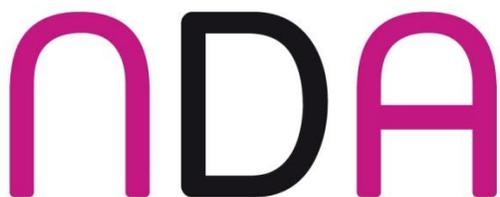# Preventing school bullying of children with Special Educational Needs or Disability

Executive Summary

Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

Preventing school bullying of children with Special Educational Needs or Disability

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November 2014

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1.1. Background

The Department of Education and Skills has taken an active role in understanding and combating bullying for many decades. Their goal is to empower schools to create school environments nationwide that are inclusive, friendly and safe for all children, including children with SEND and where bullying behaviours are not supported.

The Minister for Education and Skills tasked the Anti-Bullying Working Group with developing a plan to clarify the priorities to be addressed to combat bullying in schools. The National Disability Authority (NDA) has contributed to this work by investigating anti-bullying supports for children with Special Educational Needs and/or disability to support the dissemination of good practice across the school system.

In this report, the acronym SEND refers to Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. The report uses the word 'children' to indicate both children and young people in school.

In order to research effective anti-bullying supports for children with SEND, the NDA undertook the following:

- A literature review on bullying and anti-bullying interventions in schools, in particular for children with SEND

- Visits to primary, post primary and special schools that were suggested by contacts in the Education Sector as possibly demonstrating good practice

- Discussions with experts on how to tackle school bullying, including the bullying of children with SEND

- Post primary data analysis on bullying and disability from the **Growing up in Ireland Survey**

Drawing on the research data, the report outlines the conditions that decrease bullying behaviours for children generally and, in particular, for children with SEND. The report includes practical examples, such as:

- What some Irish schools are doing to decrease bullying behaviours

- An Irish school's bullying policy taken from one of the schools visited

- Key actions for school management and staff on including children with SEND in the school's anti-bullying policy from an American expert advisory group

- A selection of approaches a school might consider, in order to implement the immediate actions suggested by the Department of Education and Skills Working Group, in their 2013 **Action Plan on Bullying**

1.2. Overview of bullying and anti-bullying interventions

Bullying occurs worldwide, in all contexts and at all ages. Bullying is a learned pattern of interaction and behaviour with serious short and long-term consequences for bullies, victims and bystanders. Cyber-bullying is a new method of bullying, and its consequences can be devastating. Bullying prevention programmes should always include cyber-bullying.

Peer and school factors interact with family, individual and community factors to determine whether bullying takes place or not, and whether it flourishes. Bullying prevention and intervention, therefore, needs to target individual, peer, school and community contexts.

There are effective whole school approaches to bullying prevention and intervention. These approaches include building a welcoming school environment where:

- Staff and children feel they belong and are interested in being at school and engaged in learning and in developing social, emotional and academic skills

- Peer-peer, peer-teacher and teacher-teacher interactions are positive and respectful

- All children can participate meaningfully in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities and friendship, kindness and empathy is actively facilitated and promoted among all children

- There is an atmosphere of trust as well as cooperation and collaboration in the classroom and in extracurricular activities

- School and teachers treat children as citizens who have rights and responsibilities and ensure that they play an active role in their social, emotional and academic learning and in eliminating bullying behaviours

- School is a learning environment where anyone can make a mistake or communicate and interact inappropriately. Mistakes and skill deficits are good opportunities to learn and change and to develop appropriate communication, interaction and social skills

- Individual needs including resilience and social and communication skills are acknowledged and addressed, taught formally and informally in the school

- Bullying policies and practices are well-defined and followed consistently by staff, parents/guardians and children

- Awareness of what bullying is and why children with SEND are more at risk is high on the school agenda and all staff, children and their parents/guardians are clear on what they are to do

Children with SEND and bullying behaviours

Children with SEND, throughout the world, are more likely to 'be bullied'/ victimised than children without SEND. If bullying is to be tackled effectively for all children, then, schools, teachers, educational professionals and parents/ guardians need to be aware of how bullying behaviours emerge and why children with SEND are more at risk of 'being bullied' and, also, in some cases, more at risk, of bullying others. They need to understand the risk and protective factors for bullying behaviours, including the specific factors for children with SEND.

For children with SEND, isolation from peers is a major risk factor for 'being bullied'. Inclusive education is an important part of the solution to the isolation of children with SEND. Comments made by children with SEND in Ireland included that teachers could make children with SEND more included by responding to their needs and by having more group activities where they can work with other children.

For an ongoing process of inclusion, strong leadership is required from the school principal in the first instance. Some Irish research raised the question whether prospective principals should be required to demonstrate evidence of positive attitudes and commitment to inclusive education. Research shows that a process of school inclusion includes:

- Good transition planning

- Staff training in mixed ability teaching, in Special Education and in a range of teaching methodologies

- Addressing the needs and goals of children with SEND, including the development of social and communication skills and self-esteem and emotional wellbeing (For example, through the provision of adequate speech and language interventions and/or the setting up of extra-curricular activities to give a particular child or children with SEND an opportunity to develop an interest, have a role in the school and to interact and develop friendships with peers)

- Resilience/self-esteem programmes for children with emotional and behavioural issues and/or with ASD/Aspergers, together with their peers

- School leadership from the principal, when solutions are required and resources have to be found, to address the needs/goals of children with SEND

- Ongoing staff training on bullying awareness and the particular risks for children with SEND

- Effective supervision of children and of 'hot spots' for bullying throughout the day

- Teacher training on classroom management and positive behaviour approaches and interventions and mentoring and support around behaviour strategies for new graduate teachers

As outlined, inclusive processes decrease important risk factors for the bullying of children with SEND by decreasing their isolation and facilitating their social and academic incorporation into mainstream school life with their peers. Inclusive processes have a positive impact on school behaviour, relationships and communication and, therefore, decrease bullying behaviours for all children.

Research on anti-bullying interventions

There is little large-scale research on bullying prevention for children with SEND, alone, or as an identified sub-category in specific anti-bullying interventions.

The research evidence shows that elements of anti-bullying interventions associated with effectiveness include:

- Intensity and duration of a programme (directly linked to effectiveness)

- Teacher training

- Parent training and information for parents/guardians

- Classroom management and classroom rules

- Cooperative group work between teachers and other professionals

- Improved playground supervision (strongly related to programme effectiveness)

- Authoritative (not authoritarian and not punitive) disciplinary methods

- Programmes with systematic monitoring of implementation

The more of the above elements an anti-bullying programme includes, the more effective and 'whole school' it is. Research shows that 'whole school' approaches are more effective in reducing the risk of being victimised/bullied, than single component interventions. The effectiveness of whole-school approaches fits in with the environmental and group nature of bullying. They decrease bullying behaviours among all children, including children with SEND. However, while these anti-bullying interventions benefit the majority of children, including many

children with SEND, there are still children or groups of children with SEND that require individual or targeted adaptations or strategies (inclusive processes).

Whole school interventions

It is important for educators and schools to note that effective anti-bullying interventions contain the same elements as other whole-school approaches including interventions for inclusion, mental health, health promotion, social and emotional learning and for early school leaving. This means that schools do not have to implement different interventions. A school can take a comprehensive and whole-school systemic approach that addresses the range of barriers to learning and development and inter-related school issues. These issues include, for example, bullying; early school leaving; mental health problems; social, emotional and/or academic exclusion; a lack of connection to school. "Rather than pursuing one more discrete program focused on a specific concern, it is essential to use each concern that rises to a high policy level, as an opportunity to catalyze and leverage systemic change. The aim should be to take another step towards transforming how schools go about ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed at school… to develop a comprehensive system of interventions for addressing the full range of barriers to learning and teaching and for re-engaging disconnected students".

1.3. Tackling bullying behaviours for all children

As outlined, the research findings highlight the major school elements that decrease bullying behaviours for everyone in the school community:

- Whole-school systemic approaches to school issues

- Establishing and maintaining inclusive processes

- Effective leadership from the principal including effective communication skills, and good systems of communication for staff, parents/guardians and children

- Pre-service and in-service teacher education and training around good classroom management; behaviour management; conflict resolution; diverse teaching methodologies; knowledge and expertise of special education and positive attitudes

- Clear school and classroom rules; good supervision during breaks and when changing classes etc; parent and teacher training and information on bullying behaviours including cyber-bullying

- Collaborative work between teachers and between teachers and other professionals

Based on the research evidence, the following key messages are emphasised:

- Bullying is a child protection issue. Schools are obliged to ensure that children are safe and treat each other with respect

- A school's anti-bullying policy should be for everyone in the school, staff, parents/guardians and children, including children with SEND. The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring the implementation of effective anti-bullying interventions, differentiated for children with SEND

- Understanding the group and social aspects to school bullying can help establish effective anti-bullying practices for children, including addressing the needs of children with SEND. Isolation from peers is the main risk factor for bullying for all children. Children with SEND are at higher risk of isolation. This can be addressed when acknowledged by parents/guardians, teachers and schools

- Effective anti-bullying interventions operate at the whole school level. These interventions involve parents/guardians and children and address school vision, organisation and culture, inclusive teaching methodologies. Other effective whole-school interventions include mental health, inclusion, health promotion, positive behavioural supports and social and emotional learning programmes. These interventions all address similar elements to those in effective anti-bullying interventions. They work at the community, school and classroom level, and address the same inter-related school issues

- The NCSE's **Inclusive Education Framework** is a whole school approach to support the inclusion of children with SEND and is a tool that is available for schools to use. The NCSE developed this framework to align with whole school evaluation and school self-evaluation processes to ensure that there is continuity between all initiatives. The themes in the NCSE's framework span a number of the principles that emerge from the evidence in this report, including leadership, communication, education and training and whole school approaches

- Leadership from the school principal is crucial in involving all stakeholders in whole school organisation including establishing and maintaining a process of inclusion for all children at school

- There are examples of good practice in Irish schools on how to create inclusive learning environments that decrease bullying behaviours for all children, including children with SEND. These approaches address issues of leadership, establish and maintain inclusive processes, address the needs of children with a range of emotional/mental/behavioural health problems and employ teachers with the requisite skills, as well as, up-skilling teachers through education and training in special education, classroom management etc.

- In order to ensure that the needs of children with SEND are addressed in school policies and practices, including the bullying prevention policy, it is necessary to:
  - Raise awareness among staff and parents/guardians that children with SEND are more likely to feel isolated, lonely, socially excluded and experience bullying more frequently. Awareness raising is key to affecting change
  - Ensure that children with SEND are not isolated and have opportunities to interact, and to develop friendships with their peers. To this end, wherever possible, children with SEND should learn in mainstream classes where teachers use appropriate methodologies for all children including group work. Where indicated, staff can set up inclusive extracurricular activities that address the interests of children with SEND. Staff should actively promote their participation in extra-curricular activities and use peer mentoring. SNAs should actively promote the independence and interaction of children with SEND with their peers in the classroom and during breaks. The school should allocate SNAs to classrooms rather than to individual children wherever possible. Children with SEND can be taught friendship skills including, for example, how to enter a group, cooperate in a group, develop and show empathy
  - Address the communication needs of children with SEND adequately
  - Focus on skills development for children with SEND – this can include building up their self-esteem and resilience, together with their peers, through the development and use of appropriate programmes
  - Establish school and classroom environments that address the needs of all children, including effective teaching and learning practices for all children, and ensuring positive child-teacher and peer-peer interactions for children with SEND
  - Supports for children with SEND need to match the level of need. Within-class support can be supplemented with intensive support for some students with significant needs where indicated. Collaborative work between the principal and special education co-ordinator and liaison between teachers and parents/guardians can be effective
  - Examine the use of suspension and, in particular, multiple suspensions, which should set off warning bells for the principal and staff, signalling that a) access to resources are needed in order to provide a more effective educational response to the communication and behavioural issues that have arisen and that b) a review of the placement should be undertaken
  - Placement of children with SEND in special classes should incorporate a review process, inclusion measures etc, from the start

Based on the literature review and empirical research, the following five guiding principles underpin a framework for schools to ensure that their school becomes a place where staff and children are happy and safe and that the school environment is conducive to learning and to developing good relationships with others. These principles can guide a whole school approach to the prevention of bullying behaviours as well as inter-related issues such as inclusion, mental health problems, truancy, and early school leaving.

The principles are:

- Principle 1: A rights-based approach to protect children from bullying to govern and underpin principles and practices

- Principle 2: Systemic interventions

- Principle 3: Inclusive processes

- Principle 4: Education and training

- Principle 5: Leadership training and communication

Principle 1: Rights-based approach to the protection of children from bullying

The prevention of bullying forms an integral part of the national guidelines for protecting children in Ireland. Connecting bullying prevention with human rights, and the core values that underpin them, may help principals, staff and parents/guardians develop an adequate vision for the school and for each child. The core values are dignity, equality, autonomy and solidarity and dignity is the anchor norm of human rights. "By listening to children's views and perspectives and being informed by their experience, we gain a better understanding of the hidden face of violence and its root causes; we learn about the different ways in which boys and girls perceive violence and suffer its impact, and we enhance our ability to shape strategies to address persisting risks".

Ireland has ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, and has signed, and is committed to ratifying the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

Children need to be empowered to be active agents for positive change in schools. Staff can promote this in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities. Active citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities, as taught in the Junior Certificate course of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), can be introduced in all parts of the curriculum,. Early education in human rights and democracy are fundamental and, when used, can create positive school environments and prevent violence in schools.

Building empathy among children, facilitating friendships for every child in the school, developing their social responsibility and raising their awareness about appropriate communication and interactions is as crucial as among the adults within the school community.

Inclusive processes require leadership and commitment from the board of management, principal, teachers and other school staff, in the first place, so that both children and parents/guardians also engage and become leaders in inclusion. Inclusion of children with SEND in all aspects of school life has benefits for all children, including the typically developing child, in fostering understanding, collaboration, patience, and appreciation of diversity.

Principle 2: Systemic interventions

Systemic interventions involve coherent, 'whole-school', substantive and holistic approaches to facilitate the development of everyone in the school community. Parents/guardians, children, and community entities need to be actively involved in these interventions. Systemic interventions use universal (for all), targeted (for some) and individual strategies to address the inter-related school issues which include bullying behaviours; exclusion and isolation; early school leaving; mental health issues; and failure to develop in school.

Universal prevention strategies include:
- Creating a vision for the school as a place where all staff and children are happy, safe and where each person can learn and develop socially, emotionally and academically

- Promoting a collaborative and cooperative supportive environment among both children and staff

- Developing school-wide standards for attitudes and behaviour

- Implementing a unified school-wide communication policy that contributes to school-wide consistent positive communication, interactions and behaviour and a positive school climate and culture conducive to learning (A warm and supportive relationship between teachers and children is one of the most powerful instruments to keep children at risk, engaged with school)

- Using the school curriculum including History, English, Religion and other subjects, as well as SPHE, to raise awareness of bullying behaviours and how to tackle them among teachers and children

- Maintaining a process of inclusion which includes differentiating policies and practice to meet the needs of children with SEND; school-level planning around the development of special education expertise and improved teaching and assessment

- Paying attention to the Built Environment: In the UK, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has published guidelines around the design of school grounds and advises that provision must be made for differing children's needs, whether this is age or ability related. The DfES argues for the creation of specific identifiable spaces where children can feel secure

- Developing alternatives to suspension, such as, counselling, skills development, parental involvement, review of Individual Education Plans, in school service, such as, cleaning up with staff etc and, also, improving teachers classroom management and conflict resolution skills

- Undertaking outreach work to support children and their families

Targeted and individual preventive strategies
- Speech and language support services for children's language development

- Language, social and communication skills interventions

- The provision of coping skills and self-esteem interventions for children at risk of isolation and bullying behaviours

- Mentoring and counselling children through particular challenges that they are experiencing at home and/or at school and doing this at the earliest possible stage

- Early referral of children with emotional and mental health issues to counsellors, psychologists, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and play/art therapists

- Extracurricular activities organised for particular children with SEND, so that, they can develop their interests and have opportunities for peer interactions and friendship

Continuity of care
- Developing a system that ensures appropriate advice on placements for children with SEND, in the first instance, and mechanisms to re-evaluate the suitability of school placements

- Building a school system, that is capable of addressing the needs and goals of individual children with SEND and responding to their changing educational, behavioural and emotional needs, by providing a continuity of supports across age ranges, depending on changing levels of need

- An interdisciplinary team-based approach to children with complex needs and, in particular, for children with intensive on-going needs

- At a European level, there is ongoing consideration of implementing a community based inter-disciplinary team model working in schools, homes and community on a wider basis than is currently the case. These teams can

address mental health, behaviour, bullying, early school leaving and family issues at individual, family, school and community level

Involving parents/guardians, children and community

- Encourage parents/guardians to be involved in the education of their children, to give feedback to teachers and schools on issues in the home that might be affecting their children; to work with teachers on the individual education plans for their children; to participate in school committees; and in the development and evaluation of school policies and practices

- Enlist parents/guardians of children with SEND to sit on or contribute to the work of school committees, so that committees are aware of and address specific challenges facing some children with SEND

- Obtain feedback from children with SEND and their parents/guardians on school policies, including, anti-bullying assessment, planning and implementation activities

- Obtain feedback on Social Personal and Health Education and other aspects of the curriculum from children, including children with SEND

- In Nova Scotia, Canada, as part of the provinces anti-bullying strategy, coaching services via the phone, help families to manage behavioural or anxiety issues in their children at the pre-school stage. Cell phone companies distribute educational materials on responsible cell phone use to customers entering a new contract, including information on how to decrease cyber-bullying. In Ireland, there are many examples of community-school work. There is a Home School Community Liaison Scheme. There has been a Garda Schools Programme since 1991, initially in primary schools, and later in post-primary schools. Community based agencies and schools run programmes such as the **Incredible Years Basic Parent Training Programme** and the **Teacher Classroom Management Programme**. The purpose of such programmes is to help parents/guardians and teachers manage and decrease early childhood behavioural difficulties

Principle 3: Inclusive processes

A unified approach to diversity and inclusion operating at the school and the wider education system could usefully reinforce one another.

Department of Education and Skills and related Statutory Agencies

- Research highlights the importance of inclusion processes and these should continue to be emphasised by the Department of Education and Skills and related Agencies to underpin inclusive processes in schools

- Re-clarifying what inclusion involves and how to implement and maintain fully inclusive school processes could be helpful. Monitoring specified aspects of inclusion in whole school evaluations etc could give impetus to the process

- Think tank forums around various aspects of school education to stimulate debate and inform policy and practice, for example:

  - How might schools engage with community and with families and address the home issues that translate into school issues?

  - How might principals and staff gain the necessary skills to include all children with SEND in an effective manner?

  - The Revised National Curriculum (1999) states that children's social and emotional development significantly influences their success in learning. How might schools address more systemically the social and emotional development of children?

  - From September 2014, the professional diploma in education (PDE) for post-primary teaching is now two years. What opportunities does this offer to address the current skills deficit in conflict management, behaviour management and in diverse teaching methodologies and special education?

Schools

- Principal and staff committed to an inclusive process and using a tool such as 'The National Council for Special Education's Inclusive Schools Framework' to attain a truly effective and inclusive education for all children

- Staff collaboration and cooperation around inclusive processes

- All school staff having collective responsibility for the full inclusion of children with SEND into the mainstream life of the school

- Designing, developing and delivering a curriculum that children with SEND can access and using Individual Education Plans to address needs and aspirations of children with SEND

- Developing classroom management and practice that are inclusive and that address social and emotional, as well as, academic needs:

  - Engage with the experiences of children and not just their behaviours

  - Develop positive approaches to learning and behaviour that are not authoritarian, punitive, fear-based or blame-oriented

  - Develop positive classroom environments. Positive attitudes are as important, as knowledge and skills, for good inclusive practices by teachers

  - Develop classroom management skills. There is correlation between classroom management and whether or not bullying takes place

  - Develop diversity awareness training for teachers

  - Develop a wide range of language development strategies in class

- Having Special Needs Coordinators in schools that work closely with the Principal

Principle 4: Education and Training

Staff development is a priority in preventing bullying and inappropriate behaviours and in providing counselling for those who may encounter bullying.

- Research has shown that the role of the teacher is a critical determinant in the success of inclusive education. The provision of teacher pre-service and in-service education and training is required around special education; inclusive methodologies; classroom management; conflict resolution; and reflective practice. Research indicates that positive attitudes to children with SEND are, as important, as knowledge and skills and are prerequisites for good inclusive practice. Thus, education and training should continue to reinforce:

  - Taking an individual and child-centred approach to all children including children with SEND as they are not a homogeneous group and their requirements vary considerably
  - Having basic knowledge and understanding of the learning styles and needs of children with SEND
  - Providing individualised programmes, support and instruction for children with specific needs and becoming increasingly equipped to provide diverse children with high quality relevant teaching that engages and motivates
  - Developing the ability to use reflective practice to improve their classroom management practices

Leadership training

- Internationally, the importance of leadership from the principal in attaining inclusive processes is well recognised. A key recommendation of an Australian report on belonging and connection in school for children with SEND was leadership training for principals

- Leadership training modules for principals and other school leaders should cover the full inclusion of children with disability into the mainstream academic and social life of the school. Modules should cover practice examples of how to embed the elements of belonging and connection in school practice. The Australian report recommended that the **UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and the **National Disability Strategy** should be added to the training program on the **Disability Standards for Education for school leaders** to add a social context to this training

- Those in leadership positions may also benefit from training in leadership styles that promote the psychological well-being of colleagues

The Teaching Council has embarked on a period of consultation end of 2014-2015 for the development of a national framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and this provides an opportunity to highlight the skills that CPD can address, such as:

- Peer coaching and mentoring to promote reflective practices

- Teaching methodologies as well as curriculum content

- Special Education, for example, understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

- How to develop children's social and emotional and communication skills

CPD is currently not mandatory except for newly qualified teachers who have to engage in a minimum of 10 of a possible 12 workshops with the National Induction Programme for Teachers before their registration can be completed with the Teaching Council. It will become mandatory when Section 39 of the Teaching Council Bill is enacted. The expected timeframe for this is 2016.

Also as part of the implementation of the Department of Education and Skills Action Plan on Bullying and following the review of the Teacher Education Support Service, a phased programme of continuing professional development (CPD) has been developed to support schools in relation to the Action Plan and the Anti-Bullying Procedures. The phases are:

Phase 1: Course providers included 'Bullying and Emotional Health and Well Being' as a theme in summer courses and 1,417 teachers attended summer courses in 2013. In 2014, course providers prioritised this theme again in summer courses.

Phase 2: Workshops for teachers have been held in education centres and will continue: 96 workshops (61 for primary and 35 for post primary) have been held in education centres throughout the country. An Irish and English version is available online.

Phase 3: A seminar in November 2014 was held to raise awareness. It covered intervention strategies and the development of a positive school climate which is central to SPHE and which also ties in with the philosophy of the Action Plan.

Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) is planning to develop a toolkit for teachers.

Principle 5: Leadership and communication

Bullying is a problem of communication and interaction. Communication is a central aspect of good leadership. The principal has a crucial role in the school in leading out on:

- Establishing clear school processes for effective communication of problems, expectations and solutions and ensuring that they are followed

- Making certain that communication, behaviour and anti-bullying policies are used as working documents and evaluated and updated periodically

- Initiating change management to establish, revise and maintain whole school planning and practices

- Providing mentoring and training of staff on collaborative practice and collective responsibility

- Promoting positive attitudes, pro-social behaviour, emotional well being and excellent communication among all stakeholders including teachers, SNAs, parents/guardians, children and school visitors

- Driving a process of inclusion for all children

- Ensuring that staff have a positive attitude to children with SEND and a vision translated into clear goals on how to effectively include all children with SEND into the mainstream social and academic life of the school

- Developing some basic knowledge/expertise in Special Education in order to be able to plan, at the school level, how to develop the required expertise in Special Education among staff

- Developing a strategy on how the school will access the resources required to effectively include a child/ children with SEND in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities

- Providing strong leadership and creativity when solutions are required to address the needs and goals of children with SEND

In summary, the international literature, good practice documented from Irish schools, and the experience and opinions of educators, show that schools can minimise bullying behaviours and facilitate the development of all children regardless of their educational and disability status. Leadership, further changes in pre-service and in-service education and training and the implementation of whole-school interventions or processes are required.

Schools can implement a whole school process that is inclusive and health promoting and inimical to bullying behaviours. This process creates a positive social and learning environment and a safer physical environment. The process

decreases isolation, a major risk factor for the bullying of children with SEND, and facilitates a sense of belonging and friendship among children by:

- Developing children's empathy and civic spirit, their sense of responsibility for each other and for the school and their ability to collaborate and cooperate with one another

- Engaging all children in extracurricular activities

- Modelling and encouraging positive interactions and communication

- Developing children's resilience and social and communication skills

- Using peer support and enlisting the help of Special Needs Assistants to promote the independence of children with SEND and constantly facilitate peer interactions

- Listening to and actively engaging with children with SEND and their parents/ guardians to ensure that the school is using appropriate individualised approaches to meet their needs. For this, schools need a robust system whereby children with SEND and their parents/guardians regularly communicate with the school re their school experience and any issues that have arisen with regards inclusion and bullying

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