

THEME LESSON - 2020

United Against Bullying

What does standing together actually look like?

Suitable for: Upper primary and secondary, adaptable by age	Time: 45-60 minutes
Theme: Anti-Bullying Week 2020 - United Against Bullying	Permanent resource: Yes

Learning aims

Pupils will have opportunities to:

- explore what “united” can mean in practice
- consider how groups can protect or pressure
- think about collective responsibility without blaming everyone equally
- identify safe ways peers and adults can support one another
- explore how shared action can continue beyond one event or lesson

Important note for staff

Use fictional situations throughout. Pupils should not be required to disclose personal experiences.

If a safeguarding concern is raised, follow the school's procedures.

1. What does “united” mean?

Write:

Does being united mean everyone has to agree?

Invite discussion.

Possible ideas:

- standing together around a shared principle
- supporting someone even if you would respond differently
- refusing to join in with harmful behaviour
- helping someone reach support
- agreeing that certain behaviour is not acceptable
- sharing responsibility without pretending everyone has the same role

Key idea

Being united does not mean being identical. It means finding something important enough to stand behind together.

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2. One person, then two, then many

Give a fictional scenario:

A pupil is being repeatedly mocked by a small group during lunch. Other pupils nearby have noticed.

Ask:

What might one person be able to do?

Then:

What becomes possible if two people act together?

Then:

What might change if a wider group decides not to join in?

Explore how support can become easier when responsibility is shared.

3. When the group is the problem

Now reverse the idea.

Ask:

Can being united ever become harmful?

Use examples such as:

- everyone agreeing to exclude someone
- a group spreading the same rumour
- joining in because "we all think it"
- pressuring someone to take sides
- refusing to speak because nobody else does

Discuss the difference between:

solidarity

group pressure

Key question

What makes a group powerful for good rather than powerful against someone?

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4. Build a support network

Give groups a fictional pupil in the centre of a page.

Around them, add possible people who could help:

- friends
- classmates
- peer supporters
- teachers
- safeguarding staff
- families
- youth workers
- school leaders

Ask:

What can each person realistically do?

Then ask:

Who should not be expected to carry the whole responsibility?

This helps reinforce that young people can contribute without being made responsible for solving serious situations themselves.

5. The shared response challenge

Give groups this question:

If our school really wanted to be united against bullying, what would we need to do together?

Ask for one idea under each heading:

- **Pupils could...**
- **Staff could...**
- **Leaders could...**
- **Families could...**
- **Peer supporters could...**

Then ask:

Which ideas depend on someone following up later?

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6. A united response does not mean one response

Give a scenario:

Two pupils are experiencing similar bullying, but one wants an adult to intervene immediately and the other is frightened that intervention will make things worse.

Ask:

Can we still be united in supporting both of them?

Explore the idea that a shared commitment to safety does not require identical interventions.

Key idea

Unity around a principle does not mean forcing the same solution on everyone.

7. Final reflection

Complete:

“Standing together can help when...”

“A group becomes harmful when...”

Closing message

Being united against bullying is not about everyone doing the same thing. It is about refusing to leave people alone with harm and finding safe ways to act together.

Follow-up possibilities

This lesson could lead into:

- **Stronger Together**
- **Group Power: Help or Harm?**
- peer-support work
- student leadership activity
- class or year-group agreements
- mapping who can help within the school
- discussing how pupils and staff can share responsibility without shifting safeguarding duties onto young people