



Books for Anti-Bullying Week (15-19 November) and beyond

Article Author:

[Rosemary Stones](#) [1]

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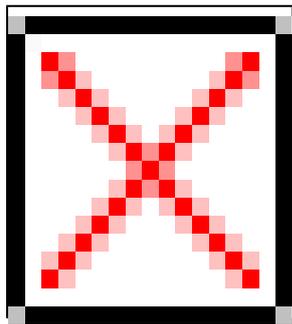
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Books for Keeps Editor, Rosemary Stones offers a list of appropriate titles.

For children who are bullied and for children who bully, reading about experiences which mirror aspects of their own experience can help them feel less isolated and more able to think about what is happening, says **Books for Keeps** Editor, Rosemary Stones. Some schools now use books as part of their anti-bullying strategies. In the classroom, books can be a safely distanced way of helping children to empathise and reflect on the difficult and painful feelings that surround difference and which may lead to bullying or being bullied.

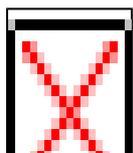


[3] For children of about 5-8, Michael Rosen's latest picture book, [I'm Number One](#) [3], illustrated by Bob Graham (Walker, 32pp, 978 1 4063 2602 4, £5.99 pbk), is about trouble in the nursery. **Books for Keeps** reviewer, Jill Bennett, writes:

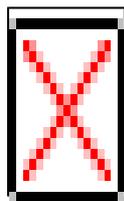
Once their owner leaves for school a trio of soft toys - a rag doll, a duck and a pig - are harried and badgered by Number One, a wind-up toy soldier. The bombastic bully bosses them about and mocks their efforts to wind him up as well as their attire. Soon he is not only wrapped up in himself, but in Maddy's hat, Sally's rucksack and Sid's scarf. Fortunately he is able to laugh at himself too once his victims start a whispering, mocking campaign of their own and all are friends once more on their owner's return from school. Bob Graham's illustrations take us down to floor level, into the small world of the toys' conflict in this humorous and non-threatening anti-bullying lesson.

Some excellent novels for older readers with a bullying theme that have been around for a while are worth seeking out.

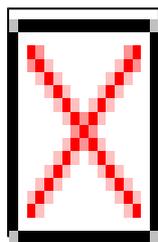
For 8-10 year-olds, Elizabeth Laird's [Secret Friends](#) [4] (Hodder, 96pp, 978 0 340 66474 5, £3.99 pbk) is a haunting, beautifully illustrated story, sensitively illustrated with line drawing by Jason Cockcroft. Lucy is the first to call Rafaella, who has sticking out ears, 'Earwig' and the name sticks. Rafaella is ostracised by the other girls with Lucy guiltily joining in although she is Rafaella's secret friend outside school. Rafaella has a plan that will change everything but events go horribly wrong.



is the story of 10-year-old Mandy who used to be friends with Melanie. Now Melanie has joined Kim's gang of bullies and has revealed all Mandy's secrets to her tormentors. Only Arthur King seems to understand how it feels to be bullied but is it OK to have a boy as a friend? Wilson's portrait of a girl on the threshold of puberty is engaging and her encounters with bullies convincing.



[6]For 12-year-olds and upwards Anne Fine's [The Tulip Touch](#) [6] (Puffin, 192pp, 978 0 14 037808 5, £6.99 pbk) is a sharply observed, penetrating novel about psychological bullying and a superb portrait of the inner world of a troubled child. Nathalie is in thrall to Tulip, immersed in her games, desperate to please her, willing to do whatever it takes to be her friend. When the scales fall from Nathalie's eyes, what will happen to Tulip?



[7]Also for older readers, Robert Cormier's [The Chocolate War](#) [7] (Puffin, 288pp, 978 0 14 131251 4, £6.99 pbk) was one of the first novels for young adults about bullying at school and it remains one of the most powerful. Jerry is a new boy at a Catholic high school where he discovers that refusing to take part in a 'voluntary' scheme to raise money by selling chocolates leads to merciless bullying by a school secret society, bullying that is implicitly condoned by the staff. A chilling novel about physical and psychological bullying.

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