

## ABOUT US

**Offices** Kinshicho and Sagamihara

**Telephone:** 03 5637 8809

**Web**

www.tomtom-english.com

**Email**

kinshicho@

tomtom-english.com



Tom Tom English (Kinshicho)  
Tom Tom English(Sagamihara)



# TOM TOM ENGLISH



## VOCABULARY

### Readily =

Without hesitation or reluctance

### Perpetrator =

Someone who has committed a crime

### Deceased =

A recently dead person

### Inflict =

To cause something unpleasant, painful or unwelcome to someone else

### Turned Upside

#### Down =

Idiom: to change someone's life completely

## Read the article overleaf and discuss these questions:

1. Do you think Ryota is guilty of bullying? Why? Why not?
2. What do you think is the difference between teasing and bullying?
3. What do you think about the school's actions following the boy's death? Were they reasonable? Why? Why not?
4. Do you think the school was right to conclude that no bullying occurred? Why? Why not?
5. What do you think about the parent's of the deceased? Were they right to reject the school's conclusion? Why? Why not? Is the amount of compensation that they are claiming reasonable?
6. Can we do anything to prevent bullying in school? What? If not, why not?

## VOCABULARY

### Shot =

An ability disrupted, usually due to some other factor e.g. stress, tiredness

### Malicious =

Intending to cause harm

### Negligent =

To fail to take proper care of something or someone

### Mediation =

Intervention in a dispute; process of trying to resolve a dispute through a 3rd party

### Bereaved =

Person who has recently lost a family member

A child bullied to death is a horrible thing. The bullies are usually children themselves, too young to be held legally accountable. But whatever lessons are legally teachable should be taught, and harshly – and if financial compensation can be extracted from bullies’ families, so much the better. That probably sums up the general feeling.

In September 2014, a 14-year-old Sendai boy committed suicide. He left no note. Bullying was the assumed cause, and the city-administered junior high school where the boy was a first-year student launched an investigation. Eleven boys were requested by school authorities to provide background information.

One of the 11 was a boy whom Shukan Josei, in its coverage, calls “Ryota.” He’d been a friend of the dead boy – “he cried when he heard the news,” his mother tells the magazine – and he **readily** agreed to cooperate. Later, Ryota’s family learned that the school grouped its witnesses into three categories: “**perpetrator**,” “victim” and “uninvolved.” The victim of course was the **deceased**. Ryota found himself labeled a “**perpetrator**.”

The information he gave, as summarized by Shukan Josei, describes a mild exchange of teasing such as all school kids **inflict** and suffer. They called each other names, and laughed at each other. No, said Ryota, he had never called the **deceased** a “pervert.” Apparently someone did.

Ryota’s life has been **turned upside down**. He has high school entrance exams to

study for, but his concentration is **shot**. It’s not even clear whether he’ll be able to enter a school in his neighborhood – or continue to live in it, for that matter. Once you’ve been dubbed a “**perpetrator**,” the image sticks to you.

“School is definitely no fun anymore,” he says ruefully. “I only go at all because if I stay away, people will say I’m guilty.”

The school set up a special commission to look into the affair. It concluded that while there had been teasing, which perhaps the school should have taken steps to tone down, it amounted to nothing systematic or **malicious** enough to be called bullying.

The dead boy’s family was not satisfied. The school had been **negligent**, they felt, and the children involved, now narrowed down from 11 to seven, had not even apologized. They requested court **mediation**, which began in February and ended in June – inconclusively. The seven children persisted in denying they’d done anything that qualifies as bullying, and the school disclaimed responsibility. The **bereaved** parents immediately filed a civil suit, demanding 55 million yen in compensation.

Court proceedings will grind on for some time. “If this is their whole case,” Shukan Josei quotes Ryota’s lawyer as saying, “We can’t lose.” But until they win – if they win – Ryota and the other boys are in for a rough ride. If they’re guilty, the rougher the better, we might say. But if they’re not?

Adapted from [www.japantoday.com](http://www.japantoday.com)