

Appendix 6

Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy

September 2022

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1) Introduction

Challenging bullying in schools is a key priority. Blaenau Gwent are committed to ensuring all our learners feel safe, secure and are supported to achieve their full potential. All young people have a right to an education and to be treated equally.

We remain committed to challenging bullying holistically. This is achieved by addressing the root causes of unacceptable behaviour and creating an inclusive and engaging environment, with priority placed on well-being so learners feel safe and are ready to learn. It is imperative children and young people are taught, both at home and in school, about building and maintaining respectful relationships; this is the cornerstone on which positive behaviour is based.

We all need to ensure the values of respect, tolerance and kindness form part of our school communities and cultures.

This policy recognises the complex nature of bullying behaviour and the importance of early identification and intervention. Traditional 'bully/victim' stereotypes need to be challenged, and a more in-depth understanding and awareness needs to be fostered. We need to establish a 'culture of telling' across settings, where children and young people, parents and professionals alike feel confident in dealing with bullying and have confidence that appropriate action will be taken if instances are reported. Although we cannot entirely control the environment children and young people grow up in, we can discourage them from engaging in bullying behaviour.

There are often deep-rooted triggers to bullying behaviour, and a multi-faceted approach is required in response. Prevention of, and reaction to, bullying should be addressed in equal measure and guidance and training need to be provided. Specific support will be required to protect all children and young people including the most vulnerable children and young people (e.g. those in care of Social Services, those who are young carers, those who have additional needs and/or disabilities, and those who experience hate crime in particular), and communication between agencies will be essential if we are to identify and reduce persistent patterns of bullying behaviour.

By bringing together work from various teams in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with that of partner agencies, this policy provides a coordinated approach to tackling bullying. A borough-wide definition of bullying is provided, along with six core strands of work. A number of strategic objectives are outlined and a shared approach to tackling bullying is summarised.

Anti-bullying needs to take a high priority, and each setting is responsible for developing a model of good practice. The Council will work with all relevant settings to monitor, support and challenge where appropriate. Ultimately, we all have a role to play in ensuring communities flourish where children and young people are free from bullying.

What Children, Young People, Parents and Professionals Think - 'It isn't big to make others feel small'.

Primary school pupil - 'Bullying is cruel not cool'.

Secondary school parent - 'We found that listening to what our daughter wanted and needed was the right thing to do'

Parent - 'Bullying is not an easy issue to approach, especially if you suspect the child you're looking after is doing the bullying'.

Foster Carer - 'Schools should create a whole school ethos where bullying is unacceptable in a safe and inclusive environment'.

2) Aim

The aim of this Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy is to establish a coordinated, consistent approach to tackling bullying in all Blaenau Gwent schools, youth and community settings. The Council and all partner agencies will work together from a shared understanding to develop evidence-based methods for significantly reducing instances of bullying between children and young people.

3) Definition

The Local Authority expects schools to use the following definition as the foundation for developing their own definition, or a learner-friendly version. It is essential that schools define what is meant by bullying because this will form the basis of their relationships/anti-bullying policy and everyone, including all staff and learners, should understand what is meant.

For the purposes of this guidance, bullying is defined as:

Bullying is expressed through a range of hurtful behaviours: it can happen face-to-face or in the digital environment. It can be carried out by an individual or group but is generally executed in front of an audience to assert power or popularity. It may involve an element of secrecy so that adults are not aware of it.

Bullying differs from an argument, a fight or friendship fallout in that it:

- is deliberate or intentional
- is generally repeated over time
- involves a perceived imbalance of power between perpetrator and target
- causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness, humiliation, and powerlessness.

It is recognised that a one-off incident can leave a learner traumatised and nervous of reprisals or future recurrence. The Welsh Government expects intervention to be immediate whether it is bullying or any other one-off negative behaviour. The Authority expects one-off incidents that do not appear to be the start of bullying to be handled as inappropriate behaviour and addressed under the school's behaviour policy.

Clarifying what is meant by bullying behaviour is an essential starting point. Agreeing a definition provides an opportunity for a school to align its values and vision and create a consistent framework of policies and procedures. The Authority expects the definition to be used in staff training, in day-to-day anti-bullying work with learners and to clarify the position for parents/carers.

This will help to make the policy clear and consistent for the whole school community.

There are several distinctive elements associated with bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

- Intention to harm – bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm.
- Those who bully others are often skilled at knowing exactly how to humiliate or hurt their target, picking on key aspects of their appearance, personality or identity that produces the effect wanted. They seek out the area in which they have power over their target.
- Harmful outcome – someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally.
- They can be isolated, humiliated or made fearful. Their sense of self-worth is reduced.
- Direct or indirect acts – bullying can involve direct aggression such as hitting, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours, revealing private information about someone or sharing intimate images with people for whom the information/images were not intended.
- Repetition – bullying usually involves repeated acts of negative behaviour or acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, such as a fight, is not usually considered bullying. Yet any incident can be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour which develops subsequently. That is why incident records are so valuable.
- Unequal power – bullying involves the abuse of power by one person or a group who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, popularity or psychological resilience.

How is bullying expressed?

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical – kicking, tripping someone up or shoving them, injuring someone, damaging their belongings or gestures of intimidation,
- Verbal – taunts and name-calling, insults, threats, humiliation, or intimidation,
- Emotional – behaviour intended to isolate, hurt or humiliate someone,
- Indirect – sly or underhand actions carried out behind the target's back or rumour-spreading,
- Online – using any form of technological means, mobile phones, social networks, gaming, chat rooms, forums or apps to bully via text, messaging, images or video,
- Relational aggression – bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or long-term illness, targeting their family's social status, isolating, or humiliating someone or deliberately getting someone into trouble,
- Sexual – unwanted touching, threats, suggestions, comments and jokes or innuendo. This can also include sextortion, so called 'revenge porn' and any misuse of intimate, explicit images of the learner targeted,
- Prejudice-related – bullying of a learner or a group of learners because of prejudice. This could be linked to stereotypes or presumptions about identity. Prejudice-related bullying includes the protected characteristics. Prejudice can and does also extend beyond the protected characteristics and can lead to bullying for a variety of other reasons such as social status and background.

Bullying can also be based on any of the protected characteristics.

It is important that when dealing with alleged incidents of bullying, individual perspectives are considered. If a child, young person, or adult states that bullying is happening, action must be

taken to determine why this allegation has been made. There will be occasions when children and young people physically or emotionally hurt others without meaning to do so, and it is important that appropriate support is provided to both parties, but the behaviour need not be labelled as bullying. It is also important to be mindful that extreme instances of bullying that include harassment could be treated as a criminal offence. All bullying is based on difference to some degree (perceived or actual), and the WG document 'Rights Respect Equality' provides further guidance.

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4) Strategic Objectives

Core Strands

Six core strands of work underpin this work:

- Policy and practice
- Awareness and communication
- Evidence-based initiatives
- Involving children and young people
- Positive partnerships
- Monitoring

Each of these will be summarised in turn, and key activities will be highlighted throughout.

Strand 1: Policy and Practice

To tackle bullying effectively, it is essential that we get policy and practice right. The Welsh Government Circular Rights Respect Equalities guidance provides school governors, headteachers, teachers and other staff with information on tackling relationships/bullying in schools and the steps that schools should take to support learners who report bullying outside of school.

School governing bodies are accountable for ensuring effective policies are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with Welsh Government guidance and for monitoring its compliance.

The Welsh Government expects school governing bodies and individual school governors to act at all times with honesty and integrity and be ready to explain their actions and decisions to staff, earners, parents/carers and anyone with a legitimate interest in the school. The school governing body decides what they want the school to achieve.

The Welsh Government expects that it should establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school,
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives,
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objective,
- reviewing progress towards achieving the aims and objectives.

Historically the LA had developed strategy and a toolkit for use within school setting and this policy supersedes this.

Key Activities

All school, youth and community settings need to develop, implement, monitor and review whole-school/community anti-bullying policies effectively.

- All agencies are encouraged to nominate a positive relationships/ anti-bullying lead,
- All agencies are encouraged to monitor the effectiveness of their own respective policies.

Strand 2: Awareness and Communication

All children, young people, parents and professionals need to have an understanding of what bullying is and why it happens. Events such as Anti-Bullying initiatives are important for

raising awareness, but regular work throughout the year needs to be done to celebrate diversity and respect difference. Curriculum for Wales can play a key part in securing this and the approach to healthy schools is key aspect in facilitating respectful, positive relationships.

Social media and the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council website will be utilised to raise the profile of positive relationships/anti-bullying practice across the borough. Equally schools play an important role in their respective communities.

Key Activities

Raise the profile of positive relationships/anti-bullying practice in school, youth and community settings.

Work with parents/carers to raise awareness and understanding of issues surrounding bullying.

Encourage full engagement and coordinate evidence-based activities for positive relationships/Anti-Bullying initiatives.

Strand 3: Evidence-based Initiatives

All work designed to prevent and challenge bullying needs to be informed by good practice, and all staff working with children and young people need to understand the underlying causes of bullying and have the ability to promote positive life and social skills. Research has identified a number of pro-active preventative and reactive initiatives that can be used effectively to combat bullying and promote positive peer relations. All children and young people should have access to a choice of methods for reporting incidents of bullying without feeling threatened and information on different reporting options should be promoted and made readily available.

Wherever possible, an anti-bullying message needs to be reinforced. Assemblies for example can be used to promote positive peer relations, celebrate diversity and respect diversity. School councils play a crucial role in identifying work that needs to be done, and peer support schemes harbour an anti-bullying ethos, provide direct assistance for those who need it, and promote the development of social skills and confidence in those who participate with clear links to schools' equality plans.

Key Activities

- Continue to promote professional learning for all settings.
- Continue to signpost information to schools and other settings on how to access support.

Strand 4: Involving Children and Young People

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that all children and young people are given the opportunity and encouragement to speak out and have their voices heard on matters that directly affect them. This right is formerly recognised in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Curriculum for Wales will provide children and young people with opportunities to be capable and confident individuals and enable them to develop the skills needed to forge positive relationships, prevent bullying, deal with it and support others. School Councils and other youth and community settings are encouraged to involve children and young people as far as

possible in developing and reviewing anti-bullying policies. Bullying is a complex, ever changing issue, and children and young people will have many of the answers. They can tell us what the most important issues are and provide some insight into how best to solve them.

Key Activities

- Invite representative Blaenau Gwent Grand School Council to discuss bullying issues to inform further work.
- Continue to identify resources to support positive relationships/anti bullying initiatives.

Strand 5: Collaboration and Partnerships

Without collaboration and partnership working, we will not be able to deliver a consistent anti-bullying approach in Blaenau Gwent.

A Strategic Safer School Partnership approach is established that will ensure that equality within education and timely support for bullying issues continues to be embedded across the educational landscape within Blaenau Gwent. All anti-bullying policies should continue to be made available to parents/carers, because trusting communicative relationships are essential if families are to work together with school, youth and community settings. Governors also have an important role to play in informing school policy and ensuring effective implementation

Key Activities

Communicate key developments and encourage collaborative and partnership working

- Ensure that schools are able to access professional learning
- Provide support and advice in the development of strategic equality plans relevant to schools
- Through the Strategic Safer Schools Partnership Board quality assure equality and diversity matters, including respectful relationship and the effectiveness of approaches to anti bullying behaviours.

Strand 6: Monitoring

All education and children's services have a duty of care, to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people. It is therefore critical that the local authority, school, youth and community settings record all instances of bullying, along with actions undertaken and outcomes. Arising from school rights, respect and equality returns a FADE is completed and submitted to Education DMT. This informs the Self Evaluation and the Safeguarding Performance Report.

Every setting is responsible for recording, reporting and acting upon incidents of bullying that occur in their care and bullying in the community needs to be reported to the Education Directorate, Gwent Police and/or the Community Safety Partnership. Agencies that are aware of bullying occurring in settings other than their own should ensure those in charge are aware of the situation. On occasion, it may be necessary a duty to report form may need to be completed to IAA within Social Services in order to safeguard individuals.

A suggested recording protocol for schools and youth settings can be found in Appendix 1. A termly overview of all incidents are to be completed by each school along with an incident form for every bullying incident being submitted at the time of the alleged incident. Every alleged incident needs to be recorded and logged accordingly. Schools should use My Concern to record confirmed incidents where possible. Within Youth settings any incidents of

bullying should be reported to the relevant line manager. Schools must have in place mechanisms for reporting and recording bullying which are clearly communicated to the whole school community with specifics to the governing body. The Authority expects the information schools record and monitor to relate directly to their school's definition of bullying and broader provisions outlined in this policy.

Effective record maintenance enables schools to review an incident, check whether there are other reports concerning the learners involved and make a decision in the light of what is recorded in a holistic and informed way. Monitoring incidents of bullying enables a school to identify patterns of behaviour and the extent of bullying; the Authority expects schools to then take proactive steps to challenge it. Schools must ensure that the information they record, maintain and monitor complies with data protection laws, such as the EU GDPR and the UK DPA 2018.

5) Data Collection and Protection

By law all schools are required to have in place a data protection officer (DPO) to ensure that the school is aware of and able to meet their obligations under GDPR and DPA 2018. The Authority expect schools to work with their DPO to ensure that all personal data is processed lawfully and with appropriate protection for individuals' rights.

As part of schools' broader responsibilities regarding the collection and monitoring of data, schools will need to determine an appropriate lawful basis from those listed in GDPR Article 6 and – if data is special category – Article 9, before beginning the processing of information on bullying. Schools will also need to ensure that they are not collecting more data than they need and have a clear retention schedule for the information. Processing of information for anti-bullying measures will need to be reflected within each school's fair processing information. Data protection impact assessments (DPIA) will be required by individual schools in determining what data they need to collect to ensure that it is proportionate and that any appropriate steps that may be necessary to mitigate risks to individuals' rights are taken. For those schools who have purchased the GDPR SLA guidance and advice can be provided.

From April 2011, all public bodies, including schools and local authorities, have obligations under the PSED. In Wales, there are specific duties on public bodies to develop and publish equality objectives and a strategic equality plan and to collect, analyse and publish information about the progress they are making in achieving their obligations under the PSED.

This policy sets out the expectation that schools will record all incidents of bullying, outlining the specific types of bullying, including bullying around the protected characteristics. The Authority expects schools to monitor processes regularly. This will enable schools to modify their bullying policies to respond to specific trends and emerging issues in a swift and effective manner. Schools are likely to find this helpful in the context of their PSED under the Equality Act 2010. This information could also be used by schools when reviewing their equality objectives and monitoring the impact of their anti-bullying policies.

It is for individual schools to determine what data and information they collect in the context of the specific issues within their school and in compliance with data protection law. The Welsh Government expects this to be done by:

- Implementing an ongoing cycle of school-level data recording, monitoring and analysis of anti-bullying information,
- Using school-level anti-bullying data to identify priority areas for implementing, whole-school improvement,
- Taking action to make those improvements, ensuring the cycle of improvement continues through analysing data as part of self-evaluation.

Through regular evaluation schools will be responsive to the trends in their school and community. It will be easier to be aware of improvements needed or the changes in procedures required if schools are in touch with changes in context.

Inclusion Data – Prejudice and Bullying Incidents

School Name:			
			****Term 2022
Number of recorded incidents of bullying	Total number of recorded incidents		
	Total number pupils involved in bullying		
	Number of boys / girls responsible		
Number of recorded bullying incidents	Racist (focused on race, religion or culture)		
	Homophobic (LGBT+)		
	Sexual		
	Transphobic		
	Sexist		
	Related to gender identity		
	Related to ALN or disability		
	Related to family status or child looked after child (CLA) status		
	Related to disadvantage		
	Focussed on appearance		
	Physical		
	Verbal		
Indirect, including exclusion and isolation			

	Online	
	Relational	

APPENDIX B

Bullying Incident Recording Form

Name of person reporting incident (please note anonymous if this is an anonymous report):	
Name of person recording incident:	
Date of report:	

Type of bullying incident (please tick all that apply):

Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relational	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prejudice-related	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indirect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion and isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online or via mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>	Face to face	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):			

For prejudice-related incidents please select the category which best describes the prejudice involved:

Racist (focused on race, religion or culture)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to gender identity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homophobic (LGBT+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to SEN or disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to family status or looked after child (LAC) status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transphobic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to disadvantage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focused on appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):			

Safeguarding Considerations:

If there is or might be a significant risk of harm, talk to your school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Under Section 89, (5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the school has powers to discipline for incidents that occur off the premises.

The Education Act 2011 gives schools powers to search and confiscate a device but please have regard for protocols on the safe handling of evidence or mobiles/devices. Do not view, store or share material that contains intimate images of a learner without consulting the DSL.

Brief summary of incident:

Name of alleged target:

Class/form/age: Year group/house:

Name of alleged perpetrator(s) (if known):

Class/form/age: Year group/house:

Date(s) of incident(s):	Day		Month		Year	
Approximate time(s):	Before school	Morning	Afternoon	After school		

Is this incident linked to previous incidents of victimisation of the target? Yes No

If yes, how long has victimisation of this person being going on? Please provide details

What occurred?

Who was involved?

Has any intervention been tried? Yes No

Does this case require the serious incident protocol to be activated? Yes No

Do the police need to be informed? Yes No

Does a device or evidence need to be confiscated/isolated as evidence? Yes No

Does online material need to be taken down? Yes No

Have parents/carers been informed? Yes No

Who has taken responsibility for these steps?

Action taken:

Follow-up required?:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Case resolved? If so please note date:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Outcome summary:

Learning opportunities:

Would you recommend any changes to approaches, policies or procedures as a result of this incident?

Signed..... Date