

BULLYING *The report below appeared in the press & a week later different people from around the globe commented on it*

There are Activities for the students at the end

Girl's Suicide in US Brings Fresh Attention to Bullying

21 April 2010

Photo: AP



A court hearing in Massachusetts where three teenagers, through their lawyers, pleaded not guilty to charges in the bullying of Phoebe Prince

An old problem is getting new attention in the United States: bullying. Recent cases included the tragic case of a fifteen-year-old girl whose family moved from Ireland.



Phoebe Prince hanged herself in Massachusetts in January following months of bullying. Her parents criticized her school for failing to protect her. Officials have brought criminal charges against several teenagers.

Judy Kuczynski is president of an anti-bullying group called Bully Police USA. Her daughter Tina was the victim of severe bullying starting in middle school in the state of Minnesota.

JUDY KUCZYNSKI: "Our daughter was a very outgoing child. She was a bubbly personality, very involved in all kinds of things, had lots of friends. And over a period of time her grades fell completely. She started having health issues. She couldn't sleep. She wasn't eating. She had terrible stomach pains. She started clenching her jaw and grinding her teeth at night. Didn't want to go to school."

Bullying is defined as negative behavior repeated over time against the same person. It can involve physical violence. Or it can be verbal -- for example, insults or threats.

Spreading lies about someone or excluding a person from a group is known as social or relational bullying.

And now there is cyberbullying, which uses the Internet, e-mail or text messages. It has easy appeal for the bully because it does not involve face-to-face contact and it can be done at any time.

The first serious research studies into bullying were done in Norway in the late nineteen seventies. The latest government study in the United States was released last year. It found that about one-third of students age twelve to eighteen were bullied at school.

Examples included being made fun of, pushed, spit on, threatened or excluded from activities. Some students had their property damaged. About four percent reported being the victims of cyberbullying. The study took place in two thousand seven.

Susan Swearer is a psychologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and co-director of the Bullying Research Network. She says schools should treat bullying as a mental health problem to get bullies and victims the help they need. She says bullying is connected to depression, anxiety and anti-social behavior, and bullies are often victims themselves.

What can be done to prevent bullying?

Bullying: Comments From Around the World



Photo: AP

Boys leaving a school in Tokyo in a 2007 photo

Last week's report on bullying brought so many comments online, we are going to take this time to share some.

One person, who gave no name or country, described an experience with a Parent Teacher Association:

I have been a victim of bullying in a PTA group. It is not just a problem for teenagers. Adults also engage in bullying activities but it is usually verbal abuse by spreading lies to ruin your reputation or isolate the victim from the rest of the group. Since we are the role model of the next generation, our behavior will shape the future society.

Vicky in Taiwan still remembers being scared by bullies in junior high school. And Jung Kim wrote: *Even we Koreans are made fun of by our own. If you're not cool with the popular people you will be laughed at.*

Jeanne from Brazil says children should be taught to respect differences. And Kelly in the United States suggested that parents should spend more time with their children: *If they are taught to be considerate when they are very young, they will not treat other people in a mean way.*

Joruji in Japan called for improving communication among students, parents and teachers. Farshad, an Iranian in the United States, and Selim from France both suggested using psychologists in school to help control the problem.

Some people complained that bullying is not always taken seriously. Commenter phantuandung in Vietnam wrote:

We as parents and teachers should let children understand that they will be punished if they do wrong, and the punishments won't be only reminders or warnings.

But not everyone agreed.

Denysenko in Ukraine says what we call bullying is a part of the socialization process:

Children need to know how to defend oneself, how to establish relationships in a group. If laws or teachers or police will protect a child against "bullying," he or she will never become an independent person.

And several of you expressed sadness at the case of fifteen-year-old Phoebe Prince. Bullying may have led to her suicide. Moneem Alhasee from Libya wrote:

I'm really astonished how such a beautiful nice girl can do such a thing. She made a mistake when she listened to those who criticized her. They were jealous of her. God bless you, Phoebe Prince.



Activity 1 Preliminary work

Find information & Debate

- 1.- Define bullying
- 2.- Find out how many classes there are
- 3.- Find out about consequences
- 4.- Inform if you have experienced bullying or know of any case.
- 5.- Express what could be done.

Activity 2

Read the first article and say whether the statements are True, False or Doesn't say

- 1.- The first photo shows Phoebe's parents
.....
- 2.- Phoebe shot herself in January
.....
- 3.- Judy's daughter suffered severe bullying also
.....
- 4.- This girl had lots of physical and psychological problems
.....
- 5.- Bullying refers to oral negative violence against a person
.....
- 6.- Relational Bullying is a synonym of social bullying
.....
- 7.- Cyberbullying doesn't involve face-to-face contact
.....
- 8.- Half of the children aged 12-18 were bullied at school
.....
- 9.- According to Swearer bullies should be treated for
having a mental health problem
.....
- 10.- Bullies are usually very young
.....

Activity 3: Read the second article.



ORAL OR WRITTEN WORK:

Having read the article, students should express their own opinions on what people around the world think and express their own views.



Activity 4: Are teachers being bullied as well? Discuss

Bullying No More, the CDrom with activities for your students to practice language within the context of this problem + Gift DVD with videos
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