

Bullying and the Law

Age Range:

13+, Years 9+,
KS3, KS4

Topics Covered:

Knowledge on the legal
issues around bullying

Time:

20 - 40 minutes

Equipment needed:

Copies of the 'bullying and
the law' quiz and answers

An exercise to explore key facts around bullying and the law.

Introduction

This exercise uses team working and reflective learning to look at the legal situation around the different forms of bullying.

Exercise

Hand out copies of the bullying and the law quiz found on the next page. This contains ten questions with true or false answers to help the group to understand some of the basic facts on how the law relates to different forms of bullying. The answers are supplied below.

The quiz can be done as a worksheet but can be more fun in teams. Teams can swap papers to mark at the end.

After the quiz ask the group to recap on the main facts they learned from the activity.

Summary

Sum up by asking the group to recap on the main laws they have learned about bullying and ask why they think these laws have been made and how they might affect someone if they were found guilty of any of the crimes related to bullying.

Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have an increased understanding of different forms of bullying including cyber bullying, sexual/sexist bullying and teenage relationship abuse.
- Young people have increased knowledge of the definitions of bullying

This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles
- Risk
- Relationships

Bullying and the Law Quiz

Please mark whether you think each statement is true or false.

1. Bullying is against the law.

TRUE / FALSE

2. Making unwanted sexual jokes or comments is against the law.

TRUE / FALSE

3. Cyber bullying is a criminal offence.

TRUE / FALSE

4. It is legal to post offensive comments or 'troll' on the internet.

TRUE / FALSE

5. Schools have a legal right to search student's property if they suspect that a student plans to hurt another student.

TRUE / FALSE

6. Domestic Abuse / Violence will affect 1 in 10 women during their lifetime.

TRUE / FALSE

7. Only people aged 16 or over can be victims of Domestic Abuse / Violence.

TRUE / FALSE

8. Bullying or abuse in teenage relationships affects around 10% of teenagers.

TRUE / FALSE

9. If a crime was committed because of prejudice towards someone's race, religion or sexuality then the sentence or punishment could be more severe.

TRUE / FALSE

10. If bullying happens outside of school then it is nothing the school can do about it.

TRUE / FALSE

Bullying and the Law Quiz (Answers)

1. Bullying is against the law.

False – There is no legal definition of bullying and so bullying itself isn't against the law however there are many laws which cover different aspects of bullying. Activities that are covered by these laws and so are illegal include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation (e.g. name calling), threats, abusive phone calls/emails/text messages and hate crimes.

2. Making unwanted sexual jokes or comments is against the law.

True - Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour which someone finds offensive or makes them feel intimidated or humiliated and the behaviour is of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include sexual comments or jokes, physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances, touching and various forms of sexual assault, displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature or sending emails with a sexual content.

3. Cyber bullying is a criminal offence.

False – As with bullying, Cyber bullying itself is not a crime however some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of laws including the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. There have been some instances of such prosecutions in the UK.

4. It is legal to post offensive comments or 'troll' on the internet.

False - It is a crime under the Malicious Communications Act to send "by means of a public electronic communications network" a message or other material that is "grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character". Last year 3 people a day were found guilty of this offence and 155 people jailed.

5. Schools have a legal right to search student's property if they suspect that a student plans to hurt another student.

True- Section 85 clause 3A of the Education Act 2011 states that a school can search a student's property, without the student's consent, if they believe "that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency". Schools can search for prohibited items brought on to school property including weapons, alcohol, drugs, tobacco or any pornographic images.

6. Domestic Abuse / Violence will affect 1 in 10 women during their lifetime.

False- It is much higher. A review of many studies showed that 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse / violence at some point during their life. Whilst some studies also show that 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse, women are more likely to experience patterns of abuse over time rather than one off incidents.

7. Only people aged 16 or over can be victims of Domestic Abuse / Violence.

True - It used to be for over 18s however in March 2013 the definition was changed so that the new definition of domestic abuse / violence includes 16 and 17 year olds.

8. Bullying or abuse in teenage relationships affects around 10% of teenagers.

False - Teenage Relationship Abuse affects much more than 10% of teenagers in the UK. A report which was released in 2015 stated that 48% of females and 25% of males reported online emotional violence from their partner. 48% of females and 27% of males reported face-to-face emotional violence. 22% of females and 12% of males reported physical violence and 12% of males and 41% of females reported sexual violence from their partner.

9. If a crime was committed because of prejudice towards someone's race, religion or sexuality then the sentence or punishment could be more severe.

True - Any crime that is motivated by hostility or prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability is known as a 'Hate Crime'. In these cases courts can impose a more severe sentence than if the crime had not been motivated by prejudice (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

10. If bullying happens outside of school then it is nothing the school can do about it.

False - Head-teachers have the power to discipline their students for any bullying incidents outside of school (Education and Inspections Act 2006).