

Shield Statement 5.

Inclusion, not Exclusion – Our organisation is inclusive and our activities acknowledge diversity and individual differences among young people, personnel and the wider community.

Ideas to Inspire:

Before answering these questions. Take a moment to reflect on what we mean when we think of diversity, or who is more likely to suffer bullying and exclusion in your organisation because of perceived differences.

The importance of this statement is in the increased amount of victimisation in children associated with differences in socialization, physical characteristics, communication behaviours, home and school environments, and bad perceptions about oneself. (Humphrey, 2021). The following includes research around some of the vulnerable minorities that may be present in the children and young people associated with your organisation.

Children and young people with developmental disabilities may have any of the following conditions: “Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, vision impairment, cerebral palsy, moderate-to-profound hearing loss, learning disability, intellectual disability, seizure, stuttering, or stammering in the past 12 months, or any other developmental delay” (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021).

Children and young people with disabilities are victimised almost twice as much compared to children and children and young people without disabilities (Pfeffer, 2016). Children and young people with discernible physical features that set them apart from other peers are thought to be easier targets of peer harassment and aggression (Bucchianeri et al., 2016). Children and young people of racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to report being a target of bullying in schools, although they believe that bullying is an increasing and serious public social issue in general (Shelly et al., 2021). Due to the increased vulnerabilities of children and young people with SEN (special educational need), special consideration needs to be given to how these children and young people can be better enabled to achieve the learning outcomes of the curriculum in a school setting, or activities/work in other settings. Some SEN children and young people may need more time to explore the concepts in the lessons and/or more opportunities to develop strategies and skills needed for their protection. To that end personal safety and anti-bullying lessons should be revisited by resource/learning support personnel on a one-to-one basis or in a small group situation, as appropriate. In addition, in a school or learning context, the NCCA Guidelines for teachers of children and young people with general learning disabilities may provide additional support for teachers in differentiating for SEN pupils.

Resources available at www.ncca.ie or www.sess.ie/resources/curricular-material/

For older children and young people with SEN – Webwise Primary resources are suitable (MySelfie in particular).

SEN Resources developed in the UK Inclusive Digital Safety: www.internetmatters.org/inclusive-digital-safety/resources and STAR SEND Toolkit: www.childnet.com/resources/star-send-toolkit

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and little parental/guardian support of children has been proven to have damaging effects on children and adolescents in relation to bullying. Potential adverse childhood experiences include anything that could cause trauma or effect the wellbeing of children aged 0-17 years and are risk factors for negative health outcomes that could emerge throughout the child's life, such as diabetes, respiratory problems, cancer, heart disease, mental health issues, smoking, eating disorders, and substance and alcohol abuse (CDC, 2021; Hoover & Kaufman, 2018). Transgender youth, rates of bullying are very high, with the majority reporting having experienced bullying (86.5%), with name calling being extremely common (reported by 96% of the bullied participants) (Witcomb, 2019)