

# **Sandy's Story**

## **Children's Parliament Investigates...**

### **Session 3**

#### **At home**

Sandy is 10 years old and has always lived in this part of Edinburgh. Sandy has 2 older stepbrothers, one is 21 years old and the other is 15 years old. He also has 3 younger sisters, aged 7, 6 and 3 years old. Sandy lives in a 3-bedroom house with his mum and step-dad, and all of his brothers and sisters. Sandy shares his room with his 2 older stepbrothers.

It's a cold wet day in the middle of winter. A low rumbling from Sandy's stomach reminds him that he had to share his supper with his little sisters last night. It's not fair; the wee ones always get more than him! And as for his big brothers, they never share with anyone. He's tired of being stuck in the middle, he doesn't have time for breakfast and he knows he'll need to wait until lunchtime to get something to eat.

Sandy shivers when thinking about his journey to school, he thinks to himself, "Wouldn't it be great to live in a warm, sunny country?"

#### **The journey to school**

Sandy always walks his little sisters to school and in the winter it's often dark and cold and they have to go through a narrow dark walkway. Sandy hates this walkway, when he is out playing there are often teenagers or adults in the walkway drinking, he's afraid that they'll be there in the morning when he walks to school too. These teenagers often shout and swear at him and he doesn't want his little sisters to be scared. Sandy doesn't like to admit it, but sometimes he finds it a bit scary in the dark and he wishes that his mum would walk him and his sisters to school.

Recently, some boys from a neighboring school have been shouting at him and his sisters on the way to school. They're older and bigger than him and they've started to follow him, calling him names and shouting threats at him. But because it's the morning the streets are really quiet and although there are some adults about they all scurry past with their heads down; they don't seem to notice what's happening. Sandy wishes he could ask for help, but he's scared and he's been told not to speak to strangers.

There are high fences around the school and the gates are closed behind them. Sandy looks, but there aren't any adults in the playground yet as it is too early. Sandy is afraid the older boys will follow him and he is relieved when he finally gets in to school.

#### **At School**

"Bye," Sandy says to his sisters, they play in a different part of the playground and he's not allowed to play with them in their area. He looks around for his

friends. Some of the older P7 children are standing together in a group. He knows some of the P7s and when they are on their own he gets on well with them, but for some reason they don't speak to him when they are with their older pals. He spots his best friend, Ben, who's just arrived. Sandy loves Ben; he's always good for a laugh, although sometimes Ben can get into trouble. Sandy finds it difficult not to get involved in stuff with Ben and this means Sandy gets in trouble with his teachers too! Ben gets annoyed with Sandy sometimes and Sandy knows Ben will stop talking to him if he doesn't join in and do as Ben asks. It's hard, but Sandy thinks that it's worth getting in trouble sometimes if it means he has a friend and doesn't feel lonely.

Sandy told Ben about the boys from the neighboring school. Ben says that Sandy should shout and swear back at them. Ben says his mum has told him that the only way to deal with bullies is to stick up for yourself; "if they hit or shout and swear at you, you should hit, shout and swear at them back!" Sandy thought maybe he could tell his teacher what was happening, but Ben doesn't think it would help because the bullying is happening outside of school.

### **In Class.**

Ben and Sandy aren't allowed to sit beside each other in class, so Sandy has to sit beside a boy he doesn't get on with. This boy makes fun of Sandy and calls him names. Sandy doesn't want to tell his teacher, as he is afraid that she will think he is making things up. Sandy thinks his teacher really likes the other boy, Sandy reckons he is one of her favorites. This makes Sandy feel awkward and she finds it hard to concentrate on his work. He gets upset and frustrated when this boy is nasty to him and Sandy doesn't feel like he can tell anyone how he is feeling. Sandy doesn't understand why no one else can see how unhappy he is in class.

Sometimes Sandy gets help from a learning assistant, Mrs Hardie. Sandy thinks Mrs Hardie is kind and patient and listens to him and asks questions about his brothers and sisters. Sandy wishes he could tell Mrs Hardie about how he feels, but he knows she is very busy and has lots of other children to work with. He tried to speak to her once, but she had to rush away and help another child.

Sandy also likes his Head teacher, Mrs Belville. She always smiles and speaks to him; even when she has to talk to him about his behaviour with Ben, she is quiet and patient and doesn't shout at him. He wonders if he could talk to her about how he is feeling. Talking to adults about bullying feels a bit scary though and Sandy is worried that the adults will get angry with him, because they might think he is being silly or trying to get someone into trouble.

What can Sandy do?