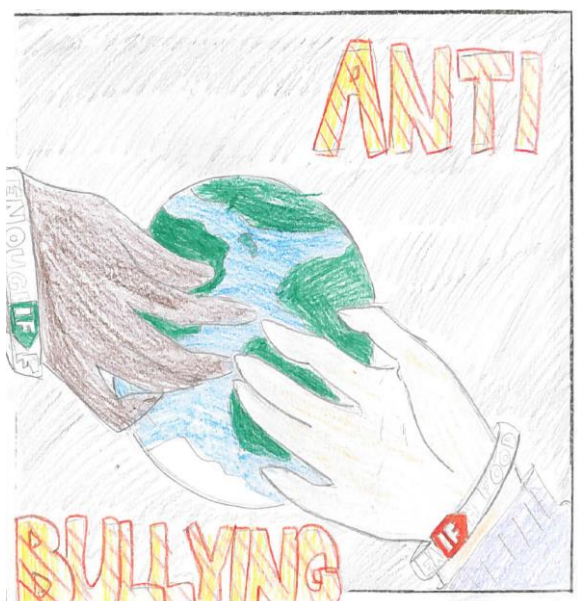


# Denbighshire Education Service

## Anti-Bullying Strategy

### “Respecting Others”

*A strategy to help schools and other settings tackle bullying and promote respect.*



Original Strategy date:	January 2014
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Annual Review Date by LA	September 2019

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**Related materials can be found at <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/education-and-schools/information-for-schools/anti-bullying/anti-bullying.aspx>**

# Introduction

## Foreword

Denbighshire continues to be committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential, including the right to learn in a safe and protective environment free from racism, bullying or discrimination of any kind. The work we propose through this document is in keeping with the “Respecting Others” Welsh Government Anti-Bullying guidance ([www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills](http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills)) and The Equality Act 2010 in understanding the importance of identifying and protecting those individuals who share a protected characteristic as much as those who do not.

Research clearly shows that emotional and social wellbeing is the basis of both good academic attainment and also the development of social skills that all members of a community need to successfully interact and thrive. As such, the damaging effects of bullying are long term and far reaching, impacting upon personal and social development as well as educational achievement.

We know that bullying happens, but preventing it can present a huge challenge. That is why we need to work together to be proactive to address this issue. The purpose of this strategy is to promote a consistent message across Denbighshire that bullying is taken very seriously and managed through a combination of prevention and intervention measures. It also intends to outline the responsibilities of the local authority, schools and governing bodies in tackling bullying in schools through the development and implementation of effective anti-bullying strategies and partnership work.

The main objectives of this strategy are to;

- Promote partnership working between schools and the authority.
- Establish effective recording measures of bullying incidents across schools.
- Establish targets to increase the reporting of bullying incidents in schools and overtime reduce the frequency of incidents.
- Intervene effectively when bullying happens through identifying trends and targeting resources.

This document has been informed by the following key documents which it is recommended are read in conjunction with any anti-bullying policy development you may wish to make.

- ❖ **The Equality Act 2010.**
- ❖ National Assembly for Wales Guidance 050/2011 **Respecting others: Anti-bullying overview.**
- ❖ National Assembly for Wales Guidance 051/2011 **Respecting others: Bullying around race, religion and culture.**
- ❖ National Assembly for Wales Guidance 052/2011 **Respecting Others: Bullying around special educational needs and disabilities.**
- ❖ National Assembly for Wales Guidance 055/2011 **Respecting Others: Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.**
- ❖ National Assembly for Wales Guidance 056/2011 **Respecting Others: Homophobic bullying.**
- ❖ National Assembly for Wales Guidance 057/2011 **Respecting Others: Cyber bullying**
- ❖ **The School Effectiveness Framework 2008.**

# **Anti-Bullying in Denbighshire**

## **What is bullying?**

There are many definitions of bullying which all have three main things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour (including aggression).
- Repeated, often over a period of time. It is not a “one-off” incident.
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying frequently focuses on individual differences or anything that is implied to be different from the majority. Aspects of body shape or appearance and cultural or ethnically based lifestyles may all be the focus of bullying. It may also reflect upon race, gender, religion or nationality, or spring from parental ignorance, bigotry or community divides. In this respect bullying undermines the school’s work in promoting respect, equal opportunities and teaching social and commonly accepted moral principles.

Many behaviours, which in the school context, are called bullying, may be defined in law as threatening behaviour, criminal damage, theft, assault, sexual, racial or homophobic harassment. It is the right of all children and young people and parents/carers to report such incidents to the police. “Bullying” is not defined as a crime, when a “bullying” incident occurs and if is reported to the police then the police will reframe the incident in a definition of a “crime” as exists and is defined by statute.

Bullying may not be restricted to incidents between children and young people. Accusations of bullying between, and towards, adults may also be made. Acknowledgement of such potential incidents should be made in school policies. Teachers and other adults who work with children and young people may be vulnerable to being victims of bullying. They need to take steps to protect themselves, for example by carefully limiting access to their personal information and equipment.

## **What are the effects of bullying?**

There is much evidence to highlight the affects of bullying across academic performance, mental health, well-being and physical health problems.

A Childline bullying report states that bullying has been one of the top five concerns reported to them every year since 1989, with the service delivering 25,740 counselling sessions to young people in the year 2015/16 for the area of bullying. Child Line have also recognised the changing world of bullying with incidences of young people contacting them about online bullying rising by 88% over the past five years. *Source: What children are telling us about bullying, Childline bullying Report 2015/16.*

### **Who is involved in bullying?**

#### **The person who exhibits bullying behaviour – the bully**

A bully may tend towards the following behaviours.

- Aim to display power in some form – size, popularity, athleticism, knowledge, etc.

- Lack empathy.
- Blame others to excuse their own behaviour.
- Does not accept responsibility.
- Crave attention.
- Be impulsive, hot-headed, and dominant.
- Be easily frustrated.
- Have difficulty following rules.

Why do bullies do it?

- It is important to determine if they themselves have their own problems, so they may feel upset or angry or feel that they don't fit in; perhaps they have problems at home?
- It may be that they are a victim of bullying themselves, perhaps by someone in their own family.
- They are scared of getting picked on so they do it.
- They want to show off and seem "tough".

Research has also identified that parenting factors may contribute to the perpetration of bullying and the persistence of bullying behaviour. Identified family risk factors include inconsistent approach to discipline, overly-permissive parenting, low warmth or involvement from parents/carers, or strict or harsh disciplinary penalties.

If a child is left to exhibit bullying behaviours without intervention, these may escalate to other types of antisocial or more aggressive behaviours. It is important, therefore, that while interventions may include disciplinary sanctions and also hold the bully to account for their behaviour they are also offered support themselves. Such consequences as 'zero tolerance' and expelling students who bully are not likely to alter their behaviour in the future and in fact escalate the situation for them and the victim. Therefore it is important to provide opportunities for the individual to begin to understand the harm they may have caused and begin to learn more appropriate ways to manage their feelings or emotions in the future.

### **The person who experiences the bullying behaviours**

Any child can be bullied, but there are some factors which may make a child more likely to be exposed to being bullied. It is important to note, however, that none of these characteristics can ever excuse bullying:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Lacking close friends in school.       | • Being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority.     |
| • Being shy.                             | • Religious affiliation.   |
| • An over-protective family environment. | • Speaking a different language or using a different accent from the |
| • Behaving inappropriately, intruding or |  |

being a 'nuisance'.

- Having a precocious talent.
  - Being different in some obvious respect – such as stammering.
  - Having special educational needs or a disability.
  - Physical, mental or sensory impairment.
  - Scarring or disfigurement on the face or body.
  - Mental illness.
  - Having a long-term medical condition such as diabetes or asthma.
  - Physical characteristics, such as 'thinness' or obesity. Different stages of puberty can mean individuals may be early or late developers. Being different from the perceived norm of the peer group may mean you are seen as a target for bullying.
- majority of the pupils.
  - Possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones, computer games, designer clothing (or conversely not possessing these).
  - A knowledge or perception that a child has a sexual orientation which is different from the majority.
  - Having physical characteristics or traits which do not conform to recognisable traditional forms of masculinity or femininity.
  - Coming from a different social class than that of the majority of the pupils.
  - Evidence of poverty.
  - Being from a family with unorthodox or 'different' family structures.
  - Looked after children or young carers.

Children who are bullied tend to struggle with creating and maintaining peer relationships which can limit their opportunities to develop effective social skills. Research shows that where an individual has been bullied over a period of time they tend to develop 'self blame', a coping behaviour where they blame themselves for the situation they are in, leading them to feel helpless instead of adopting a healthy approach to problem solving. As such, some of the most successful interventions focus on increasing levels of resilience amongst victims of bullying, such as social skills or assertiveness training, which have been shown to improve their self esteem, sense of competence and abilities to effectively cope with bullying behaviours.

### **The person who observes or knows about the bullying behaviour – the “bystander effect”**

A bystander is *'a person who does not become actively involved in a situation where someone else requires help'* (Clarkson 1996, p6) and in this way is understood to be a passive observer, an onlooker who watches something happening, but stays on the side-lines and does not intervene or get help, even if someone needs it. Being a “bystander” is not passive; and witnesses to bullying play very different roles, some more active than others, and these “bystanders” contribute significantly to what takes place. The “bystander” is condoning and empowering the bully by not intervening. 'Doing nothing' does have a real impact on events and may cause harm. In Finland, it was recognised that most pupils in a class are bystanders of bullying situations, aware of what's going on and sometimes participating (Salmivalli 1996, 1999). Researchers asked the question *'What do other children do while the bully is harassing the victim?'* and it was observed that as well as those who are bullied and those who bully, there are usually other witnesses who, through adopting particular roles, influence and affect what happens. The following *'participant roles'* were identified:

- 'Assistants' who join in and assist the bully;
- 'Reinforcers' who do not actively attack the victim but give positive feedback to the bully, providing an audience by laughing and making other encouraging gestures.

- ‘Outsiders’ who stay away, not taking sides with anyone or becoming involved, but allowing the bullying to continue by their ‘silent approval’.
- ‘Defenders’ who show anti-bullying behaviour, comforting the victim, taking sides with them and trying to stop the bullying.

Bullying is therefore seen to be a group phenomenon in which a variety of players contribute a number of roles, pressures and influences, either intentionally or unintentionally, and ‘are substantially involved in playground bullying, whether as active participants or as “bystanders” who are unable or unwilling to act pro-socially.’

Bystanders can successfully reduce victimisation, by reducing the social reinforcement of the bully’s actions through the use of a number of strategies such as not joining in, voicing disapproval, reporting incidents, etc. In our schools it would assist if we could empower the reluctant “bystander” to report incidents which they feel unable to directly intervene to address themselves.

## **Promoting partnership with the local authority**

A key strand of any successful anti-bullying strategy is a mechanism that allows for schools and individuals with a responsibility for anti-bullying to work effectively and in partnership with the local authority. This is supported by schools keeping accurate records of bullying incidents and returning this data to the authority as requested. This will allow resources to be used most effectively and also meets the schools statutory duties under the Education Act 2002 and The Equality Act 2010.

In addition, this strategy will contribute directly to a number of key local DCC priorities, including Denbighshire’s Corporate Plan and Corporate Well-being Plan.

As an authority we are able to offer a number of support agencies in relation to anti-bullying work. These include –

- Behaviour Support Service (BSS).
- Educational Psychology Service (EPS).
- **Education Welfare Service (EWS).**
- School Based Counselling Service (SBC).
- Youth Service.

## **Effective anti-bullying strategies**

### **Role of the school and governing body or Senior Leadership Team.**

Schools are ideally placed to play a key role in tackling issues associated with bullying. By effectively challenging bullying, schools can create a safe environment for children and young people, helping them to realise their potential and improve their emotional health and wellbeing. It also demonstrates that the school cares and makes clear to bullies that such behaviour is unacceptable and will be challenged.

### **Anti-bullying Policies**

All schools, by law, must have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Head teachers and governing bodies will need to satisfy themselves that their policies comply with a number of key pieces of legislation, including the:

- Human Rights Act 1998.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991).
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 – *which requires schools to draw up a race equality policy and ensure that policies do not discriminate against racial groups. It also places a duty on schools to ‘promote race equality and good race relations’.*
- Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) - *This requires the responsible body of a school to make reasonable adjustments to policies, procedures and practices that place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled peers.*
- *The Equality Act 2010* - making particular reference to bullying on the grounds of pupil’s protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) within the policy.

The anti-bullying policy should also clearly link to other school policies, for example the:

- Behaviour policy - in some cases the anti-bullying policy may be a sub-section of this document. It should make clear how bullying incidents will be managed and dealt with for all involved.
- Child Protection Policy – particularly in severe cases of bullying, particularly those involving sexual harassment or aggression.
- Complaints Policy.
- School Strategic Equality Plan – it is a legal requirement for all schools to publish this.

The anti-bullying policy should be drawn up in consultation with the whole school community; pupils, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, governors and parents/carers. An agreed policy should be short, succinct and written in language that everyone understands. It is good practice to produce a children and young person friendly version of the policy.

It should include:

- Recognition that bullying encompasses the following three elements
  - It is deliberately hurtful behaviour (including aggression).
  - Repeated, often over a period of time. It is not a “one-off” incident.
  - It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.
 This may be through including a definition of bullying if you have an agreed one;
- Aims and objectives;
- Whole-school preventative measures, intervention techniques, curriculum support, training policy (depending on resources);
- Procedures to follow – who to tell, how to record bullying (including possibly providing a system for pupils to inform confidentially) and how it will be dealt with.

### **How to develop and review your current “Anti-bullying Policy”**

The following information is based on the school anti-bullying policy self assessment tool piloted by the Welsh Government during the 2007/08 academic year, but it also draws upon guidance produced by the “**Anti-bullying Alliance**” on what makes a successful anti-bullying policy. Welsh Government Guidance states that the policy should be named “Anti-bullying.” This policy will be requested by Estyn and has to be reviewed by the governing body annually.

An effective policy should be divided into the following sections:

- Introduction
  - Values and ethos statement



- Objectives and desired outcomes of policy
- Named person
- Context.
- Consultation.
- Prevention – reducing the frequency of bullying.
- Reaction – responding effectively to reported incidents of bullying.
- Development and review.

An anti-bullying policy should refer to and link with policies concerned with health, safety and wellbeing, child protection, safeguarding, equal opportunities and rights, behaviour and support and parental or carer involvement.

All policies should be reviewed annually and should follow six key steps to ensure this is carried out effectively –

**Step 1 – Working Group.**

**Step 2 – Consultation – how effective is the current policy?**

**Step 3 – Strengths and weaknesses of current policy through information gathered in Step 2.**

**Step 4 – Making appropriate changes to the policy.**

**Step 5 – Pulling it all together and further consultation if needed.**

**Step 6 – Final draft and beyond**

**Further information and guidance on each step can be found at**

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/education-and-schools/information-for-schools/anti-bullying/anti-bullying.aspx>

## **Current reporting procedures**

All schools in Denbighshire are responsible for recording their own data of bullying incidents amongst their population. Best practice would be for this to be done as each incident occurs and the SIMS recording system allows this. Biannually (February and September) schools are then expected to forward this data to the authority through the SIMS recording sheet. All data will then be collated by the authority.

Guidance on data collection and reporting procedure is available at

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/education-and-schools/information-for-schools/anti-bullying/anti-bullying.aspx>

The categories under which the bullying incidents are recorded allow information to be collated on the type of bullying and methods used to allow trends to be identified across the data. Categories also link to the protective characteristic under The Equality Act 2010.

## **Consultation of the strategy**

Consultation around the development of this strategy was originally achieved over a period of four months, with the involvement of a wide range of partner agencies and school personnel.

Further consultation of this strategy was carried out at Denbighshire's Education Health and Well Being Group in October 2015.

## **Monitoring the strategy**

The objectives of this strategy will continue to be monitored through –

- Sharing of information and resources through the authority's website.
- Delivery of services to school and evaluation of service usage.
- Recording of incidents by schools on SIMS and biannual review and collation of this data.
- Annual review of the strategy as a whole.
- Amendment of the document as necessity dictates.

This strategy will continue to be monitored and reviewed through the authorities Education Health and Well Being Group, allowing multi-agency working and promotion of links with school staff.