

Local Schools and Youth Groups Get Ready for Anti-Bullying Week

Schools and youth groups across Northern Ireland are getting ready to take part in this year's Anti-Bullying Week, which runs from Monday 16th to Friday 20th November 2015.

Under the theme "What Bullying Means To Me", the Week provides an opportunity to focus on our understanding of what bullying is all about.

Anti-Bullying Week is coordinated by the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) and supported by Translink. NIABF is an interagency group hosted by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) NI and funded by the Department of Education.

Lee Kane, NIABF's Regional Anti-Bullying Coordinator, explains the importance of Anti-Bullying Week:

"Earlier this year the Minister for Education announced plans to introduce new anti-bullying legislation to the Northern Ireland Assembly. This legislation aims to provide a single, common definition of bullying for use in all schools in Northern Ireland.

"Bullying is one of those words that almost everyone has a good idea of what it means and of what it is in practice. NIABF defines bullying as 'the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others'. However, through our work with young people and the adults that support them, it has become clear that we sometimes have different, and often conflicting, definitions for 'bullying'. For us to more effectively tackle bullying, we must develop a common understanding of what it is."

Lee continues: "We are urging teachers, youth workers, parents and carers to speak to children and young people about this year's Anti-Bullying Week theme, 'What Bullying Means To Me', so that we can improve our understanding of bullying wherever it takes place, either in school, in the playground, in our communities or online."

Anti-Bullying Week is once again supported by Translink. Ursula Kelleher from Translink says:

"Bullying can mean different things to different people but has the same detrimental impact on child development – creating fear and anxiety, tension and stress. It's important we continue to take positive steps to build understanding of what constitutes bullying in order to address it effectively and protect an individual's emotional wellbeing.

"By supporting NIABF we are also delivering the message that customers should always behave responsibly and with respect for other passengers and staff while travelling by bus or train."

Largymore Primary School, Lisburn, is just one of more than 600 schools and youth groups across Northern Ireland that has already signed up to the campaign. Gillian Dunlop, Principal, explains why it is such an important week for the school:

“Anti-Bullying Week gives school management, teachers and our school council the opportunity to reinforce the anti-bullying message across the entire community. During the week we use the fabulous NIABF resources to highlight what bullying is and how we can deal with it, not only in school but at home, online and in our community.”

To find out more about Anti-Bullying Week log on to www.endbullying.org.uk

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