

For information
on 5 February 2008

**Legislative Council
Panel on Education
Information Note on Bullying in Schools**

Purpose

This note serves to provide information on bullying in schools for Members' reference.

Background

2. In response to Members' enquiry on bullying in schools at the meeting of 20 October 2005, we agreed to provide an information note on the subject for Members' reference. With a view to refining the annual survey on guidance and discipline cases which include bullying cases, the Education Bureau (EDB) revised the survey in the 2004/05 school year after consulting professional bodies concerned. Survey data are accumulated from that year onward for comparison purpose. Upon the completion of the collection and analysis of the survey data of the past three school years (i.e. the 2004/05 to 2006/07 school years), this information note is prepared for Members' reference.

Survey on Bullying in Schools

3. In this survey, about 1,000 secondary and primary schools were required to provide the number of bullying cases¹ in schools through an electronic reporting mechanism on an annual basis. The return rates of the survey were 88%, 91% and 99% in the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 school years respectively. The number of bullying cases reported, the total student

¹ Literature review was conducted by EDB on the definition of bullying. School bullying is defined as a repetitive, malicious behaviour that involves an imbalance of power between students. EDB has consulted the Association of Hong Kong Student Guidance Professional (Primary), the Hong Kong Association for School Discipline and Counselling Teachers and the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters on the survey. On defining school bullying cases, it is agreed by the sector that the survey should cover cases for which teachers' intervention and counselling have been provided.

population and the percentage in the past three school years are as follows:

Table 1: Primary School

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
No. of Cases	114	135	88
Student Population	430 396	408 386	392 902
Percentage	0.03%	0.03%	0.02%

Table 2: Secondary School

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
No. of Cases	213	266	159
Student Population	461 337	464 988	467 139
Percentage	0.05%	0.06%	0.03%

Table 3: Total (Primary and Secondary Schools)

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
No. of Cases	327	401	247
Student Population	891 733	873 374	860 041
Percentage	0.04%	0.05%	0.03%

The above results reveal that the trends of bullying in both primary and secondary schools had no significant changes in the past three school years.

Policy and Support Measures

4. EDB has all along attached great importance to the whole person development, moral and civic education of students. Regarding guidance and discipline in schools, EDB strongly advocates a whole school approach and places much emphasis on personal growth and life education in the school curriculum with a view to helping students develop appropriate attitude and skills. Students are enabled to learn how to handle their

emotions effectively, respect for others, master communication and social skills and manage conflicts positively, with a view to creating a harmonious school environment and minimizing school bullying. To combat school bullying effectively, we also need the concerted efforts of schools, parents and the community; as such, home-school co-operation is greatly encouraged. For instance, EDB has set up a website on Moral and Civic Education. Apart from supporting teachers to implement moral and civic education, this website also provides related topics with suggestions on how parents can cooperate with schools in developing a harmonious school environment so as to enhance home-school cooperation. EDB also collaborates with other government departments and non-governmental organisations in organizing related activities to help students develop positive values, such as the Enhanced Smart Teen Project in collaboration with six disciplinary forces and the project “P.A.T.H.S. to Adulthood” that is jointly organized with the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and the Social Welfare Department.

5. EDB has been providing various supportive measures to help schools in managing bullying in school, including organizing seminars and workshops to enhance teachers’ knowledge and skills in managing bullying periodically. To strengthen pastoral care in schools, the manning ratio of school guidance personnel in primary schools has been improved in the 2002/03 and 2006/07 school year to the present ratio of one for each primary school with 18 classes or more. A resource package entitled “Co-creating a Harmonious School” was developed in 2004 to enhance teachers’ knowledge of bullying and enable them to master the skills to prevent and tackle the problem. While schools provide immediate counselling and assistance to students who are involved in bullying, Educational Psychologists and School Development Officers of the Regional Education Offices and the Guidance and Discipline Section also render schools with consultation and on-site support where necessary.

Way Forward

6. With the implementation of the new senior secondary academic structure in 2009/10, students’ diverse learning needs will be catered for more suitably under the diversified curriculum and as a result of which their self confidence and sense of competence will be enhanced. This will help to

reduce behaviour problems of students. Besides, we are actively considering introducing a priority theme under the Quality Education Fund to encourage schools to seek funding support to launch school-based projects on youth development, including prevention of bullying in schools.

7. To further support teachers in organising preventive and developmental programmes at schools, we are developing a new resource package on anti-bullying which will comprise guidelines on handling bullying in schools and plans for classroom/group activities. In addition, a parent leaflet will be published to enhance parent's awareness of early identification of bullying problems and relevant parenting skills. At present, there is one school social worker for each secondary school. Starting in the 2008/09 school year, the Government will provide about 1 000 programme workers for three years to assist social workers in secondary schools to implement activities, to assist secondary students to develop their potential and promote their health and wellness. EDB will continue to support schools in developing a harmonious school environment and helping students nurture positive value and character through moral development.

Education Bureau
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