

BULLYING AND CYBER-BULLYING

Read the text and answer the following questions. Choose the right letter.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are some of the biggest social problems that teenagers in the UK, Europe and throughout the world now face.

According to the Europe Education Centre more than 70% of European teenagers admitted they have been a party to acts of bullying.

Bullying is an aggressive behaviour where one person dominates another one by using physical and moral violence. One characteristic is the imbalance between the bully and his/her victim: a bully is strong, aggressive and domineering whereas a victim is weak, docile and submissive.

Although cases of bullying have also been reported in primary schools they are particularly widespread in boys and girls aged 14. This is a difficult age for teenagers who often suffer from insecurity and generic fears. They also experience high levels of sensitivity and dramatic changes in their interests. Bullies are often violent because they are insecure.

The acts of bullying have serious effects on victims who suffer both physically and psychologically. Moreover they feel isolated, start to do badly at school and lose their selfconfidence.

Parents and teachers are increasingly worried about this phenomenon as victims usually do not talk to anyone about the problem. When teenagers do decide to tell someone about it they prefer to confide in their peers rather than in adults.

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Cyber-bullying is very dangerous: it usually involves boys and girls making fun of a friend and then harassing the victim via the Internet and mobile phones. This leads to victims being forced to face the social pressure of hundreds of people. They often feel frightened, vulnerable and depressed.

In the UK cyber-bullying is becoming more common, with 63% of sufferers being girls. However this problem concerns both boys and girls: two out of ten teenagers have been victims of bullying.

VOCABULARY

A bully: is aggressive, physically ablebodied, succeeds in physical and sporting activities; is egocentric, does not comply with the rules, does not accept refusal and does not like to be contradicted.

A passive bully: does not participate directly in the bullying event, but contrasts or even supports it by egging the bully on through laughter or open enjoyment. His attitude exalts the bully, who tends to exaggerate his behavior when he has an audience.

Defenders: are people who oppose the bully by defending the victim. Unfortunately they are often unable to stem the violence.

A passive victim: is generally a sensitive, insecure person with low self-esteem who does not succeed in sporting activities and who therefore feels awkward and incapable of reacting to physical violence.

An active victim: tends to react to the bully's violence with the same weapons used by the bully. This reaction is interpreted by the bully as provocative and stimulates him or her to bounce back. This attitude is dangerous as it can trigger an escalation in violence.

A GOOD PIECE OF ADVICE

What you need to do with a bully:

- If you are a victim of bullying, tell a person you trust;
- Don't reply to a bully's messages: ignore them and stay far away;
- If a bully wants to force you to do something against your will, refuse with determination;
- If a bully takes any of your possessions, do not quarrel but tell an adult;
- Stay close to adults or your mates: this will prevent the bully from getting close to you;
- In order to avoid meeting the bully constantly change the route you take to school;
- If you know someone who is suffering from bullying tell an adult immediately;
- If you meet a police officer in your neighborhood ask him for help.

ACTIVITIES

1. How many teenagers in Europe have bullied someone?
 - a. About 70%
 - b. Over 70%
 - c. 70%
 - d. Less than 70%

2. What are the characteristics of a bully?
 - a. Aggressive and strong
 - b. Violent and weak
 - c. Strong and rude
 - d. Weak and aggressive

3. Where is bullying particularly widespread?
 - a. In teenagers
 - b. At primary school
 - c. In 14-years – old boys
 - d. At secondary school

4. Why is the 14 year old age group a difficult phase for teenagers?
 - a. Because this group is insecure and sensitive
 - b. Because this group is worried and isolated
 - c. Because this group is serious and sad
 - d. Because this group is violent and bored

5. How do the victims of bullying feel?
 - a. They feel bad and unhappy
 - b. They feel isolated and lose their selfconfidence
 - c. They feel weak and sad
 - d. They feel submissive and insecure

6. Who is worried about bullying?
 - a. Parents
 - b. Police and parents
 - c. Parents and teachers
 - d. Relatives

7. Why do victims of cyber-bullying feel isolated?
 - a. Because they stop going to school
 - b. Because they have to stop using their mobile phones
 - c. Because they have to stop surfing the Internet
 - d. Because they do not speak to anyone about the bullying they have suffered

8. Which sentence has a similar meaning to the word “harass” in line 17?
 - a. They mock people
 - b. They physically attack people
 - c. They make people sad
 - d. They steal from people

9. Who suffers cyber-bullying particularly in the UK ?
 - a. Boys
 - b. Women
 - c. Everyone
 - d. Girls

10. What is the main instrument of cyber-bullying?
 - a. A mobile phone
 - b. A laptop
 - c. The Internet and mobile phones
 - d. An MP3 player