

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Bullying at school

Passage about bullying at school to read and discuss

Read the following:

Bullying in schools on the increase

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By A'eysha Kassiem

Bullying in South African schools by pupils and even by teachers has reached "epidemic proportions" over the past two years.

That's according to a presentation by Pierre du Plessis and Lloyd Conley – doctors at the University of Johannesburg – at the International Conference on Learner Discipline in Potchefstroom on Wednesday.

"Most pupils are targeted by bullies in taxis on the way to school, or in toilets and bathrooms at schools. Even teachers participate: teachers bully pupils verbally, physically, psychologically and even sexually," Du Plessis said.

Pupils at junior high schools were particularly at risk as bullying was found to peak during these years. It was also prevalent during the elementary years and often saw a decline during high school.

"However, while direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant. School size, racial composition and school setting – whether rural or urban – do not seem to be distinguishing factors," he said.

Boys were also more likely to be bullies than girls.

"Bullying comprises direct behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing, initiated by one or more perpetrators against a victim.

"In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a learner to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion," Du Plessis said.

Boys and girls used different methods to bully fellow pupils.

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While boys were likely to engage in "direct bullying" in a physical manner, girls took to spreading rumours or enforcing "social isolation". It was crucial for pupils to be supervised – particularly in the playground and in the hallways, Du Plessis said.

"Whether the bullying is direct or indirect, the key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse," he said.

Both perpetrators and their victims suffered long-term consequences in later life. Victims suffered from depression and low self-esteem. "It is a myth that bullies are insecure underneath their bravado. Research indicates that their self-esteem is (generally) average or above average."

Once you have read the above news report, divide into work groups of about 6 learners per group. Discuss the topic of bullying. Keep notes of your discussion. Cover the following in your discussion:

- Talk about what it means to be a bully.
- Words that you would associate with a bully.
- Words that you would associate with a victim.
- Whether there is bullying in your school.
- Rules about bullying in your school.
- What you can do about bullying in your school.
- What you think the school should do about bullying.
- The consequences of bullying.

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Your teacher will assess your participation in the group discussion using the checklist below.

Checklist for observation of group discussion			
Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concept of bullying at school?		
4	Keep to the topic under discussion?		
5	Cover all the points listed above?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly, using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
9	Use body language appropriately?		
10	Make notes when applicable to remember points made by others?		
2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			

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Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	Solution
1	20	See checklist in Appendix of Assessment Tools.

Appendix of assessment tools

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