

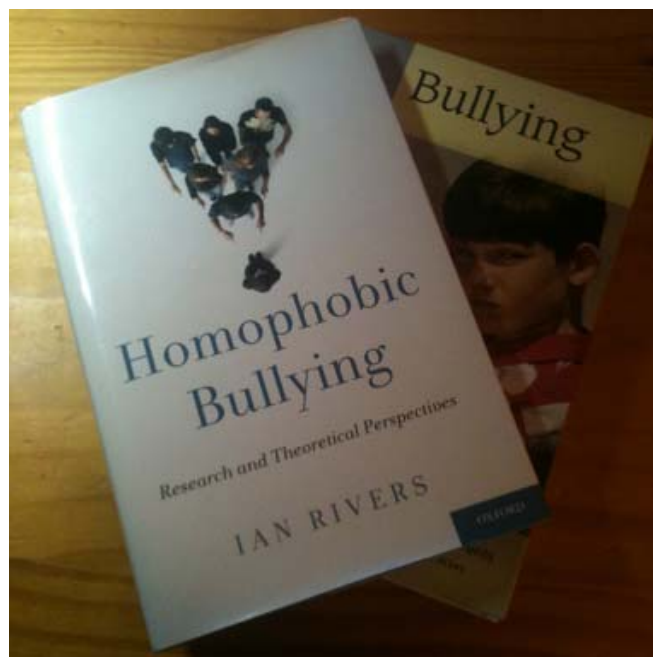
# HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

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Briefing Note 2

A whole school issue

*IT IS DEPLORABLE THAT HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS HAVE BEEN AND ARE THE OBJECT OF VIOLENT MALICE IN SPEECH OR IN ACTION. SUCH TREATMENT DESERVES CONDEMNATION FROM THE CHURCH'S PASTORS WHEREVER IT OCCURS.*

**CARDINAL JOSEPH RATZINGER, 1986  
(POPE BENEDICT XVI)**

# Homophobic bullying

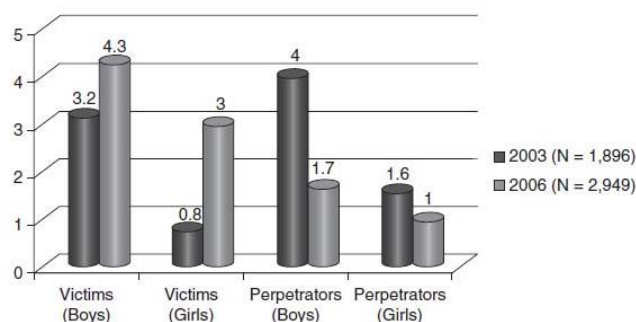
## A WHOLE SCHOOL ISSUE

### Homophobic bullying: Basic facts

*HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING* continues to be a concern for educators. For two decades, research conducted by Ian Rivers has demonstrated the nature and long-term implications of this form of bullying for young people at school<sup>1,2</sup>.

Homophobic bullying does not just affect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth, it affects all young people who are perceived to be different. In two related studies conducted in the North of England between 2003 and 2006, Rivers and his colleagues demonstrated that, in mainstream schools, homophobia continues to rise, particularly among girls (see *Figure 1*)<sup>1</sup>.

*Figure 1: Rates of homophobic bullying 2003-2006*



Homophobic bullying has been shown to have a negative impact upon *ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT*, *PROMOTE ABSENTEEISM*, and it has been linked to high rates of *SELF-HARMING BEHAVIOUR* internationally.

Studies conducted in both in the U.S. and U.K. show that homophobia reduces with age among school-aged youth. In the U.K., recent ethnographic research conducted in sixth forms suggests that, in this selective environment, homophobic sentiments and epithets are no longer considered acceptable<sup>3</sup>.

Homophobic bullying only exists where conservative values flourish, and where difference is seen as a challenge to 'traditional' values and the status quo. However, even if one has very strong views about homosexuality, the victimization and abuse of young people can never be justified.

#### REFERENCES

1. Rivers, I. (2011). *Homophobic bullying: Research and theoretical perspectives*. New York: Oxford.
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3. McCormack, M. & Anderson, E. (2010). It's just not acceptable any more: The erosion of homophobia and the softening of masculinity in an English state school. *Sociology*, 44(5), 843-859.