

Anti-Bullying week takes place in England and Wales from the 14th to 18th November 2022. It is co-ordinated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, an organisation made up of approximately 140 members, and is held every year. It aims to raise awareness of bullying of children and young people, in schools and elsewhere, and to highlight ways of preventing and responding to it.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance's agreed definition of bullying is: " the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online."

According to research undertaken by the same group, bullying has a significant effect on children and young people's mental health, emotional wellbeing and identity. Young people who have experienced bullying are more likely to experience mental health issues and those who have mental health issues are more likely to be bullied. Schools need to ensure that young people feel able to talk about bullying and how it affects their emotional wellbeing.

This Anti-Bullying Week, Muslim Mind Collaborative – a membership organisation which helps to educate and inform colleagues from a range of sectors, for the benefit of Muslim mental wellbeing – is focusing on anti-Muslim prejudice or Islamophobia. We have created a poster to help children and young people identify Islamophobic bullying in schools, and we will be releasing key information to help people understand this specific kind of bullying.

As a member of the Muslim Mind Collaborative, we are pleased to have you support this key resource in time for two relevant and high-profile national initiatives; Islamophobia Awareness Month and Anti Bullying Week, which happen to coincide. Both campaigns have real salience with MMC's work, given their impact on the mental wellbeing of young Muslims. As such, we have created an *Identifying Islamophobic Bullying poster* designed for educational settings and aimed at young Muslims.

Here are potential email/letter templates you may wish to use:

Cover letter for schools

Dear xxx,

RE: School resource for Anti-Bullying Week: Identifying Islamophobic bullying.

This year, for Anti-Bullying Week, Muslim Mind Collaborative – a member organisation which works together for the benefit of Muslim mental health - is choosing to shine a light on Islamophobic Bullying. As November is Islamophobia Awareness Month, we hope you will make use of the attached resource as part of your school's social, moral, cultural and spiritual education.

Last year, Home Office statistics showed a 26% increase in religious hate crimes, with 42% of all religious hate crimes targeted at Muslims.¹ This mirrors data from public attitude surveys, some of which evidences more than double the number of people expressing hostility towards Muslims as opposed to other identified minority groups.² Perhaps it is no surprise then, that a recent EHRC report found that 70% of Muslims said they had specifically experienced religion-based prejudice.³

Like other social prejudices, Islamophobia can and will be parroted by children and young people in their school environments. With no legal definition for it, this can mean it is difficult to label, identify and therefore extinguish. As 1 in 12 students in British schools is Muslim, this issue will only grow in salience.

We have attached a key resource to assist schools with this issue. The MMC and Kidscape *Identifying Islamophobic Bullying poster* can help schools to:

- Provide information, support and reassurance to anyone that may be suffering from Islamophobic bullying, and details of where to seek help
- Establish a clear definition for Islamophobic bullying in your educational setting
- Help to create a culture in which this prejudice is unequivocally called out as unacceptable
- Destigmatise Muslim children and young people's identity and culture
- Start dialogue and conversation regarding acceptable and unacceptable forms of speech and behaviour
- Educate wider pupils, staff and families on the features and harms of Islamophobic bullying
- Create more supportive environments for Muslim children

This resource is supported and endorsed by a number of national organisations with specialisms in relative fields.

We hope that you will be able to utilise this key resource.

¹ Home Office: Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022 [Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98484/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022.pdf)

² Nancy Kelley, Omar Khan, Sarah Sharrock, "Racial prejudice in Britain today", NatCen Social Research, September 2017, p. 7. http://natcen.ac.uk/media/1488132/racial-prejudice-report_v4.pdf

³ Abrams, D., Swift, H., and D. Houston. 2018. Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain. Equality and Human Rights Commission. p. 10.

Wider dissemination:

Poster email to other non-member organisations

Dear colleagues,

RE: School resource for Anti-Bullying Week: Identifying Islamophobic bullying.

This year, as Anti-Bullying Week coincides with Islamophobia Awareness Month, we have created an invaluable resource for schools. MMC's *Identifying Islamophobic Bullying poster* is aimed at young people in schools, and designed to help them identify, name and seek support for Islamophobic bullying.

Unfortunately, anti-Muslim prejudice is on a rise, as are mental health conditions amongst young people. As Muslims have the youngest age profile of all faith groups, with 1 in 12 students in British schools being Muslim, this is an area of growing relevance and importance.

This resource will help to:

- Provide information, support and reassurance to anyone that may be suffering from Islamophobic bullying, and details of where to seek help
- Establish a clear definition for Islamophobic bullying in educational settings
- Help to create a culture in which this prejudice is unequivocally called out as unacceptable
- Destigmatise Muslim children and young people's identity and culture
- Start dialogue and conversation regarding acceptable and unacceptable forms of speech and behaviour
- Educate wider pupils, staff and families on the features and harms of Islamophobic bullying
- Create more supportive environments for Muslim children
- Meet schools' social, moral, cultural and spiritual goals to educate and enrich children and young people

It is also the first in an ongoing series of resources being produced by MMC which will look at this vital area of young Muslim mental health in schools. Please do share our resource, and amplify our accompanying information campaign this week which seeks to educate on Islamophobia, bullying and mental health.

If you would like to join the Muslim Mind Collaborative, please contact Sabah.gilani@bcbn.org.uk