

# Friendship & Peer Pressure Bullying Lesson Plan

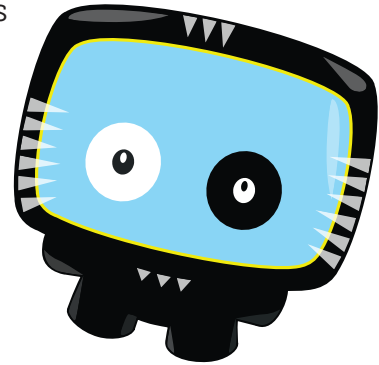
**Cyber  
Mentors**

## Background and Overview

Friendship and bullying are sometimes different sides of the same coin. There is a common misconception that friends cannot bully one another and it's all harmless. This lesson plan has been produced so that teachers can make pupils aware that peer pressure can affect people in different ways and also allow them to reflect on their friendship groups and the element of loyalty which extends to this. This lesson plan will also include references to young people and their usage of mobile phone technology to extend their friendship groups and some of the pitfalls of this technology.

This lesson plan is ideal for secondary school pupils but is adaptable for younger pupils. The suggested group is Year 7 pupils who are adapting to a new transitional phase with regards to school and friendship groups.

This lesson plan could initiate a mentoring/buddy system in your school, giving longevity to any existing system.



## Lesson Objectives:

- To examine the differences between good and bad friendship groups.
- To examine the differences between good and bad teasing.
- To explore how far they may go in terms of loyalty to their friends.
- How to develop a plan of action when a friend or group teases/bullies you.
- How to respond when a friend bullies another friend and they feel too scared to intervene in case they get bullied too.

## Learning Outcomes:

- To enable the pupils to understand how their behaviour/attitude can impact others.
- For pupils to gain an understanding around how friendships can sometimes succumb to bullying behaviour intentionally or unintentionally.
- Recognition of some of the factors which may influence bullying relating to friendship.
- Using empathy to recognise and take into consideration other people's feelings.

We suggest that the lesson plan be stretched over two, 50 minute periods. This will encourage the pupils to have sufficient time to discuss and mind-map around their perception of good and bad friendships.

## What you will need

A room which is big enough for the pupils to sit in a circle.



Step

1

Before commencing with the lesson, a working agreement should be drawn up with the pupils. This may differ from learning agreements which may be visible in the classroom already. Working agreements are good because they give the pupils the opportunity to set their own rules for the lesson. You might want to prompt them with a few i.e. treat each other with respect, agree to disagree and hands up etc.



Step

2

## Ice-Breaker

Get the young people to stand in a circle and inform them that the maximum number is 25. The objective is for the pupils to call out the numbers in chronological order without anyone else getting there first. If this happens the process has to begin again. This will encourage the pupils to learn communication and listening skills.

Identifying qualities in people are really important when you are looking to build friendships with people. Everyone is an individual and therefore has different personality traits. Different traits appeal to different people. For instance, one might prefer to surround themselves with people who are extroverts or introverts. However, there are certain qualities that are always essential when deciding whether someone is a friend or not.

- Loyal
- Honest
- Kind
- Considerate
- Generous
- Positive
- Unselfish
- Caring
- Patient
- Understanding
- Fair
- Keeps their promise

Ask the students to sit in pairs and to exchange ideas about what they perceive the term 'friendship' to mean.



Download the 'body' template and display the list of friendship qualities on an OHP if possible. Ask the young people to mind-map the opposites of the qualities displayed. This can be done in a big group, pairs or smaller groups. You could use the qualities that the pupils came up with earlier and those listed to the right.



Then reconvene the students into a whole group and discuss what qualities make a good friend and what qualities make a bad friend. Discuss the reasons for this and also whether it is possible to have a mixture of good and bad qualities in a good friend. Explore why this may be the case and whether it is a good or bad thing.



Get the young people to think about their best friend. What makes this friend better than others? Are they loyal to this friend? How far would they go to maintain this friendship? For example, would they be willing to do anything that their best friend asked? If no, why not etc. This is to get the students to start thinking about peer pressure. (Please see bottom of lesson plan for friendship type)



## Peer Pressure



Step

7

Peer pressure can be defined as pressure by a peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values or otherwise conform in order to be accepted as part of a group.

Split the class into small groups and ask them to discuss:

- What things might a friend ask you to do that may go against your beliefs or values?
- Discuss different ways that friends may pressure you to do things that you don't want to do, i.e. threats to withhold friendship; start calling you names, threats of violence etc.
- Explore how you could say no or get out of a situation without causing offence?

Now get the pupils back together to share feedback on the exercise.

### Teacher's notes:

The need to feel accepted can be particularly strong during the adolescent years, where self identity is not yet fully formed. This can often lead to a period of uncertainty and can account for the fact why some young people may succumb to a level of conformity. This conformity can take many forms i.e. dressing the same, talking the same, listening to the same music etc.

In extreme cases the need to feel accepted can lead young people to act in ways that they would not normally. For example, if a young person wanted to join a particular group of friends who regularly used drugs, they may feel that they would have to adopt that behaviour too in order to be fully accepted into that group. We call this negative peer pressure. There is also positive peer pressure and this could take the form of pressure to follow group rules, pressure not to take up unhealthy habits etc.

Peer pressure plays a pivotal role in bullying and this may occur when a young person is perceived to be weak or different. Bullies don't want to be disliked and may exhibit bullying behaviour out of their own sense of self loathing. The bully usually picks an easy target and someone that other people are unlikely to defend. The peer pressure to be liked combined with the peer pressure to reject the person who appears different leads to bullies picking on kids who may already be struggling with their own social issues.

## Scenarios



Step

8

For this section you should ask the pupils to organise themselves into groups to re-enact the scenarios below. They need to pay particular emphasis to ways that they could resist temptation assertively.

*One of your friends wants you to exclude someone you get on with. They have told you that if you don't do what they say, they will stop talking to you..*

*You are asked by a group of your mates to have a cigarette with them. You don't smoke. They have told you that nobody will find out.*

*You are walking to the canteen when another pupil hands you a mobile phone. They tell you to put it in your bag as they don't want to get caught with it. You say you don't want anything to do with it but they have told you that you have no choice and if you don't do it they will beat you up later.*

*You have noticed that two of your mates have recently had tattoos done. Your parents have forbidden you from getting one. Your best mate has told you that if you don't get it done it will mean that you are not loyal to them and they will never speak to you again.*

*You walk into the toilets at break and see one of your friends beating someone up. They see you and tell you that you have to punch the person too. You don't want to but they have said if you don't, they will tell the teachers that it was you who did it.*

*Now bring the pupils back together to show and tell. How hard was the improvisation? Was it hard saying no? Do they feel confident that they would now be able to use the skills that they have learnt in the exercise in their day-to-day lives?*



Step

9

Inform the pupils that as a result of what they have learnt that they have been assigned a mission. Ask them if they are able to accept the mission. The mission is that in the next seven days they will need to befriend a pupil in the school who they haven't spoken to before. It has to be someone who they perceive to be in need of a friendly face. Explain that the potential impact that they could have on another individual could be huge and more importantly, it will make them feel really good too!

## From best friend to deadliest enemy, and all the variations between

- Here are some common words and phrases to describe friendship:
- BFF (best friends forever)
- best mate = your best friend
- a good friend = someone in your "inner circle" of friends
- to be really close to someone = be good friends with
- pal = friend
- buddy = friend
- to go back years = to know someone for a long time: "Steve and I go back years."
- an old friend = a friend you've known for a long time: "He's an old friend of Dave's."
- a friend of the family / a family friend = someone close to your family: "John is an old family friend."
- a trusted friend = someone you can trust
- a childhood friend = a friend from when you were very young
- a circle of friends = all the friends in your group: "She's got a great circle of friends."
- be just good friends = when you want to say you're only friends with someone of the opposite sex: "We're not going out. We're just good friends, that's all."
- More casual friendships:
- penpal / epal = someone you know from corresponding / writing: (Find a penpal on our Penpals forum!)
- someone you know from work (or another interest group): "Andy? Oh, he's someone I know from work."
- someone you know to pass the time of day with = someone you know to say "hello" to
- casual acquaintance = someone you don't know very well: "She's just a casual acquaintance of mine."
- a friend of a friend = someone you only know because they're a friend of one of your friends. "Dave's a friend of a friend."
- a mutual friend = someone that two people know: "Karen's a mutual friend of both me and Rachel."
- Mates:
- classmate = someone in your class at school.
- workmate = someone you work with
- flatmate/roommate = someone you share a flat or house with
- soul mate = someone you're very close to because you share the same opinions and beliefs.
- Not good friends:
- on-off relationship = where you're sometimes friendly, and sometimes not: "Cath and Liz have an on-off relationship."
- fair-weather friend = a friend who's never around when you need help: "She's only a fair-weather friend."
- a frenemy = someone who's a friend and an enemy at the same time.
- Other expressions:
- strike up a friendship with = make friends with someone
- be no friend of = not like someone / something: "I'm no friend of his!"
- have friends in high places = know important / influential people: "Be careful what you say. He's got friends in high places."