Responsibility.

The coordinator would be responsible for implementation of the Safe School plan at every level in a school.
Examples of Useful Safe School Modules

Positive Behaviour Strategies          Conflict Resolution Strategies
Peer Mentoring Training                 Peer Mediation Training
Challenging Behaviour Training         Positive Management Strategies
Anti-Bullying Week                     Care/Friendship Week

Positive Parenting Training
Child Protection Guidelines Training
Teaching Council Code of Practice Training.
Staff “Attitudes & Behaviour in the Workplace” Training

Many of these are used in schools already but would be more effective if carried out within the wider Safe School framework.
Safe School Program - Training

**Short Term - within one year**
The Department of Education and Skills already has a dedicated team whose remit can be broadened. A group of senior trainers can be trained.

**Medium Term - within two years**
Teachers can be trained in the Teacher/Education Centres.

**Long Term - ongoing teacher training**
Teachers can be trained through the Education Departments of the teacher training colleges as a core part of teacher training.

*The Anti-Bullying Centre in Trinity College, Dublin could have an advisory and a practical role at each of these stages.*
Safe School Program -
Not Re-Inventing The Wheel

The Research is done.
The Strategies exist.
The Auditing Tools exist.
A regionally based independent Auditing Team can be engaged/assembled/seconded/trained.
An independent external Accreditation Body to which the Auditing Team would report can be agreed.
We need to start talking and sharing.
Independent Auditing and Accreditation

Necessary to ensure agreed standards are reached and maintained for dealing with bullying in schools. Boards of Management who have had this responsibility up to now have not been effective.

Only schools reaching agreed standards of (a) awareness-raising, (b) disclosure of bullying behaviour and (c) safe effective resolution of bullying situations at all levels in the school community would be accredited accordingly and awarded a “Safe School” plaque.

The Auditing Team would report to an Accreditation Body on which organisations at this forum could be represented.

This Auditing and Accreditation would cost a lot less than the enormous annual cost of the Status Quo already mentioned.
National Anti-Bullying Coalition

Why Settle for Less than Triple A Rating
A Broader National Anti-Bullying Coalition?

Could we join together to share information, to possibly meet a few times a year, to support (and monitor) the work of the promised Anti-Bullying “Working Group” and to work together with the DES towards implementation of a Safe School model, to be based on standards agreed between all our organisations, starting today? If so, please complete the form you will receive at the lunch break and return it to the NABC as soon as possible.