

# Bullying

‘Leslie liked to make up stories about the giants that threatened the peace of Terabithia, but they both knew that the real giant in their lives was Janice Avery.’

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson (Puffin, 1995)



Unfortunately, most of us have experienced bullying at some point in our lives, either as a victim, a bully or a bystander. For Jess and Leslie in Bridge to Terabithia, the bully is Janice Avery.

Use these notes to form part of your school’s anti-bullying policy. They use a clip from the film Bridge to Terabithia called ‘Free to Pee!’ (which can be located in the ‘Bullying’ section of the Bridge to Terabithia Digital Resource CD-ROM), plus background notes for use in a whole-school assembly context.



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## **PSHE and Citizenship – Bullying**

**Years 4 – 6**

### **Film Clip Analysis and Discussion**

#### **Discussion – ‘Free to Pee!’**

Jess’ little sister, May Belle arrives onto the playground proudly proclaiming that her daddy has given her a ‘Twinkie’ (a kind of doughnut) Jess tells her to be quiet, or else she will lose her Twinkie to the school bully, Janice Avery.

#### **Discussion point 1:**

Is it fair that May Belle isn’t allowed to be excited about her Twinkie?

Do you think Jess is right for telling her to be quiet?

Have you ever experienced this type of atmosphere where you have to keep quiet about something to stop it from being taken? How did it make you feel?

What is the solution to this problem?

It’s not long before Jess is proved right, and May Belle comes running to him in tears telling him that Janice has taken her Twinkie. She asks him for help, but he is reluctant to get involved. She pesters him, saying that Janice and her gang are charging people to use the toilet!

#### **Discussion point 2:**

Why do you think Jess is reluctant to get involved?

What would you do in this situation?

Leslie comes over and suggests that Janice is being unfair and that she needs to be challenged. She starts a mini rebellion, leading a group of small children towards Janice and her gang shouting ‘free to pee!’ over and over.

#### **Discussion point 3:**

How would you describe Leslie and her actions?

How do you think Jess feels about what Leslie is doing?

The group don’t win this particular battle, and Jess tells his sister that he can’t help because if he does, he’ll be in trouble for hitting a girl. May Belle is crying. Leslie tells her not to worry – they’ll get Janice back some day. Janice and her gang are laughing cruelly in the background.



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#### **Discussion point 4:**

Describe how each of these characters feels at the end of this scene:

May Belle

Leslie

Jess

Janice

What impact has Janice's bullying had on the school as a whole?

What is the solution?

One way of addressing the problem of bullying in schools is to make sure everyone (pupils, teachers, staff, parents) is aware of the school's Anti-bullying Manifesto.

#### **PSHE and Citizenship – Anti-bullying Manifesto**

##### **Whole School Assembly Notes**

Show the 'Free to Pee!' clip to the whole school and ask for feedback.

Explain that there is acceptable behaviour, and unacceptable behaviour, and that bullies will not be tolerated.

Display this Anti-bullying Manifesto on the interactive whiteboard and elsewhere so that everyone can see it. Go through each point carefully, explaining the terminology and giving examples where necessary.

#### **Anti-bullying Manifesto**

In this school, we treat each other with respect.

We do not:

1. Call each other names
2. Hit, punch, kick or hurt each other
3. Ignore people so that they are isolated
4. Spread rumours about each other
5. Threaten people
6. Steal things or take things from each other
7. Laugh at people
8. Scare people
9. Gang up on people
10. Make jokes about people because they are different



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At the end of the assembly, show the clip entitled ‘The Music Lesson’, which can be found in the ‘Keep Your Mind Wide Open’ section of the Bridge to Terabithia Digital Resource CD-ROM. Before you show it, explain that the aim of the Manifesto is to ensure that everybody in the school feels safe and happy, and to encourage people to work and play together, as friends. ‘The Music Lesson’ clip shows children singing together and attempting to make friends – an exemplary model of behaviour for any school.

Make sure teachers and pupils are aware that they can share their thoughts, views and experiences of bullying at the Film Education / Bridge to Terabithia ‘**Bullying Blog**’ website – found at [www.filmeducation.org/bridgetoterabithia](http://www.filmeducation.org/bridgetoterabithia)

Send letters home to parents stating the school’s Anti-bullying Manifesto and asking for their support.

### **Being a Bully**

Sometimes, bullies can’t help being horrible. They have reasons for their actions. In the film Bridge to Terabithia, Janice Avery is the biggest bully of all. She is horrible to Jess, Leslie and May Belle. Leslie and Jess have to take drastic actions to make her stop.

One day, Leslie finds Janice crying in the girls’ toilet. It turns out that Janice is being bullied at home. It is often the case that children who see bullying at home copy it when they are at school. It is important to remember that a bully may be bullying because they are so scared of becoming victims themselves.

When Jess and Leslie offer Janice friendship, she stops bullying them.

### **ICT, PSHE and Citizenship – Bullying Issues**

**Years 3 – 6**

#### **Activity – Bullying Blog**

Children who are victims of bullying or bullies themselves are invited to add a blog to the [filmeducation.org/bridgetoterabithia](http://www.filmeducation.org/bridgetoterabithia) ‘**Bullying Blog**’. They could use the forum to share their experiences of bullying, or to make suggestions about how bullies can be tackled and stopped.



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## Useful anti-bullying websites:

### Anti-bullying Week 2007 will be 19-23 November

#### **[www.beatbullying.org/](http://www.beatbullying.org/)**

- seminars, training courses and conferences for young people and professionals plus anti-bullying tool kits.

#### **[www.bullying.co.uk/](http://www.bullying.co.uk/)**

- people are invited to write letters into the website to which responses are posted. Widely used in schools to cover bullying in the curriculum:

The charity's work has expanded over the years and includes work with schools, youth organisations, police forces and health trusts, running workshops and speaking at conferences. They help up to 50,000 pupils a year through the distribution of leaflets and other anti-bullying resources.

#### **[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/page.asp](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/page.asp)**

- the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) was founded by NSPCC and the National Children's Bureau in 2002. The Alliance brings together 65 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

#### **[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)**

- information for schools about how to deal with specific problems; e.g. how to deal with homophobic bullying.

#### **[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)**

- provides DVD's and a helpline for parents of bullied children. Also deals with abuse and sexual abuse.



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