

Challenging bullying: Rights, respect, equality

Bassaleg Cluster Anti-Bullying Policy



Welsh Government:

Rights, respect, equality: guide for children Guidance to help children deal with bullying can be adopted for this purpose. This document is available in a range of community languages.

Welsh Government

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Vision:

Rogerstone Primary School is committed to ensuring that all learners have a life free from abuse and harm, including bullying. Every pupil has the right to work and learn in an environment where they feel safe, supported and free from fear.

Understanding Bullying - A definition:

There is no legal definition of bullying. Within our school, bullying is defined as:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally.”

Underpinning this definition are behaviours, which result in individuals or groups feeling unsafe. Bullying behaviour usually includes the following four features:

- 1) It is usually repetitive and persistent
- 2) It is intentionally harmful
- 3) It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it
- 4) It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are being targeted.

Objectives

In order to fulfil our anti-bullying vision, our school:

1. Has appointed a lead professional with responsibility for managing a strategic approach to anti-bullying. The lead professionals for anti-bullying are the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
2. Ensures that the whole community including parents, learners and staff understand what bullying is.
3. Reinforces the anti-bullying message with the whole staff community through regular general and specific training, staff meetings and information communication.
4. Equips learners with strategies, which enable them to respond to bullying behaviour.
5. Reinforces the anti-bullying ethos with learners, specifically through Circle Time sessions, Pupil led sessions, Wellbeing class helpers, Personal Social Education (PSE), class / tutor time, assemblies; and in general through the curriculum, using projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs, debates and daily interactions between staff and learners. Ambassadors for promoting rights of the child and values support this ethos also.
6. Uses the school website to share the school anti-bullying policy and the Welsh Government Rights, respect, equality guidance for parents and children.
7. Reinforces the anti-bullying message with parents through formal and informal parental communications.
8. Collates listens to and records details of learner opinions on incidents of prejudice, discrimination, harassment and bullying, in order to improve school policy and procedures.
9. Ensures that parents, staff and learners are aware of the procedures to follow if they are the target of bullying or if they feel that they might be behaving in bullying ways.
10. Ensures that parents, staff and learners understand the signs of bullying.
11. Provides support to those who are the targets of bullying and those who are perpetrating bullying behaviour.
12. Provides peer listeners in school to support those who are the targets of bullying in conjunction with other adult support services.
13. Provides restorative justice conferences, facilitated by school staff or the youth offending service as appropriate.
14. Ensures that all learners understand the school's behaviour policy.
15. Ensures that all learners understand the school's sanctions for behaviour that is harmful to others.
16. Ensure that no learner has to move to a different school as a result of on-going bullying.

Rogerstone Primary School does not tolerate any form of bullying.

- It is up to everyone in the community to stop bullying by making it unacceptable for anybody to bully another person.
- Bullying can take a wide range of forms. Bullying is behaviour/words towards another person that is meant to hurt them or embarrass them. The behaviour can

involve individual or group behaviour. All bullying behaviour should be reported and recorded, whether perceived or actual. We will listen to, investigate and respond to all reports of bullying.

Some of the different types of bullying recognised by the school include:

- Emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, tormenting such as hiding belongings)
- Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence)
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours)
- Cyber (all forms of abuse involving the internet, social websites, chat rooms, mobile phones, email, text messages, photographs etc)
- Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in)
- Interference with possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings)

Some of the reasons why people may be bullied include:

- Sex based bullying which includes unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Racially motivated bullying
- Faith based bullying
- Cultural differences
- Special educational needs and/ or disability
- Homophobia. (Research evidenced that learners may also experience homophobic bullying related to gender stereotyping, e.g. sensitive boys, academic boys, sporty girls, boisterous girls.)
- Appearance
- Personal Hygiene
- Academic ability including more able and talented or learning difficulties
- Perceived wealth or poverty

Bullying behaviours may include emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions. This behaviour is considered acceptable by the perpetrator due to the target's perceived differences and their perceived lack of power within the majority community.

Equality Act 2010

Bullying related to the protected characteristics referenced in The Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation, Welsh Language) will be addressed in the same way as other forms of bullying. However, it will be considered and investigated in the context of the schools commitment to promoting an environment where all community members are respected, valued and celebrated equally. This aspect of the anti-bullying policy has a direct link to the school's Equality Policy and Equality Action Plan. All prejudice related incidents will be recorded and reported electronically through the SIMS Behaviour Management system.

In addition to the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, our schools are committed to identifying, reporting, and addressing bullying related to a broader range of vulnerabilities. This includes pupils who are new to English or Welsh-based education systems (NEWBES), those from minority ethnic groups, traveller communities, looked-after children, and children with long-term health conditions. We also recognise the impact of mental and emotional health challenges, peer-on-peer sexual harassment, and family circumstances, including looked-after status, as factors that may increase vulnerability to bullying. Furthermore, we are mindful that some pupils may be affected by issues related to poverty, this may lead to social isolation or stigma. All incidents are taken seriously and investigated in line with our Safeguarding and Anti Bullying Policies.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined within this policy as the use of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet to deliberately upset or harm someone else. Cyberbullying is different to other forms of bullying. In cyberbullying, the audience for the bullying can be very large and reached rapidly. This means that the degree and seriousness, as well as the possible risks and repercussions, can be harder to control and curtail.

Cyberbullying can take many forms such as:

- Threats and intimidation;
- Harassment or stalking;
- Vilification and defamation;
- Peer rejection and exclusion;
- Identity theft;
- Unauthorised access and impersonation;
- Publicly posting, sending or forwarding personal or private information or images;
- Manipulation
- Blackmail

The reasons why people may be a target of cyberbullying are the same as the reasons for other types of bullying (noted above), for example for reasons related to their sex, sexual identity or race, their appearance or their personal hygiene.

The following technologies are regularly used as vehicles for cyberbullying:

- Mobile phones;
- Instant messenger and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)
- Chatrooms and message boards
- E-mail
- Webcams
- Social network sites
- Video-hosting sites
- Virtual learning environments (VLEs)
- Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds

The school recognises that in the case of cyberbullying, the target and perpetrator may not be on the school premises when the incident occurs. The school recognises that

it has a responsibility to address off-site incidents and will take action to prevent incidents of this kind. This may include liaising with Gwent Police.

It is recognised that 'bystanders' can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example or by taking part in online polls or discussions, sharing images. Learners, parents and staff should also refer to the School's I.T. policy for further information and details on how cyberbullying is discouraged.

Signs of bullying

Bullying can cause serious psychological damage. A learner who is experiencing bullying may display some of the following signs:

- Becomes frightened of going to school, frightened to attend specific lessons or going to specific areas of the school
- Makes changes to their usual routine
- Becomes more quiet, withdrawn or anxious than previously
- Begins stammering
- Threatens to run away or runs away
- Self-harms
- Threatens suicide
- Begins to perform poorly at school
- Frequently has missing or damaged possessions
- Is always asking for extra money or never has money
- Has unexplained injuries
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Begins to bully siblings or peers
- Stops eating or attending meals
- Is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- Becomes nervous when a cyber-message is received
- Appears more tired than usual (due to sleep disturbance, including bed wetting);
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem;
- Is reluctant to go out into the playground/yard and
- Is reluctant to use toilet facilities
- Is reluctant to discuss the reasons for any of the above

Learner's guide on how to respond if you are being bullied:

If you are being bullied, the following responses should help:

1. Explain to the bully that the words/actions are upsetting; he or she may not be aware of this. However if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings
2. If you are with friends, ask them to stay with you
3. Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
4. The bully will not stop if they think they can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends.

5. Tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf. Tell your school peer listeners/mediators.
6. Know that we are all unique, like everyone else. Remember that the diversity within our school community and within Newport is important and valued.

Learner's guide to how to respond if you think someone is being bullied and how to prevent bullying:

1. If the learner being bullied is in danger, fetch help. If you are outside school, phone 999. If there is no danger, your presence may ease the situation so remain together.
2. Show that you and your friends disapprove of any bullying behaviour.
3. Give sympathy and support to learner/s who you think are being bullied.
4. Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. If you think individuals might not find your comments funny don't say them.
5. If you know of bullying, tell someone. The target may be too scared or lonely to tell.

Cyberbullying:

Remember it is helpful if allegations of bullying are supported with evidence. If bullying occurs via social networking sites or mobile technologies, take screen shots. Copies should be printed and given to a member of staff. **Parents, pupils, staff should not forward any information electronically.**

Parents' guide to bullying behaviours

Whenever there is a case of bullying the parents/guardian of both the target and the perpetrator will be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

If your child is being bullied:

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. Parents should contact their child's class teacher/form teacher/Head of Year if they are worried. It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation; bullying can be complex to understand as it is possible that the parties involved will have varying perceptions of the events under investigation. Reassurance will be needed in order to persuade your child that they have done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that you provide helpful information.

- Who was involved?
- Where did it take place, when and how often?
- Why did it take place?
- What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the school of these details, the member of staff will explain how the school will proceed; this will normally begin with an investigation into the allegations

(see below for details). Be reassured that the school will respond sensitively to the needs of all the learners involved. All information will be considered and investigated thoroughly.

You may be able to help. Ask what you can do to support the school's actions to support your child. It is helpful to make a note of the actions the school intends to take and any strategies the school suggests will be helpful for you to implement to support your child. Stay in touch with the school and inform the school of how things are going. Contact the school as soon as possible if further incidents occur.

Ensure you keep records of all incidents your child shares. (Who?, Where?, When?, Why?, What form of bullying behaviour?). This helps to track events should the bullying behaviour continue.

If your child is involved in the bullying:

It is very upsetting when your child is involved in bullying behaviour. Do not panic or blame yourself. It is important to work with the school to modify your child's patterns of behaviour. Acknowledge that these things do happen and the school has mechanisms in place to respond to this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why learners behave in this way from time to time. Children sometimes bully others because:

- They are not aware of how hurtful it is;
- They are copying the behaviour of peers, older siblings or people they admire;
- They have a temporary difficulty integrating within their peer group;
- They are bullying others because of encouragement from friends;
- They are going through a difficult time personally and need help;
- They have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships.

To stop your child from being involved in bullying behaviour:

- Talk with your child and help them to understand that what they are doing is unacceptable as it makes other learners unhappy;
- Discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour in order to get what they want;
- Suggest ways of joining in activities with other learners without being hurtful or unkind;
- Liaise with the school;
- Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school;
- Check that your child has identified an adult at school to whom they can go if they have a problem or a worry of any kind. They need to have a good relationship with this person.

Please note that the school will need to take action if bullying behaviour occurs. The matter will be responded to sensitively, but it needs to be effective for all those involved. Sanctions will link with those outlined in the School's Behaviour policy. Where identified adjustments need to be made for learners with additional needs, the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO)) will be involved in decision making.

Prevention of Bullying

The school aims to prevent bullying from becoming established. This is achieved by establishing a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and where it is seen as the responsibility of all members of the school community to report any instances of inappropriate behaviour and/or bullying.

- School Council provides a forum where children and young people can raise general issues of concern.
- The curriculum is used as a vital means of teaching children and young people how to manage these feelings and specific issues are addressed in PSE, Circle Time, Assemblies and curriculum time.
- The school based counselling service, peer support, Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA) and restorative approach exist to support individuals in need.
- Staff within school respond to all incidents of unkind words and behaviour in a restorative manner. We regard this as an important prevention strategy.

Procedures for investigating a case of suspected bullying

Bullying events are identified in several ways:

- Disclosure to a member of staff by the individual being bullied;
- Disclosure to another learner by the individual being bullied;
- Witnesses to specific bullying events;
- Suspicion of bullying based upon the indicators listed above.

An allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. It will be investigated thoroughly. Clear procedures will be followed to stop the bullying. All learners will be supported if they have been bullied. Regular check-ins will ensure the bullying has stopped. We will work hard to ensure no learner has to move schools as a result of bullying.

All members of staff have a duty to respond straight away if they suspect, or are made aware of prejudice related behaviour and/or bullying in line with the school's equality policy. It may be possible for the staff involved to carry out an initial investigation; however, the preferred route is for staff to make a note of the date, time and nature of the incident and pass evidence on to named staff for investigation. This will involve a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibility.

An investigation of bullying will take time. You will be kept informed throughout the process. The member of staff investigating will take the following steps:

- Target(s), perpetrator(s) and witness(es) will be interviewed by the member of staff investigating. All parties will be reassured of the discretion of the school in dealing with such matters within the limits of our confidentiality policy. The target(s) will be reassured that the matter is being treated seriously and being investigated.
- If the target reports the matter, they will be spoken with first. If not, any witnesses will be interviewed, followed by the accused perpetrator and finally any bystanders.
- All learners involved in the situation will be listened to without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described.

- A written summary of all discussions will be made. This summary will be agreed by the individuals involved. This is important as it will enable the target and witnesses to feel reassured that action is being taken, and for the accused party to feel that they have had a fair hearing.
- A problem solving approach, which avoids blame, will be more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving change. Restorative approaches may be a useful approach.
- All prejudice related incidents and bullying and bullying incidents related to ALN, appearance and personal hygiene will be recorded and reported using the SIMS behaviour management system.

Action by the school:

If it is felt that bullying has taken place, the target will be informed that action will be taken to prevent bullying from continuing. Sanctions will be implemented in line with the School's Behaviour Policy.

The school will respond to incidents of bullying which take place outside of the immediate authority of the school. The perpetrator needs to understand the effects of their actions upon the target, and will be given support in order to modify their behaviour including ELSA or counselling if appropriate. If the bullying behaviour continues, there are a number of possible sanctions available to the school. These may include:

- A verbal warning, recorded in the perpetrator's file
- A letter of apology to the target, with a copy kept on file. This letter can be scribed if appropriate. (A verbal apology is appropriate for children at foundation phase.)
- Referral to the Headteacher in the case of persistent or severe bullying. Cases of persistent and severe bullying may result in school exclusion procedures being implemented.

The target of the bullying will receive support from the school ELSA, counsellor or other supportive adults as required, and their recovery will be closely monitored by a nominated adult who works in partnership with the target's parents.

Partnership with Parents

Whenever there is a serious case of bullying the parents/guardian of both the target and the bully will be informed in writing or by personal contact. This contact will be carried out by a member of the senior leadership team.

Follow Up

Learner follow up check-ins will take place periodically to ensure the bullying behaviour has stopped and that the learner feels safe. If there are any further incidents, the appropriate senior leader will be informed immediately and appropriate action in line with the school behaviour policy will be implemented. Where identified adjustments need to be made for learners with additional needs, the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO)) will be involved in decision making.

No learner in our school will have to move schools to escape bullying behaviour.

Should we receive a new learner to our school, we will discuss with parents/carers the reasons why the child has moved from their previous school. If parents/carers provide information that suggests that the learner has experienced bullying we will monitor the learner in order to determine their emotional needs. We will support the learner through ELSA/school based counselling should they need support

Recording Incidents of discrimination and/or bullying and analysing the information

The Headteacher will maintain an electronic record of incidents of discrimination and bullying and will prepare internal reports in order to analyse any specific patterns or trends. This information will inform in-school strategic planning and partnership work where appropriate.

The Headteacher will forward termly reports to the Local Authority in order for the Local Authority to analyse any specific trends at school and local level. Local Authority patterns of behaviour will be shared with schools regularly in order that the school can respond appropriately to locally identified needs.

Links with other policies

- Behaviour
- Attendance
- Additional Needs
- Child Protection
- Complaints - The Welsh Government expects local authorities to ensure all schools have appropriate complaints procedures in place. If school governors are not available to make a decision regarding a complaint, the local authority may be required to step in to appoint suitable persons to do so.
- Equality
- PSE
- ICT

Welsh Government: Statutory Guidance - Rights, Respect Equality, 2019

This series of guidance materials offers further information and advice around developing anti-bullying policy and strategy.

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