Tuesday English News Report: Broadcast Date: Nov 28th, 2017

A concern group on youth suicide prevention in Hong Kong **urged** the government to set up an independent body to investigate complaints of bullying, criticising authorities for their **passive stance**. The Citizens' Alliance for Prevention of Youth Suicide, formed by several groups of parents, teachers and social workers, said a recent **alleged** bullying incident showed that schools could not resolve such matters themselves. The alliance's calls came amid a separate campaign on the same day by medical students from the University of Hong Kong to raise awareness of suicide risks among the city's youth.

The actions of both groups were **sparked** by a case on November 17, when a mother told police her son was constantly bullied at school and another pupil had forced a pencil eraser tip into the boy's ear. Teachers at the Tuen Mun school could not **substantiate** the woman's claims, but the boy's parents rejected their findings and **vowed** to pull him out of the school.

"There is a conflict of interest when schools handle their own bullying complaints. From a school's standpoint, they would want to **play down** such incidents," alliance member Simon Hung said.

They suggested that the Education Bureau set up an appeal mechanism for schools and an independent body should be in charge of looking into such incidents.

The bureau earlier said they had guidelines and training for schools and teachers on how to handle such incidents, and that they would study the investigation reports of schools, offering help if necessary. Education lawmaker Ip Kin-yuen said the bureau had the "utmost responsibility" when it came to dealing with such issues.

Findings from the Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa), released this year, found that Hong Kong pupils reported being threatened and physically bullied at school more than the average rate for all 52 countries and cities surveyed.

Some 20 per cent of 1,600 Hong Kong pupils surveyed reported that they had been hit or pushed around by others in school at least once, compared to the average of 11.9 per cent. The rate was the fifth highest among all developed countries and cities.

Citizens' Alliance for Prevention of Youth Suicide said bullying often went **undetected** in schools and that reported cases were *"*only the tip of the iceberg*"

*Only a hint or suggestion of a much larger or more complex issue or problem

"Each school should set up an anti-bullying group led by a teacher and a social worker to constantly monitor the situation," alliance member Coco Wong said.

**To stop something at an early stage before it gets worse

"When any pupil needs help, he or she can go to this group so the problem can be **nipped in the bud* before it progresses to something more serious like an attempted suicide."

Wong, whose daughter was once a victim of name-calling and being **ostracised** in school, said support should not only be given to victims, but also to bullies who might need help with emotional or social problems.

Adapted from The South China Morning Post dated 25th Nov, 2017

Questions to think about:

- What is your opinion on the issue or issues raised in this article?
- What are the causes of the problem? What can make the problem worse? What is the impact on the victim? What makes it even easier to be a bully these days?
- What can be done to stop the problem? Do you think some of the possible solutions or suggestions given in the article are workable/effective?

I: Vocabulary and understanding meaning: *Match the meaning and/or synonym (words with a similar or the same meaning) to the words which have been highlighted in bold in the article.*

Column A: Word from text	Letter	Column B: Meaning or synonym
1. urge (v)		A: the attitude or viewpoint of someone
2. passive (adj)		B: promise
3. stance (n)		C: provide evidence to support or prove the truth of
4. allege(d) (v)		D: earnestly or persistently persuade or convince someone to do something
5. spark (v)		E: try to make a problem or difficult situation seem less important than it is
6. substantiate (v)		F: exclude/leave out from a group or organisation
7. vow(ed) (v)		G: accepting something as is or letting something go, not actively engaged in trying to make a change
8. play down (phrasal verb)		H: not found out or discovered
9. undetected (adj)		I: provide the stimulus or 'fire' for something, ie to start or set off an event
10. ostracise (v)		J: claim or assert that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically without proof.

II: Usage of vocabulary: *Choose the most appropriate word from the table above to fill in the missing words of the sentences below making sure your answers are grammatically correct.*

1. The authorities and police _____ people to remain calm and not panic in the aftermath of the disaster.
2. One of the students in the class felt sorry for the new student who _____. The other students refused to do any group or pair work with him just because he was a bit different.
3. The boy who was hit tried to _____ the seriousness of the incident because he did not want any more trouble from the group of bullies. He shrugged off help saying he was not really hurt.
4. The problem remained _____ and unnoticed for years as no one paid attention to it.
5. Although the woman (a) _____ a crime had been committed, the police could not find any evidence to (b) _____ or prove her claim.
6. The riot _____ by the supporter of one football club challenging the supporter of the rival football club. They started fighting and then all hell broke loose.
7. The boy who was constantly in trouble at school _____ to turn over a new leaf. He said he would reform and stop breaking the school rules.
8. The politician won the election because of this strong _____ on corruption.
9. If someone is in trouble, we should not stand by _____, but instead take action and help.

Challenge of the week: Idiom fun

ENGLISH CORNER CAFÉ IS ALWAYS OPEN ON A TUESDAY FOR DRINKS, SNACKS, CONVERSATION & GAMES

See Ms Roberts for prizes if you know the answers!