The S3 English exam in April will take the form of a group discussion on a topical issue.

This year the discussion will take place on: **Thursday 23rd April** and will be on the topic of: **Can bullying be stopped?**

In preparation for the exam, and in keeping with Strathaven Academy’s commitment to improving literacy skills through regular personal reading, pupils should read the selection of articles on this issue and make some brief notes.

This will enable pupils to complete their Added Value Unit and will help shape and inform their views about this topic for the assessed group discussion.

**You may wish to think about**: types of bullying, causes, solutions – what works and what doesn’t, whether it is a normal part of growing up, whether it should be a criminal offence, your own experience of being involved in or witnessing bullying……..

Performance in this discussion will count towards each pupil’s N4 or N5 qualification and will help to finalise decisions about which course pupils will undertake in S4. Pupils may bring notes or ideas for questions they wish to ask of others. Pupils will be assessed on their contributions and their ability to listen to and respond to others.

The **4** **assessment criteria** are:

* Being able to select significant ideas and content to contribute to the discussion
* Being able to show their knowledge and understanding of language in terms of their language choice
* Being able to communicate meaning at first hearing
* Being able to use significant aspects of non-verbal communicatione.g. eye contact, gesture, pace, tone, body language etc.

**S3 English Exam: Spoken Performance**

**NOW** you are going to take part in a group discussion on this topic based on the sources and your own experience/knowledge/opinions.

You will be in a mixed group of 5 or 6 pupils who will have 15 minutes to discuss: **Can bullying be stopped?**

You may wish to think about: types of bullying, causes, solutions – what works and what doesn’t, whether it is a normal part of growing up, whether it should be a criminal offence, your own experience of being involved in or witnessing bullying……..

Your performance in this discussion will count towards your N4 or N5 qualification.

You may bring notes or ideas for questions you wish to ask of others.

You will be assessed on your contributions and your ability to listen to and respond to others.

The **4** **assessment criteria** are:

* Selecting significant ideas and content, using a format and structure appropriate to purpose and audience
* Applying knowledge and understanding of language in terms of language choice
* Communicating meaning at first hearing
* Using significant aspects of non-verbal communication

Remember the key features of *high quality* group discussion – these are the things your assessor will be looking for during your discussion:

* *Can you make clear relevant points?*
* *Can you develop your ideas?*
* *Can you make effective use of notes/ evidence?*
* *Can you stick to the purpose of the discussion?*
* *Can you listen to others exploring, building upon and expanding on their ideas*
* *Can you help to ensure that everyone gets involved?*
* *Can you ask questions of others or answer questions posed by others?*
* *Can you clarify or summarise what the group or individual group members are saying?*
* *Can you challenge the views of others while recognising that they have the right to views different from your own?*
* *Can you ensure you are clear and audible throughout?*
* *Can you make regular eye contact?*
* *Can you show enthusiasm?*
* *Can you use a wide range of verbal and non-verbal techniques e.g. body language, pace, tone, gesture, emphasis, register, rhetorical devices?*

**Here are some phrases that you can use to help you to contribute during discussion:**

**Starting A Discussion**

* The question up for discussion is…?
* We need to decide…?
* The group has been asked to look at…?
* To begin with…?
* Why don’t we start by…?

**Challenging**

* I see what you mean but…
* I am not sure I agree because…
* An alternative view would be…
* I see your point but it’s also true that…

**Encouraging others/asking questions**

* Could I ask…?
* What do you think \_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
* Does anyone agree or disagree with that point?
* Have we gone into enough detail?
* Would anyone like to comment on that?
* Let’s make sure we hear from everyone.
* I wonder if…?

**Moving the Discussion on**

* I think we should move on to the next point.
* We have other areas to consider
* Could we move on to considering…?
* Why don’t we move on and come back to this if necessary?

**Making a Contribution**

* I think one of the key points is…
* In my opinion . . .
* It seems to me . . .
* I feel that . . .

**Developing Points**

* For example/for instance…
* Because…
* This is due to…
* What I mean by this is…
* My evidence for this is…
* My reasons are…

**Building on Contributions**

* I’d like to add to that by saying…
* Just to build on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s point
* Another example is…

**Clarifying**

* In other words, are you saying that…?
* Just to be clear, do you mean it is……?
* Am I right in understanding that….?

**Summarising**

* I think there are a few key ideas.
* Here’s where I think we are
* Do you agree that the main points are…?

**NSPCC - What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Bullying can take different forms. It could include:

* physical bullying: hitting, slapping or pushing someone
* verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or threatening someone
* non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages
* emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
* exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone
* undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours
* controlling or manipulating someone
* making silent, hoax or abusive calls
* racial, sexual or homophobic bullying
* bullying someone because they have a disability.

**What is cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

Cyberbullying can include:

* sending threatening or abusive text messages
* creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
* trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
* excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
* shaming someone online
* setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
* encouraging young people to self-harm
* voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
* creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
* sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
* pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

**Signs of bullying**

No single sign will indicate for certain that your child's being bullied, but watch out for:

* belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
* physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
* being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
* not doing as well at school
* asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
* being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
* problems with eating or sleeping
* bullying others.

**Effects of bullying**

The effects of bullying can last into adulthood. At its worst, bullying has driven children and young people to self-harm and even suicide.

Children who are bullied:

* may develop mental health problems like depression and anxiety
* have fewer friendships
* aren't accepted by their peers
* are wary and suspicious of others
* have problems adjusting to school, and don't do as well.

All children who are affected by bullying can suffer harm – whether they are bullied, they bully others or they witness bullying.

**Who's at risk**

Any child can be bullied for any reason. If a child is seen as different in some way, or seen as an easy target they can be more at risk.

This might be because of their:

* race or ethnic background
* gender
* sexual orientation.

Or it could be because they:

* appear anxious or have low self-esteem
* lack assertiveness
* are shy or introverted.

Popular or successful children are also bullied, sometimes because others are jealous of them. Sometimes a child's family circumstance or home life can be a reason for someone bullying them.

Disabled children can experience bullying because they seem an easy target and less able to defend themselves.

**Support**

For parents and carers

You might experience a huge range of emotions if you discover a child's being bullied. Whether it's a child in your care or someone you know, we have tips to help you cope.

[1. Talk to them about bullying and cyberbullying](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

[2. Let them know who to ask for help](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

[3. Help them relax and take a time out](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

[4. Report bullying on social media and online gaming](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

[5. Report bullying videos shared online](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

[6. Talk to your child’s school or club](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/)

For children

We understand how difficult it is for children to talk about bullying. Whether it's happening now or happened in the past, Childline can be contacted 24/7. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and confidential. Children can also contact [Childline online](https://www.childline.org.uk/%22%20%5Co%20%22Childline%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

Childline has lots of advice about [different types of bullying](https://childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/) and a tool to help them [bounce back from bullying](https://bounce-back-from-bullying.childline.org.uk/).

**Prevent bullying**

There are steps we can all take to keep children and young people safe from bullying.

Be available for your child to talk to you about their worries and make sure they know where they can go to for support. That could be yourself, a teacher they trust or [Childline](https://childline.org.uk/get-support/%22%20%5Co%20%22Childline%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

You can ask your child's school to book a free [Speak out Stay safe assembly](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/our-services/working-with-schools/) for primary school children. Our specially trained staff and volunteers hold assemblies and workshops, covering topics like bullying and abuse, but without using any scary words or adult language.

If your child has bullied someone

If you find out your child has done something to hurt someone else, you’re likely to feel angry, disappointed or any number of other strong emotions.

Explain that what they’re doing is unacceptable. Children and young people don’t always realise what they’re doing is bullying, or understand how much their actions have hurt someone.

**Childhood bullying 'damages adult life'**

BBC News

By Sean CoughlanBBC News education correspondent 19 August 2013

**Bullying in childhood "throws a long shadow" into victims' adult lives, suggests research indicating long-term negative consequences for health, job prospects and relationships.**

The study tracked more than 1,400 people between the ages of nine and 26.

School bullies were also more likely to grow up into adult criminals.

The study, from Warwick University in the UK and Duke University in the US, concludes bullying should not be seen as "a harmless rite of passage".

The long-term impact of bullying in childhood was examined through the experiences of three different groups - those who had been bullied, those who had carried out the bullying and those who had been both victims of bullying and had also carried out bullying themselves.

**Long-term damage**

The research, published in Psychological Science, suggests the most negative outcomes were for those who had been both victims and perpetrators of bullying, described in the study as "bully-victims".

Described as "easily provoked, low in self-esteem, poor at understanding social cues, and unpopular with peers", these children grew into adults six times more likely to have a "serious illness, smoke regularly or develop a psychiatric disorder".

By their mid-20s, these former "bully-victims" were more likely to be obese, to have left school without qualifications, to have drifted through jobs and less likely to have friends.

**We cannot continue to dismiss bullying as a harmless, almost inevitable, part of growing up. We need to change this mindset and acknowledge this as a serious problemDieter Wolke, University of Warwick**

All of those involved in bullying, as victims or aggressors, had outcomes that were generally worse than the average for those who had not been involved in bullying.

Those who had been victims of bullying, without becoming bullies themselves, were more likely to have mental health problems, more serious illnesses and had a greater likelihood of being in poverty.

But compared with "bully-victims" they were more likely to have been successful in education and making friends.

There were also distinctive patterns for those who had been bullies, but who had not been bullied themselves.

These "pure bullies" were more likely to have been sacked from jobs, to be in a violent relationship and to be involved in risky or illegal behaviour, such as getting drunk, taking drugs, fighting, lying and having one-night stands with strangers.

They were much more likely to have committed offences such as breaking into property.

However in terms of health and wealth, bullies had more successful outcomes than either the victims of bullying or those who were both bullies and victims.

Such "pure bullies" were identified as often being strong and healthy and socially capable - with their manipulative and aggressive behaviour being seen as "deviant" rather than reflecting that they were "emotionally troubled".

The study included verbal, physical and psychological bullying and the comparisons were adjusted to take into account social background factors, such as family hardship, family stability and dysfunction.

"We cannot continue to dismiss bullying as a harmless, almost inevitable, part of growing up. We need to change this mindset and acknowledge this as a serious problem for both the individual and the country as a whole; the effects are long-lasting and significant," said Prof Dieter Wolke of the University of Warwick.

"In the case of bully-victims, it shows how bullying can spread when left untreated. Some interventions are already available in schools but new tools are needed to help health professionals to identify, monitor and deal with the ill-effects of bullying. The challenge we face now is committing the time and resource to these interventions to try and put an end to bullying."

Emma-Jane Cross, founder of the anti-bullying charity BeatBullying, said: "This groundbreaking study shines a light on what has been an overlooked subject for society and the economy. The findings demonstrate for the first time just how far-reaching and damaging the consequences of bullying can be."

# Bullying has an impact that lasts years. I know - I’ve been a victim

Depression, anxiety, panic attacks - it’s a major risk factor for mental health in adulthood. This Anti-Bullying Week, let’s encourage empathy and kindness

The Guardian [*Anita Sethi*](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/anitasethi)Fri 16 Nov 2018

A scene that often replays in my mind is being 13 years old, curled up in the foetal position on the floor and being kicked in the ribs. I’m screaming but then my voice catches and becomes a silence that sticks as a lump in the throat that stays there for years.

[Bullying](https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2018/jan/17/bullying-is-still-rife-in-schools-heres-how-teachers-can-tackle-it) – which can be physical, mental, emotional, verbal – can steal a lot, including our confidence and self-esteem. It can also steal language, the ability to express what we have experienced.

This week is [Anti-Bullying Week](https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/anti-bullying-week-2018-choose-respect?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIyZHKpcjW3gIVYbvtCh10-QdPEAAYAyAAEgJt-PD_BwE), and it is important to understand that, if not addressed, bullying can have deep and damaging consequences – echoing far into the future and affecting our relationships and behaviour.

I have experienced physical bullying: the sudden sharp pain of being pinched in the playground, the searing sting of a slap, the foot stamping on me, hands shoving me into the blaring traffic of a busy road. I have experienced verbal bullying too. “Sticks and stones can break your bones but words will never harm you,” went the childhood chant – which I found confusing because words can harm and hurt most, can break your heart and spirit.

Bullies love to chip away at an identity – and the use of language can be their most belittling tactic. Often the first thing they take is a person’s name: I was “Freak” for much of my younger life. I was dehumanised – I had “lips like a slug”, “hair like a horse”, and was “a stupid Indian cow” (considering that a cow is actually deemed a holy animal in India, I’m now taking this as a compliment).

[Studies reveal](https://www.livescience.com/27279-bullying-effects-last-adulthood.html) that childhood bullying can be a major risk factor for poor mental health in adulthood, raising the risk of depression, anxiety, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thoughts – all of which I have had. Research by the [University of Montreal](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/12/121218081615.htm) also suggests that bullying can change the structure surrounding a gene involved in regulating mood – making victims more vulnerable to mental health problems as they age. [Another study](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4552909/) into the long-term ramifications revealed that bullying could lead to “reduced adaptation to adult roles, including forming lasting relationships, integrating into work and being economically independent”.

The theme of this year’s Anti-Bullying Week is “choose respect”, and it is important that we explore and put into practice the ways we can respect others and ourselves more, to both help those who still grapple with the effects of bullying, and to stop others from having to suffer. Empathy – a crucial understanding of the minds and hearts of others – can stop us from wilfully hurting others. One report has revealed that [reading can help to teach empathy](https://readingagency.org.uk/news/media/reading-for-pleasure-builds-empathy-and-improves-wellbeing-research-from-the-reading-agency-finds.html): I believe books should be prescribed for both bullies and those who’ve been bullied.

This year I was asked to write for [Three Things I’d Tell My Younger Self](https://www.harpercollins.co.uk/9780008318673/three-things-id-tell-my-younger-self-e-story/), a new book aimed at helping young people cope with life. What would I say, if I could journey back through time? Words can harm but can also heal. I would tell my younger self not to internalise the voices telling me I was worthless, useless, a loser, stupid, ugly. I now recognise that by speaking out, writing back, by finding and using our true voice, we can break the poisonous grip of the past.

Bullying is a repeated pattern of abuse of power designed to dominate those perceived as inferior, as weaker. Bullying is an endemic, systemic attempt to degrade, and we need to recognise the signs and empower ourselves to deal with it, and prevent it. Bullying can happen in childhood and in adulthood too. Indeed, the leader of the most powerful country on Earth [uses bullying to dominate and degrade](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/09/donald-trump-op-ed-bullying-and-bluster-cant-save-him-now) his opponents. In this world of so-called [strong men](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jul/17/obama-criticises-strongman-politics-coded-attack-trump), let’s remember that strength can actually be found in vulnerability – in showing the ways in which we have been hurt, how that hurt has shaped our lives, and how we can begin to heal it through empathy, kindness, and respect.

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## Bullying behaviour often emerges in childhood, and the consequences for victims can last a lifetime. But what makes a child become a bully?

### **BBC Future By Kelly Oakes** 16th September 2019

When RubySam Youngz was singled out by a bully at the age of 10 in her last year of primary school, she felt isolated and confused. She’d just moved with her family from England to Wales and the bully honed in on her accent. They then started mocking her appearance. “Nothing really made sense to me,” she says. “I’m in a new place, I don’t really know anyone, no one likes me, and I really do not know why.”

Youngz says the relentless bullying, which continued through secondary school, had a knock-on effect in all areas of her life, and she took up smoking and drinking in an attempt to cope. Now aged 46, it is only in the past year that she has come to terms with the effect that the bullying had on her.

“I felt like ‘no one else likes me, so I don’t like me’,” she says.

Her experience underlines a painful truth. Children, for all their innocence and inexperience of the world, can be some of the most vicious bullies. Their actions, perhaps less hindered by the social norms we learn in later life, can be merciless, violent and shocking. And they can have life-long implications for the victims.

But what makes a child become a bully?

“For the longest time, in the research literature, we thought there was just one type of bully: a highly aggressive kid that had self-esteem issues that may come from a violent home or neglectful home,” says Dorothy Espelage, a professor of education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. That picture is now changing.

The definition of bullying that academic researchers have adopted states that it’s a form of aggression between individuals or groups that have different levels of power. It perhaps fails to capture the terrible toll it can have on victims or the complex reasons why people become bullies in the first place. But one key element is the difference in power.

“It could be that you’re bullying me, and you’re popular, and I’m not popular, and that power differential makes it difficult for me to defend myself,” says Espelage. While domestic violence and sibling aggression are still risk factors for children becoming bullies, they’re not the only reason, she adds. Children who grow up in violent homes but go to a school with an anti-bullying programme and a supportive atmosphere won’t necessarily become bullies.

Researchers’ picture of the typical school bully has become more nuanced in recent years. Aside from the blunt and open aggressor, another [**more Machiavellian kind of bullying has come to be recognised**](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1348/026151099165384). Children who fall into this category tend to have better social skills, are often charismatic and liked by teachers – far from the “oafish” stereotype of bullies. Crucially, these children can turn on and off their bullying to suit their needs.

“Socially dominant bullies want to be the leader of the crowd,” says Espelage. “And the way that they do that is to push kids down the hierarchy.”

Other research backs up this idea that bullying is often more about the bully themselves, rather than their victims. In a study of school children in Italy and Spain, pupils took part in an exercise that entailed [**thinking about a bullying situation from the point of view of the bully**](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ab.10060). The researchers also gave the children a questionnaire about their peers to categorise each child as either a bully, a victim or an outsider.

Those who were categorised as bullies by their peers were more likely to respond to the hypothetical bullying incident with statements that focused on how the incident affected the bully themselves (saying things like “I would feel great because I got the attention of other children!”) or statements that showed a lack of empathy (such as “I don’t feel guilty because I don’t think about it” and “I would feel indifferent because the victim doesn’t suffer”).

Bullying has also taken on new forms in recent years. One common characteristic of bullying as previously defined by academics is that the aggression towards the victim is repeated. But the online world is blurring this due to the potential impact that just one instance of cyberbullying can have.

“Does it have to happen more than once, when you’ve posted something that’s gone to a million people?” asks Espelage. “Probably not.”

In fact, there’s such a big crossover between school bullying and cyberbullying that some researchers argue they are becoming one and the same – especially now that children often have their phones with them in class. “In my research it was found that many times school bullies continue the harassment online,” says Calli Tzani-Pepelasi, an investigative psychology lecturer at the University of Huddersfield. “They may be sitting next to each other but prefer to bully each other through social media, as that way their actions can be viewed by more and they feel a false sense of fame.”

So what should you do if you think your child may be bullying other children?

Getting to the bottom of their motivations is a good first step. “If somebody called me and said your child is engaging in these behaviours, I would want to say [to the child], ‘OK, what are you getting from that? Why are you doing this?’,” says Espelage. “It may be that your child... is in a school where that’s what they’re expected to do.”

It’s also worth considering whether your own actions may be influencing your child’s. “For some parents, their interpersonal style may be may be modelling that behaviour,” she says.

One way to address school bullying could be a [**buddy system designed to foster peer support**](https://pure.hud.ac.uk/en/publications/peer-support-at-schools-the-buddy-approach-as-a-prevention-and-in), where younger students are assigned an older mentee to show them the ropes when they start school.

“The fact that younger students have the opportunity to model the right behaviour from the older students” is one advantage of such a system, says Tzani-Pepelasi. But having a supportive school environment in general is also important when it comes to tackling bullying. “It takes a lot of persistence, and consistency from the teachers and the school staff in general, as without them the system cannot function,” she says.

Espelage agrees that strong relationships between teachers and among peers are key. “What we know from our research is those schools where they pay attention to the issues of connectedness, making sure every kid feels like they belong in that school, there’s less bullying,” she says.

Often, though, that support isn’t there. In 2014, Espelage and her colleagues published a five-year study showing [**a worrying link between bullying and sexual harassment in schools**](https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/246830.pdf). It revealed that bullying among younger children often involves homophobic insults, which then escalates to sexual harassment in later school years.

But the children involved in sexual harassment – both the perpetrators and the victims – often didn’t seem to understand how serious the incidents were, perhaps because [**teachers may not be stepping in to prevent them**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23586889).

“That continuum of aggression from bullying, to homophobic name-calling, to sexual violence, to teen dating violence is real,” says Espelage.

As for whether kids grow out of bullying once they leave school, Espelage says some may do so – or find a different outlet for their aggression – but not all. “I would argue, based on my experience, that some [school bullies] go into professions in which that type of behaviour works for them, whether that's [**a police officer**](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1059601112449476), [**a professor at a university**](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10672-008-9073-3), [**a lawyer**](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09695958.2013.874350).”

Perhaps saddest of all, however, is that the impact of bullying on victims can last for decades, leading to [**poorer physical and psychological health**](https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2014.13101401). Youngz, who was bullied throughout secondary school, has now trained as a grief recovery specialist, and hopes to be able to help others who have been through similar kinds of loss.

“The bullying has been part of that because it was loss of feeling normal, loss of trust, loss of safety and security,” she says.

Her main bully contacted her via Facebook earlier this year to apologise. When she received the message, Youngz felt angry. “It did nothing for me at all personally to relieve any pain that she put me through,” she says. “It might have helped her, I don’t know.”

But when it comes down to it, she thinks the apology – just like the bullying that had such a negative impact on her life – was really more about the bully than about Youngz herself.

“I have compassion towards her because I can understand maybe why she did what she did, because she may have been having troubles at home as well,” she says. “But I’m not agreeing with what she did.”

# Bullying is exaggerated, says childhood expert

[**Anushka Asthana**](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/anushkaasthana)*, education correspondent, The Guardian*

Sun 28 Oct 2007

The level of playground bullying is being exaggerated and children must learn to cope with name-calling and teasing to help them develop resilience, a childhood expert says.

In a book to be published tomorrow, Tim Gill, a former government adviser who led a major review into children's play, argues that mollycoddling children by labelling 'unpleasant behaviour' as bullying is stopping them from building the skills they need to protect themselves. 'I have spoken to teachers and educational psychologists who say that parents and children are labelling as bullying what are actually minor fallings-out,' said Gill, the former director of the then Children's Play Council, who is currently advising the Conservative Party's childhood review.

'Children are not always nice to each other, but people are not always nice to each other. The world is not like that. One of the things in danger of being lost is children spending time with other children out of sight of adults; growing a sense of consequence for their actions without someone leaping in,' he told The Observer

Gill related an incident in which his own daughter complained that she was being bullied after three boys teased her about a game she was playing in the park. 'What struck me was the use of the word bullying to describe that,' he said. 'Bullying is where the victimisation is sustained and there is a power imbalance. I do not mean we should allow unbridled cruelty, just that one option is asking, "Can you sort it out yourself?" '

In No Fear: Growing up in a Risk-averse Society, which will be published tomorrow, Gill argues that society is 'bubble-wrapping' children. Parents, teachers, police, the government and wider society are all to blame, he said, for overreacting to risks such as 'stranger danger', injury and abuse.

[Children](https://www.theguardian.com/society/children) were too quickly branded antisocial. He cited a case where three 12-year-olds were arrested and DNA-tested for climbing a tree.

In the book, he also tackles the system for child protection, arguing that too many people were made to go through bureaucratic checks in order to spend time with children. In the case of Abigail Rae, the two-year-old who drowned after disappearing from her nursery, a passer-by saw her but did not stop her in case he was accused of abduction, said Gill.

All these different factors were working to the 'detriment of [children's] physical, mental and emotional wellbeing', says Gill's book.

But his views on bullying are likely to cause most controversy. 'What may seem like minor name-calling to an adult could be devastating to the child,' said Liz Carnell, director of the charity [Bullying](https://www.theguardian.com/society/bullying) UK. 'Bullying can start with one incident, and if you nip it in the bud straight away, it will not grow into a problem.'

Gill Frances, director of wellbeing at the National Children's Bureau and spokeswoman for the Anti-Bullying Alliance, said it was good that Gill's daughter could come to him, but added: 'For lots more, there is no-one to turn to.'

However, Frances, who will launch anti-bullying week next month, said she agreed with Gill to some extent: 'Yes, we are wrapping children in cotton wool, and by doing that they do not develop the skills they may need, but we also need to make sure they are constantly supported and confident to get help.'

Gill has also encountered a significant amount of support among both parents and head teachers. John Peck, the head of Peafield Lane Primary School in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, said: 'To some extent the word bullying is over-used and sometimes people fail to differentiate between a normal fall-out between two human beings and something that is bullying.'

# Coping with the bullies 'is part of growing up', says child expert

By LAURA CLARK Daily Mail 28 October 2007

Minor playground spats are blown out of proportion and branded 'bullying', an expert has claimed.

Youngsters must learn to cope with teasing and name-calling so they are able to handle awkward situations as adults, former Government adviser Tim Gill says.

He believes the extent of bullying is being exaggerated by over-protective parents and teachers, who apply the label to childhood squabbles which were previously assumed to be part of growing up.

The claims, in a book published today, are certain to fuel concerns over the escalation of the bullying 'industry'. Police officers warned this year that a target-chasing culture is forcing them to make 'easy' arrests for offences such as bullying. In one example, a child in Kent was arrested for throwing a slice of cucumber from a tuna sandwich at a classmate.

The latest Government guidance to schools urges heads to record all instances of bullying and report the findings to their local council. But Mr Gill, who led the first Government-backed review of children's play areas in 2003, warns against mollycoddling children by describing everyday teasing as bullying. He claims it is part of a trend to 'bubblewrap' children, meaning they do not develop the resilience needed to deal with adult life.

Parents, teachers, police and officialdom are all to blame for over-reacting to risks such as injury, abduction and abuse, he says.

'I have spoken to teachers and educational psychologists who say that parents and children are labelling as bullying what are actually minor fallings-out,' said Mr Gill.

'Children are not always nice to each other, but people are not always nice to each other. The world is not like that.'

Mr Gill said his daughter had complained she was being bullied after three boys teased her about a game she was playing in the park.

'What struck me was the use of the word bullying to describe that,' he added.

'Bullying is where the victimisation is sustained and there is a power imbalance.

'I do not mean we should allow unbridled cruelty, just that one option is asking, "Can you sort it out yourself?"

'A few years ago, interactions that would have just been seen as children being children are now treated as something much more sinister and troublesome that we have to stop.'

He said that in one school a child's decision not to be another pupil's friend was recorded as an incident of bullying.

'It's a little bit like the health and safety culture,' he added.

'Teachers are in danger of feeling they can't take a common-sense approach.

'We are running the risk of children growing up who are not going to be able to look after themselves in social situations.'

Mr Gill also warned that children's play with their friends was being too closely supervised by teachers.

He said that with fewer children playing in parks or in the street, the schoolyard is often only place they can enjoy being outdoors.

His book, No Fear: Growing Up in a Risk-Averse Society, warns children are being branded antisocial for innocuous activities such as street football, playing hopscotch or climbing trees.

'This is being labelled as antisocial behaviour and police or neighbourhood wardens are clamping down,' he said. 'For me, this is an identical issue.'

Mr Gill, who was director of the Children's Play Council for seven years, is advising the Conservatives as they conduct an inquiry into the state of childhood.

Ofsted inspections are giving children the impression that bullying is widespread in adult life - and that presentation is more important than substance, according to an academic.

Professor Cedric Cullingford, of Huddersfield University, said: 'Teachers are seen to become highly stressed and fearful of the inspectors and from this many pupils perceive inspections as a form of bullying.

'The message portrayed, and taken on by many of the youngsters, is that it's not what you do that counts, but the way you present yourself. Children are learning about spin from an early age.'

## Being bullied at school really does affect you for life as study finds people that got picked on are 35 per cent more likely to be unemployed

**Being bullied in secondary school leads to poorer outcomes later on in life**

**Persistent or violent types of bullying tended to have the worst consequences**

**About half of pupils reported experiencing some type of bullying between the ages of 14 and 16**

By [VICTORIA BELL FOR MAILONLINE](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Victoria+Bell+For+Mailonline)

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Being bullied in secondary school leads to poorer outcomes later in life for victims of the abuse, with them also more likely to be unemployed, according to research.

Being bullied increases the probability of being unemployed at age 25 by about 35 per cent; and for those in work, it reduces income by about 2 per cent, new research has found.

Persistent or violent bullying were found to have had the worst consequences.

Being bullied is still often wrongly considered as a 'normal rite of passage', but as the new research shows, it can have detrimental implications into adult life.

The research considers the importance of bullying as a major risk factor for poor physical and mental health and reduced adaptation to adult roles.

A staggering 40 per cent of people over the age of 25 who were bullied suffered mental health problems.

The team analysed confidential data on over 7,000 school pupils aged 14-16 from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England.

The data consisted of information on how frequently the children were bullied, and what type of bullying they experienced.

Examples of these include being called names, being excluded from social groups, being threatened with violence, experiencing violence and having their possessions taken from them.

This information was reported by both the child and parent, so the researchers could gain a detailed picture of the patterns of bullying.

They found that those who are bullied reduces the probability of gaining five or more good GCSE passes (grades A\*-C) and staying on to take A-levels by 10 per cent.

About half of pupils reported experiencing some type of bullying between the ages of 14 and 16.

The full findings of the research, which will be presented at the Royal Economic Society's annual conference at the University of Warwick in April 2019.

### WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CHILDHOOD BULLYING?

Bullying can affect everyone; those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying.

Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide.

It is important to talk to children to determine whether bullying, or something else, is a concern.

## Children who are bullied

Children who are bullied can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues.

Children who are bullied are more likely to experience:

Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy.

These issues may persist into adulthood.

## Health complaints

Decreased academic achievement—GPA and standardised test scores—and school participation.

They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.

A very small number of bullied children might retaliate through extremely violent measures.

In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied.

## Children who bully others

Childrens who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood.

Children who bully are more likely to:

* Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
* Get into fights, vandalise property, and drop out of school
* Engage in early sexual activity
* Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults
* Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults

## Bystanders

Children who witness bullying are more likely to:

* Have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
* Have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety
* Miss or skip school

## The Relationship between Bullying and Suicide

Media reports often link bullying with suicide. However, most youth who are bullied do not have thoughts of suicide or engage in suicidal behaviours.

Although children who are bullied are at risk of suicide, bullying alone is not the cause.

Many issues contribute to suicide risk, including depression, problems at home, and trauma history.

Additionally, specific groups have an increased risk of suicide, including black and minority ethnic, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.

This risk can be increased further when these children are not supported by parents, peers, and schools.

Bullying can make an unsupportive situation worse.