

HOW EDUCATORS

CAN SUPPORT NEW YEAR 7S

AT THE START OF TERM



FROM THE DIANA AWARD

Starting secondary school can seem daunting but it's also an exciting new chapter. New students may be worried about things like getting lost, not making friends, struggling with lesson content or travelling alone to school for the first time. But other elements can feel exciting, like meeting new people, joining an after-school club or learning new things.

As a result of the pandemic, the Year 7s starting in September probably won't have attended all the usual events like taster days that older students may have had when moving from primary to secondary school. Therefore, it's more important than ever that the whole school community thinks carefully about what to do to make them feel welcomed, safe and happy in their new school!

So, as a staff member, what can you do to support new Year 7s and ensure that they know how to get support for bullying behaviour?

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED:

WORK WITH YOUR STUDENTS _

- Meet with your Anti-Bullying Ambassador team or chat to the older students you teach and encourage them to reflect on what their worries and concerns were when they started in Year 7. Ask them to think about this and come up with some ideas for how they can support the new Year 7s.
- Consider running a survey of the new students, ask what their worries and concerns are and how they would like to see the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and staff supporting them and addressing these worries, especially throughout the first term.
- Once you have identified what some of the worries and concerns are likely to be, it will be easier to identify ways to support them.

SAFE SPACES _

Does your school have a safe space or do you hold lunch time clubs or drop-in sessions? Think about what opportunities you have to make it easy for new Year 7s to report bullying behaviour or seek support. It can really help to have an opportunity to speak to peers about bullying behaviour so a lunchtime drop-in session led by students is a great thing to offer.

Publicise this safe space in assembly or form times to let students know where to go if they need some time out or someone to talk to about something that's concerning them - whether this is to do with mental health, bullying behaviour or any other worry. Let them know when and where these will take place.

REPORTING SYSTEM _

Do you have a strong reporting system to allow students to easily access help if they have experienced bullying behaviour? Now would be a great time to review this system and, once you're happy with it, make sure to explain to Year 7s as soon as possible how to use the reporting system. Anything from a reporting box in the library where they can drop in a note to a reporting email address will help Year 7s understand that they can and should reach out for support if they experience bullying behaviour.

ONLINE SAFETY _

For some young people, going to secondary school marks the first time that they get their own mobile phone! This is

a very exciting time but it's important to be reminded of how to stay safe when online using social media and what to do if you experience cyberbullying behaviour. Consider running sessions on how to stay safe online with your new Year 7s. Check our Resource Centre for lesson plans or guides that can be shared with students.

SUPPORT NETWORKS _

A fantastic way to feel settled in a new school is to feel a collective sense of belonging, feel welcomed into your new school and connected to its values and ethos. A great way to combine this with getting new students to think about their support networks is with our support network activity which can be downloaded [here](#). This activity encourages students to reflect on the people in their lives who they can speak to if they have a worry or concern by drawing around their hand and creating a support network. You could challenge each new form group to give this activity a go, with each form creating theirs in a different colour. The hands could then all be collected to form a mural that could be displayed in your school - a colourful reminder that we all have someone we can speak to if we have a worry or concern and that no one needs to feel alone if they experience bullying behaviour.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER _

You or your team of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors could run activities for the new Year 7s that help them to get to know each other better in form times. Do you remember the parachute activity from your Anti-Bullying Ambassador training? If not, no worries - this activity involves all students standing around a parachute (or in a large circle if you don't have a parachute) and sharing interesting facts about themselves that others may relate to. For example, the first round could include statements like 'I have a pet', 'My favourite subject is Maths' or 'I like football'. Everyone who shares this then swaps places across the parachute/circle. Round two should include slightly more personal statements, such as 'I am a good friend' or 'I always aim to do my best, even in Maths!' Round three can take this one step further, with statements reflecting on what makes you, you. For example, 'My best quality is that I listen' or 'I am proud of what makes me different'. This is a great activity that your team could run with new year 7s. It not only helps people to get to know each other better but it also helps to remind everyone of the importance of celebrating differences and how unique we all are.

BEING AN UPSTANDER _

We can only tackle bullying behaviour if we all play our part - and this includes the new Year 7s. Introduce the concept of being an Upstander to the Year 7s at the earliest possible opportunity to help create a whole school community of people who will stand up to bullying and support others. You could use the Upstander lesson plan and pledge cards in our Resource Centre to introduce this concept.

It has been a strange and uncertain time for us all recently and the new Year 7s may have had quite a disrupted last term in their primary school. They may therefore be feeling even more nervous than usual about transitioning to secondary school. Creating a supportive and welcoming environment for them is more important than ever this September! If you have Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, encourage them to make supporting the Year 7 transition one of their top priorities this term and try to offer opportunities for Year 7s to get to know as many other students as possible whilst maintaining social distancing.

The Diana Award Crisis Messenger

The Diana Award Crisis Messenger provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK – simply text DA to 85258 and trained volunteers will listen to how you are feeling and help you think through the next step towards feeling better.

BBC Bitesize

BBC Bitesize has loads of videos and resources all about starting secondary school – you can check these out [here](#).

antibullyingpro.com

Don't forget to also check out our [Badges page](#) and our [Resource Centre](#) for more inspiration for your anti-bullying work!

Good luck!



We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

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