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A BIGSCREEN PRODUCTION

**WEDNESDAY'S  
CHILD**

**TEACHERS & PARENTS  
GUIDE**

TEACHERS & PARENTS GUIDE for  
Open Discussion about Bullying/Gun Crime

Thank you for purchasing this copy of Wednesday's Child.

# WEDNESDAY'S CHILD



The purpose of this DVD and booklet is to inspire classroom discussions and open channels of communication between students in a safe peer-to-peer environment and also to allow teachers to learn something about their students and how they feel and deal with bullying issues and concerns over guns and the threat of gun violence in their communities.

The producers, cast and crew of Wednesday's Child DO NOT claim to have the answers required to solve the problems of bullying and or issues surrounding gun violence. However, we believe through communication and the experiences and knowledge that our youth possess they are more than capable of discovering the solutions required to combat bullying and gun violence in their own classrooms, schools and communities.

Please use this guide as an opportunity to talk about the movie, the interviews and what possible lessons there can be learned from it. Students should be encouraged to speak openly but respectfully about their own experiences.

This guide is based in part from "Bullying" by Dr. Carrie Herbert of Red Balloon Learner Centres (2nd edition, Folens, 1997).

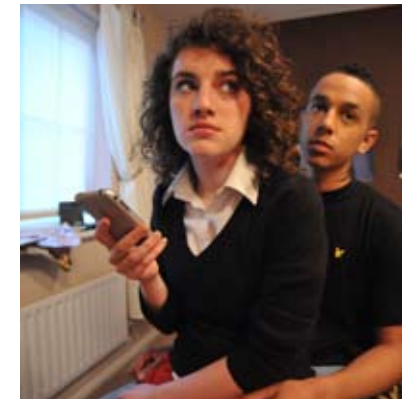
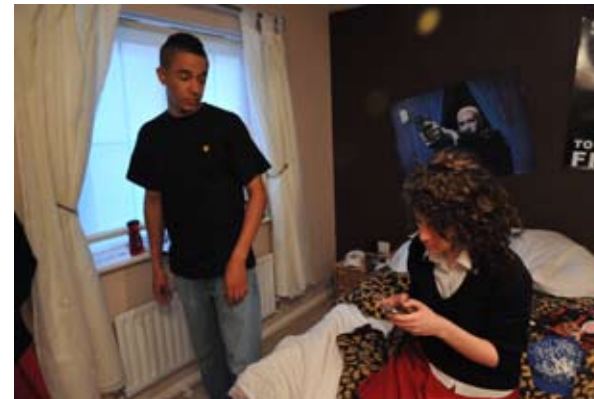
This guide has 7 parts:

1. How to watch the DVD with students/youth
2. Facts about bullying
3. Misconceptions about bullying
4. Helping people who have been bullied
5. Helping the person doing bullying
6. Guns and gun violence
7. Talking points about the film
8. Write your own Anti-Bullying Policy

## 1. HOW TO WATCH THE DVD WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

We suggest that when you watch this film with children and young people you first show the INTERVIEWS with real victims of bullying. This generally sets the tone required and puts the viewer in the frame of mind to best empathize with the characters in the film.

Once you have watched the INTERVIEWS and FILM please direct the students to talk about the film with regard to the following topics and conversations. Feel free to allow the students to hold open communication as well.



## 2. FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Bullying can be found in all types of schools, state, independent, rural, city and boarding.
- Bullying can also take place in work places, communities, religious groups and families.
- It's possible to counter bullying effectively.
- Bullying is a learned behavior; it can be unlearned too.
- Bullies need help and support to change their behavior.
- People helping those who feel bullied need to balance between overprotecting them and empowering them to overcome those doing the bullying.



### 3. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BULLYING

- Bullying is a “boy” problem.
- Girls are “just catty” and will grow out of it.
- Bullying is only a problem if actual physical contact is made.
- The solution to bullying is to just “Kick them out of the school.”
- Name calling and racist comments are not really bullying.
- “It was an accident; I didn’t mean to upset them!”
- “It was a joke, they just took it too seriously!”
- Bullying is rare (at our school or in our community.)
- Bullies are BIG children with a chip on their shoulder.
- Victims of bullying are usually thin, weedy children who wear glasses and are generally “weak” individuals.

### 4. HELPING PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN BULLIED.

- It’s important, in the first instance, to accept the recipient’s perception of what happened and to assure them that they have acted correctly in coming to you.
- Actively listen to them (stop what you are doing, give them your full attention and don’t make assumptions)
- Ask them to tell you what happened by asking neutral questions such as:

“Tell me what happened.”  
“Who was involved?”  
“When and where did this happen?”  
“What did you say or do at the time?”  
“How often has this happened, or is this the first time?”  
“Was there anyone who saw or heard this?”  
“Have you spoken to anyone else about this incident/these incidents?”  
“How have you been affected by this bullying or harassment?”

- It is not helpful to conduct an interrogation or make comments or ask questions that make them feel that in some way they were responsible for the behaviour, or that their complaint is trivial or time-wasting.



### 5. HELPING THE PERSON DOING THE BULLYING - THE ‘NO BLAME’ APPROACH

- Punitive treatment towards the person who has bullied or harassed may well reinforce their view that when they get big/powerful enough they will be able to use bullying tactics again. Education and awareness raising are more effective and enduring.
- Calling a person ‘a bully’ is neither helpful nor constructive. Many people use bullying behaviors against others; many people are also victims of bullying behavior. On many occasions these are the same person: they use bullying tactics towards one person and are victimized by another. Identifying particular behaviour as ‘bullying behaviour’ is more helpful and constructive. Behaviour at least can be changed.
- Those using bullying behaviour are often happy enough to talk about what has happened as long as they think you are being reasonable and empathetic.
- When dealing with the person using bullying behaviour defuse the situation; do not exacerbate it by being angry, sarcastic or indignant.
- The goal is to try and get this person to feel concern for the recipient.
- Try to communicate with the perpetrator on equal terms, rather than from a hierarchical position.
- Accept their account initially to keep them talking.
- Consider enlisting their support in helping to resolve issues so they continue to feel empowered while developing empathy for their victim.

## 6. GUNS AND GUN VIOLENCE

While the number of overall offences involving firearms fell by 2% in 2007-08 compared to the previous year, Firearms were still involved in 455 serious or fatal injuries, compared to 468 the previous year. Some laws about guns are:

- A minimum five-year sentence for people convicted of possessing an illegal firearm
- It's an offence to possess an air weapon or imitation firearm in public without legal authority or reasonable excuse, with an age limit of 17.
- If you see people using or carrying illegal firearms, report it immediately to the police, or to CrimeStoppers. Their website to find out how you can get involved in community projects to fight gun crime.
- Guns should be taken seriously and reported.



## 7. TALKING POINTS ABOUT THE FILM

- What do you think is the real issue behind why Julie bullies Alison?
- Why does Julie seem to respect Millie?
- Why do you think Julie's gang hangout with her?
- Why do you think Alison takes the gun?
- Gracie gives Alison a chance to talk about what's happened. Why do you think she doesn't talk to her?
- Julie starts to harass Gracie. Why do you think she does that?
- Tami stops Julie from picking Gracie. Why does she do this for Gracie but not for Alison?
- Do you think that Alison intended to kill Julie or just scare her?



## 8. WRITE YOUR OWN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- Start with a positive statement – a statement of ethos and the kind of school this is...
- A clear definition, preferable student written, of what bullying is.
- Who has been involved in developing this policy.
- The consequences for the recipient if bullying is not dealt with.
- That bullying behavior can be perpetrated by student, teachers, parents, administrative staff and that ANYONE can be bullied.
- How bullying behavior will be treated by staff and students.
- What a recipient should do and what support is available.
- A list of Peer Supporters to whom people can go to discuss bullying.
- Training implications for school staff
- How the policy will be reviewed and promoted.

