

Aberdare Community School Ysgol Gymunedol Aberdâr



Anti-Bullying Policy

Date Adopted	30 th November 2022
Signature of Headteacher	<i>Gareth Morgan</i>
Signature of Chair of Governors	<i>J. Brindley</i>
Date to be reviewed	November 2023

Aberdare Community School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Background

At Aberdare Community School, we believe that all pupils have the right to respect. We are committed to providing a caring, safe atmosphere, so that they can learn and play in a relaxed and friendly manner.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know how to deal with such incidents and who to tell.

We acknowledge that bullying does take place but have a zero tolerance approach towards it. We believe that every young person has the right to be safe. It is everyone's responsibility to watch for early signs of distress, deterioration of learning and wellbeing, isolation and erratic behaviour. This behaviour may be an indication of other problems but it may be the early signs of bullying.

We encourage an open culture in Aberdare Community School where everyone within the organisation has responsibility for reporting and recording incidents of bullying. Every reported incident will be taken seriously and appropriate action taken with those involved.

Statement of Intent

At Aberdare Community School we believe that:

- Bullying is undesirable and unacceptable
- Bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found
- Seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength not weakness
- All members of our community will be listened to and taken seriously
- Everyone has the right to enjoy and achieve in an atmosphere that is free from fear
- All of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others
- Pupils should talk to an adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously
- Pupils should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them
- We all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse
- We believe in tackling bullying by encouraging an environment where individuality is celebrated and individuals can develop without fear

Definitions

Bullying, in the WAG 2019 guidance 'Challenging Bullying' is described as;

Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, which intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally.

Estyn's View (*Tackling bullying in schools: A survey of effective practice – Estyn 2006*)

"Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts or harms."

Aims and Objectives

The aim of our anti-bullying policy:

- To enable everyone to feel safe while at Aberdare Community School and encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying
- To deal with each incident of bullying as effectively as possible, taking into consideration the needs of all parties and of our community, and, as a result, to reduce the incidents of bullying
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to
- To help and support pupils displaying bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of the school community
- To ensure all members of our community feel responsible for helping to reduce bullying

The objectives of our anti-bullying policy:

- Our whole community can evidence ownership of the ACS Anti-Bullying Policy
- To maintain and develop effective listening systems for pupils and staff within the school
- To involve all staff in dealing with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly
- To equip all staff with the skills and information necessary to deal with incidents of bullying
- To communicate with parents and the wider school/setting community effectively on the subject of bullying
- To acknowledge the key role of every staff member in dealing with incidents of bullying
- To ensure that all incidents of bullying are recorded and appropriate use is made of the information, where appropriate sharing it with relevant organisations
- To promote emotional health and wellbeing across the whole school and for all members of our community to role-model this in all situations

When is it not Bullying?

Some behaviour, though unacceptable, is not considered bullying. The school deals with these instances in accordance with the school's behaviour policy to prevent an incident potentially escalating to become bullying.

The following examples are cases which would not normally be considered bullying:

Friendship fallouts	A friendship feud may however deteriorate into bullying behaviour that is enabled by the fact that former friends have an intimate knowledge of the fears and insecurities of one another. Children and young people who are targeted by former
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	friends feel the betrayal deeply and are frequently isolated from their former friendship group.
A one off fight or disagreement/argument	Unless it is part of a pattern of behaviour that indicates intentional targeting of another individual or disagreement between two children or young people is not generally regarded as bullying. Nevertheless they may require assistance to learn to respect others' views.
Insults and banter	Children and young people will often protest that an incident was a joke or banter. If two friends of equal power are in the habit of bantering with one another it is not deemed to be bullying. If one learner uses banter to humiliate or threaten another who is powerless to stop it and made fearful by the act, the border between banter and bullying is likely to be crossed.
A one-off instance of hate crime	Unless this behaviour is repeated it would not usually be regarded as bullying but it would be criminal behaviour, the school would deal with this using their behaviour policy and other relevant policies, such as the school's 'Prevent' policy. If considered necessary, the school would also need to involve the police.

Common Language around Bullying

When referring to the roles played in bullying incidents it is preferable not to label children and young people as a 'victim' or 'bully' because learners are often encouraged to 'hate bullying' which can then translate into hating individuals who bully. It is a label a child or young person can internalise and live up to, or it can impede their ability to change their behaviour. By not labelling someone a bully, space opens up to help them change their unacceptable behaviour and use their power or leadership in other ways. It is helpful to separate the person from the behaviour to allow the person to change. Their behaviour is disliked or unacceptable, but they are not hated as individuals. Labelling learners as 'victims' can entrench their 'otherness' and ensure they are not accepted by their peers. They are seen as weak and many children and young people avoid them for fear of being seen in the same way. Some targeted children or young people begin to believe it is their fault they are bullied and see themselves as a victim.

To reflect this we use the terms 'target' and 'perpetrator'.

Bullying may take many forms:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional/Indirect
- Cyber
- Racist/Homophobic

Common examples of bullying include:

- Bullying around race, religion and culture
- Bullying based on disability or ability
- Bullying based on sexist, sexual and transphobic issues
- Bullying based on homophobia
- Bullying based on use of ICT (Cyberbullying)

It is important that when dealing with incidents of bullying, individual perspectives are taken into account. If a child, young person or adult states that bullying is taking place, actions must be taken to determine why this allegation has been made. Bullying is not always consciously motivated.

1. Defining Bullying linked to race, religion and culture

This form of bullying describes a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded or powerless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith (including lack of faith), national origin or national status.

Historically, the term 'racism' has been used in situations where colour and physical appearance are considered to be significant markers of difference. However, there has almost always been a cultural element as well.

Racism around skin colour continues to be prevalent, and schools must continue to be alert to it and to challenge it. But also there are forms of racism which are primarily to do with culture, customs, religion and heritage. These too must be addressed and countered by schools.

Under this category we also have to consider;

Anti-Gypsyism

Anti-refugee prejudice

Anti-Semitism

Islamophobia

2. Bullying involving learners with disabilities and/or SEN

Reports from Mencap and the Anti-Bullying Alliance show that children and young people with disabilities and/or SEN are more likely to experience bullying than their peers. A study by the Institute of Education in 2014 found that even after controlling other factors that might influence the likelihood of a child being bullied, at age seven a child with SEN is twice as likely to be bullied as a child with no SEN.

Learners with a disability and/or SEN learners may be more vulnerable to bullying because:

- of negative attitudes towards disability or perceived disability
- of a lack of understanding of different disabilities and conditions
- they may not recognise they are being bullied
- they may be doing different work or have additional support at school
- they may be more isolated than others due to their disability or condition
- they may find it harder to make friends as a result of their disability or condition
- they may exhibit perceived bullying behaviour due to their disability or condition, e.g. autistic learners may not be aware of other people's personal space, or learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may interrupt conversations or talk over other learners
- they may experience lots of change, e.g. moving from a mainstream to a special school or learner referral unit, or spending periods of time in hospital.

3. Defining Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are specific forms of bullying motivated by prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people (including those questioning their sexuality), someone with a LGBT relative or simply because a learner is different in some way. It is not characterised by specific acts but by the negative attitudes and beliefs towards LGBT people that underlie these.

4. Defining Sexist and sexual bullying

Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes repeatedly expressed in ways that demean, intimidate and/or harm another person because of their sex or gender. It may sometimes be characterised by repeated inappropriate sexual behaviours.

It is also commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes. Sexual bullying and sexual harassment are terms which are often used interchangeably in schools, with sexual bullying often regarded as a type of sexual harassment. Whether the incident is considered sexual bullying or sexual harassment, this is addressed in our safeguarding policy. Sexual bullying can affect boys and girls.

5. Defining Online Bullying

Online bullying behaviour can take different forms including:

- **profile** – people do not have to be physically stronger, older, or more popular than the person they are bullying online
- **location** – online bullying is not confined to a physical location and it can take place at any time. Incidents can take place in a learner's own home, intruding into spaces previously regarded as safe and private
- **audience** – online content can be hard to remove and can be recirculated and reposted. The potential numbers of people who can see content posted online is very large. Single incidents of online abuse can quickly escalate into bullying, e.g. by reposting, sharing and through comments
- **anonymity** – the person being targeted by bullying may not necessarily know the identity of the perpetrator(s) of the bullying behaviour. The target also will not know who has seen the abusive content. If the perpetrator actively hides their identity from the target this may be considered a form of passive aggression and, if repeated, this could constitute bullying
- **motivation** – online bullying is typically carried out on purpose. However, initial incidents may have unintended consequences, and can escalate through the involvement of others. An individual may not feel that by endorsing or reposting someone else's post that they are actively participating in bullying. The instigator may not have intended an offensive or hurtful comment to be repeated. A single incident – one upsetting post or message – may escalate into bullying involving a number of people over time.

The law relating to bullying

Legislation applies in Wales, the UK and internationally that aims to protect the rights of children and young people to a life free from abuse and harm including bullying. Existing legislation and

international conventions with relevance to bullying in Wales include, set out in chronological order, the following:

Protection of Children Act 1978 (as amended)
Malicious Communications Act 1988
Criminal Justice Act 1988
Children Act 1989
Education Act 1996
Protection from Harassment Act 1997
Human Rights Act 1998
Education Act 2002
Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended)
Children Act 2004
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
Education and Inspections Act 2006
Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008
Equality Act 2010
Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011
Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
Serious Crime Act 2015
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Indications of learners who may be at risk from bullying may include learners who:

- are frightened of walking to and from school
- does not want to go to school or on the bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or running away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in their school work
- comes home with torn clothes or damaged books
- has possessions go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies are continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings

- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Aberdare Community School views bullying seriously. The main aim is to foster an atmosphere where bullying is discouraged, stopped quickly and is seen to be inappropriate and wrong.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Learners who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Powers of schools to exclude learners for bullying

Guidance from the Welsh Government indicates that there are some instances where schools may consider exclusion in cases of serious bullying.

- A decision to exclude a learner permanently should be taken only:
 - in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy
 - if allowing the learner to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the learner or others in the school.
- There will be exceptional circumstances where it is appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:
 - serious, actual or threatened violence against another learner or a member of staff
 - sexual abuse or assault.

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, schools should avoid permanently excluding learners with statements of special educational needs.

Prevention.

At Aberdare Community School, we are constantly working to tackle bullying. We use many ways to inform staff and learners about the subject. We show how seriously we take any form of bullying through the following:

- Anti-bullying week.
- School Rules.
- Assemblies.
- School Council.
- PSE shut down days.
- Class management.
- Monitoring behaviour.
- Break and lunchtimes being closely monitored.
- Training for all staff.
- Outside speakers and guests.
- Emphasis on team ethic through Sport, P.E., Music, after school clubs.
- Pastoral care.
- YEPs
- School Counsellors

- Police Liaison Officer
- RAIS

Procedure

1. All stakeholders have a duty to stop and/or ensure that any suspected cases of bullying are reported as soon as they occur.
2. Incidents of alleged bullying can be reported to any member of our school community. The recipient must then immediately pass that report to the Progress Leader.
3. Children are then interviewed individually usually by a member of the pastoral team and statements written.
4. Once it has been established that the incident meets the school and WG definition of bullying a report is written in class charts by the Progress Leader or a senior member of staff. In the case of more serious incidents the Deputy Headteacher with oversight of the Pastoral Teams should be informed immediately.
5. It is important that the target feels that they will be dealt with sympathetically. The recipient should encourage the target to talk about the incident(s) but should not promise to withhold information that will result in no action.
6. The Progress Leader or member of the pastoral team will investigate the incident(s) using the same procedures as other disciplinary matters. Where the circumstances warrant, parents/guardians will be notified of bullying incidents.
7. A restorative meeting will be made available to both the perpetrator and target. The school also has access to 'eye to eye' counselling. If further services are required (Behavioural Support, Children Services, Educational Psychology, police liaison officer, YEPS) then the appropriate outside referral will be made initially by telephone and formally by the 'multi agency referral form'.
8. The school's established sanctions will be used against the perpetrator(s). Exclusion could result for serious or long-lasting offences where the perpetrator constantly ignores warnings and sanctions employed.
9. Where students experience cyber bullying outside school; students are advised to save all messages and report the incident to the school and/or police. Where incidents of bullying have taken place outside school but impact on school life, the school will take action and work with parents and/or the police to resolve the issues ensuring the target/s are supported.
10. Where serious incidents occur the school will advise parents/guardians to notify the police and will work with all parties to prevent further abuse.

Parents/Carers

It is important that parents are encouraged to contact the school if they are concerned regarding any types of bullying and we will work with parents and the local community to address issues outside of school.

Learners

- Bullying themes are regularly included in assembly material for all year groups, in particular cyber bullying
- Community police officer will talk to all learners through assemblies and shut down days about cyber bullying
- Y Senedd has an antibullying committee who are guided into considering school bullying and associated aspects. They greatly contribute to the school's ethos and effectiveness of dealing with issues.
- The school will utilise many outside agencies as support and consequently the learners have access to many counselling and support services in and outside school.

Staff

- All new members of staff including student teachers will discuss the anti-bullying policy and procedures with the member of the Senior Management Team who is responsible for their induction
- The procedures will be disseminated to all other staff through staff meetings, informal conversations and INSET days. All staff have access to this policy which can be found in staff admin – policies and procedures.

Governors

- The policy will be presented to the Governing Body every two years for readopting. Account will be taken of their views.

