

## Sectarianism hasn't gone away

**"I know fighting is stupid. But there's nothing else to do. In the holidays someone's going to have a knife or something and someone is going to end up getting killed."** Mark (15)

Sectarianism is not a thing of the past for many young people in the Northwest. In the last year pupils in one town were grieving the death of a boy as the result of a sectarian motivated incident.

Despite this tragedy these young people continue to engage in conflict and fights with each other just because they are from opposing Catholic and Protestant communities. The opening quote is from a Protestant school pupil who spends his free time hanging out with his other Protestant friends, vying for a fight with Catholic young people.

"At the weekend we would just go out as a group and maybe send a text suggesting we meet up for a riot like." Curtis (15)

Actually seeking out a fight is what they enjoy to do as well as pestering the police. Most young people live for the weekend when they can meet up with friends and go to the cinema. For two gangs in one Northwest town the cinema is just the meeting place for a fight.

"I wouldn't go anywhere on my own. No way. We try to go everywhere in a group. Especially to the cinema because some of the other lot are always there." Stevie (15)

Although these young people admit fighting is "stupid" and know that someone someday ending up getting killed is inevitable they still spend their weekends at loggerheads with Catholic young people. They can even admit that they have lots in common but it has just become a way of life and something to do to fight. If they choose not to they could lose their friends and their street cred. For most this is too high a price to pay.

Another place that sectarianism is still alive among young people is on school buses. There are young people in the Northwest who are terrified of the journey to and from school because of the abuse they get because of what uniform they are wearing.

"I travel on the bus to school, every day. I wait for my bus at the station. There are pupils from other Catholic schools waiting too. There is always slagging happens before we get on our buses. I'm a Protestant and I wait for my bus with my friend who's a Catholic. I have never had any bother but I've seen enough to know that integrated buses would just be asking for more trouble." Jack (15)

A recent government commissioned report showed that over 160 extra buses are on the school runs to accommodate the segregation of Catholic and Protestant young people. A regular bus user said: "I have seen friends of mine refuse to get on a bus because its going to an area they have been told by parents is a no-go area." Tola (16)

What makes it a no-go area? An older generation's outdated notion passed on to their children as fact? If that notion gets passed onto the children's children sectarianism is never going to take a back seat on public transport or anywhere else.

### About this story

This article was written by **Fiona Hall (16)**

### 0 comments

- [Add a comment to this page](#)

---

Built on [Cubik](#)

©2012 Headliners

Registered Charity Number 1043300. Supported by the [Department for Children, Schools and Families](#)