

Anti – Bullying Policy

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Introduction and Context

Why do Schools Need an Anti-Bullying Policy?

In November 2019, Welsh Government published the following guidance documents:

- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for parents and carers
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for schools
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for local authorities
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: A guide for children
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: A guide for young people

These guidance documents contain detailed information on anti-bullying, including online toolkits to support implementation of the guidance at an operational level. Staff and governors with responsibility for anti-bullying should make themselves familiar with these materials.

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children and young people is of paramount importance for the local authority, our schools and all educational settings.

Bullying is an issue which is high on the agenda for us all. It is a requirement for all schools to have a policy which clearly sets out their strategies for preventing and responding to bullying behaviours, including those that are based on protected characteristics. This guidance provides advice to headteachers and educational staff on how to manage this process most effectively.

By taking a proactive approach and addressing bullying effectively we can reduce the instances and the long-term impact.

It is expected that all those who work in schools in Powys will adopt and implement this guidance.

The local authority is committed to the principles and values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in all aspects of our work. Everybody has the right to feel valued and entitled to the respect of others, both within and out of the formal learning environment.

The local authority is committed to the principles of inclusion and equality and recognises that these are essential to the promotion of positive behaviour. This is underpinned by a commitment to fostering the wellbeing of all learners and young people. The creation of nurturing, healthy and safe environments is crucial in enabling learners and young people to thrive.

The local authority recognises the need to create an ethos that is engaging, empowering and supportive in order for learning and positive behaviour to develop. The cornerstones of trust, respect, inclusion and high expectations of all are integral to creating a well-disciplined learning environment.

The local authority has adopted the Powys Children's Pledge. The pledge forms a commitment to everyone under the age of 25. The pledge is based on what children and young people have said is important to them.

Promises within the pledge include providing access to information, listening to views, providing safe environments, and treating all children equally. The pledge is a commitment to help children and young people to 'Start Well' through equal access to services, support and life opportunities. The pledge reminds us all of our duty of care to children, in line with the Health and Care Strategy for Powys and the council's vision and values.

Policy and Procedures

Addressing bullying in the context of Estyn's Inspection Framework

Estyn's Inspection Framework includes clear links to preventing bullying in two of the inspection areas which are:

- well-being and attitudes to learning
- care, support and guidance

Estyn inspectors will consider:

"how well the school responds to and manages any incidents relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination.

They should consider how well the school's arrangements foster a positive approach to managing learners' behaviour and an anti-bullying culture."

The Welsh Government expects school anti-bullying policies to outline:

- the vision and values of their school
- their definition of what is meant by bullying
- why it is important to prevent and challenge bullying
- how awareness of bullying will be raised
- how anti-bullying work will be embedded in the curriculum rather than an isolated annual event (such as during anti-bullying week)
- involvement of staff, learners, parents/carers and school governors in development and implementation of the policy
- signs a child or young person might be experiencing bullying
- how bullying will be prevented including on journeys to and from school • when the school will take action in relation to bullying outside the school
- how the school will respond to incidents
- how to report bullying
- what learners can expect
- what parents/carers can expect
- how incidents will be recorded and monitored
- how learners and/or parents/carers can appropriately escalate the matter if they do not feel that their concerns are being taken seriously
- how the school will evaluate and review their policy and strategy

Anti-Bullying Policy - Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm

The vision and values of the school

Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm adopts a whole-school approach for promoting positive, respectful behaviour between staff and learners as part of our whole school approach to wellbeing. This approach should be woven through all school activity. Creating an environment which encourages positive behaviour and addresses the root causes of unacceptable behaviour will help create an inclusive and engaging environment where learners feel safe and are ready to learn.

'HAFAN' is at the heart of our vision for Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm. Ensuring that our school is a Haven "Hafan" for all our pupils is our primary aim. Our role as educators is to take on that crucial responsibility of carefully placing a stable platform from which every child can 'take off' into the diverse wider world. Every child who enters our school gates can expect the best. Through rich, inclusive and stimulating experiences, 'discovery' will ignite our children's creativity and inspire a love for lifelong learning.

What is meant by bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying in Wales or indeed in Great Britain. Therefore, the definition used in this guidance builds upon widely used principles established in the UK since 1993. Welsh Government guidance defines bullying as:

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

There are a number of distinctive elements associated with bullying. These include but are not limited to the following:

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 or images were not intended.

Repetition: bullying usually involves repeated 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.

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 (see appendix 2 for more information on online bullying).

Relational aggression: bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's special educational needs (SEN) 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 (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). 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.

There are specific types of bullying relating to protected characteristics.

These can broadly be categorised into the following groups:

- Bullying connected with age;
- Bullying involving learners with disabilities, which can include SEN;
- Homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic bullying;
- Bullying connected with race, religion and/or culture;
- Sexist and/or sexual bullying.

What is not bullying?

Some behaviour, though unacceptable is not considered bullying.

The Welsh Government expects these instances to be dealt with in accordance with our school's behaviour policy to prevent an incident potentially escalating to become bullying. Some cases might be a safeguarding matter or require involvement of the police. A young person may be in need of multi-agency support or therapeutic intervention.

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 friends feel the betrayal deeply and are frequently isolated from their former friendship group

A one-off fight: the Welsh Government expects it to be addressed according to the school's behaviour policy unless it is part of a pattern of behaviour that indicates intentional targeting of another individual.

An argument 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.

A one-off physical assault: the Welsh Government expects it to be stopped and addressed immediately. Police involvement in cases where physical assault has happened may also be appropriate.

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, which the Welsh Government would expect to be dealt with in accordance with the school's 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.

Why it is important to prevent and challenge bullying

Evidence shows that bullying has a destructive and harmful impact on the lives of children and young people, not only on those being bullied but also on those who bully and those who stand by. It can lead to feelings of self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and sometimes even suicide. It can also affect the ability of a child or young person to enjoy and achieve.

Bullying will not be tolerated in our school. We will make sure that all staff including teachers, teaching and support assistants, school cook, cleaning staff, learners, voluntary helpers and visiting multi-disciplinary staff are aware of our policy. Our aim to combat bullying in the first instance will be a preventative one, as it is agreed that "prevention is better than cure". Learners will be encouraged to develop an attitude of caring and consideration towards others, taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their fellow learners and their needs. These attitudes will be emphasised especially through specific class projects and discussions in assemblies and RVE as well as forming an explicit part of the PSE. This is the ethos of the school and is encapsulated in the school vision and aims. We must acknowledge however that a few of our learners are unable to express their concerns and fears; this makes it even more important that as members of staff we are even more aware of learners' communication needs and it will be made clear that bullying is not acceptable.

How awareness of bullying will be raised

If there is a good level of awareness in the whole school community about unacceptable behaviour it is likely more learners will come forward to report it.

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- ensure that, on induction, all new staff are made aware of the policy, the approach taken by the school and how the procedures are administered;
- ensure that playground, lunch time and school transport supervisors and school administrators are fully aware of the policy and the procedures they should follow;
- regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying;
- ensure that learners know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying;
- ensure that all learners are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying;
- involve learners in anti-bullying campaigns in schools;
- publish the anti-bullying policy on the school website;
- publicise details of useful helplines and websites;
- offer support to learners who have been bullied;
- work with learners who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have.

How anti-bullying work will be embedded in the curriculum rather than an isolated annual event
(such as during anti-bullying week)

Creating an environment which encourages positive behaviour and addresses the root causes of unacceptable behaviour will help create an inclusive and engaging environment where learners feel safe and are ready to learn.

The school strives to ensure that our learners are aware of what is bullying. The importance of the following are emphasized regularly:

- respecting others;
- respecting property;

- showing respect to the wider community;
- acting consistently.

This is achieved by:

- presentations and daily assemblies;
- 'Check ins' and 'check outs';
- consultation with the school council;
- cross-curricular work;
- working with external agencies, for example, police and school nurse;
- Theatre in Education workshops

The Curriculum for Wales identifies four purposes for the curriculum. It recommends that the entirety of the school curriculum should be designed to help all children and young people to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, ready to be citizens of Wales and the world;
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience is about the physical, psychological, emotional and social aspects of our lives. One-off lessons or short 'blitz' type activities are less likely to succeed than work embedded in the curriculum which progressively addresses relationships, positive behaviour and resilience.

Work across the curriculum builds a supportive school culture and shared values. It can be instrumental in enabling and empowering learners to acquire and maintain the social skills that will allow them to constructively manage their relationships with others and equip them to respond to bullying in an appropriate and, if necessary, assertive way. This approach to bullying enables the issue to be introduced progressively in an age, gender and culturally appropriate way and not treated as a 'one-off' lesson. It allows learners to make use of preferred and appropriate learning styles and can include the use of literature, audio visual material, drama, music, debates and outside visitors.

Targeted initiatives provide an opportunity to reinforce a positive and inclusive school culture. This can include awareness days, workshops, signposting and drop-in sessions as well as involving the wider neighbourhood and utilising a variety of organisations.

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm, we will involve staff, learners, parents/carers and school governors in the development and implementation of the policy.

Successful implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy to challenge and prevent bullying in schools must involve the whole school community. Taking a whole-school approach is more likely to succeed than a single initiative by a teacher or group of learners.

Without the wholehearted involvement of the school population anti-bullying strategies are not likely to succeed as they are unlikely to be successfully implemented. Schools should consult learners as an essential step in all stages of anti-bullying work.

If learners feel 'ownership' of the anti-bullying strategy, they are more likely to abide by it. It also allows them to influence decisions on matters that affect them, in line with their rights under the UNCRC. As respected members of the school, learners are more likely to feel a sense of belonging.

Successful anti-bullying work respects every member of the school community and demonstrates this respect rather than imposing a set of rules onto learners without any reference to how well this is working.

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm, we will:

- engage widely with the school community to ensure that our policies and procedures are relevant and update them accordingly;
- set clear and realistic objectives about what the strategy aims to achieve (awareness raising activities will be undertaken to promote these objectives among staff and learners);
- provide training, if needed, on how to implement the objectives of the strategy;
- consult with all those involved in implementing the strategy as to how well the strategy is working.

It is imperative that children and young people are taught, both at home and in school, about building and maintaining respectful relationships. This is the foundation on which positive behaviour is based. Parents/carers have an important role to play, as part of the school community, in taking responsibility for their child's behaviour inside and outside school. Partnership working between the school and parents/carers to maintain high standards of behaviour and to encourage respect and kindness towards other people is vital.

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm, we will ensure that parents/carers:

- know how the school would like them to report any concerns and how to escalate matters appropriately should they not be satisfied with the outcome of their initial concern;
- know who to speak to when raising a concern about bullying and what evidence to provide;
- have been engaged to support their children and support the vision and values of the school;
- are aware that prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable within the school community;
- are aware of the school's complaints procedure, in case they are not satisfied with the way the school has dealt with a case of bullying they reported;
- are aware that bullying school staff via social media is not acceptable.

Signs a child or young person might be experiencing bullying Indicators that a child is being bullied could include:

- reluctance to go to school;
- appearing frightened of or during the journey to and from school;
- changing their usual route;
- being anxious, moody, withdrawn, quiet; complaining of illnesses such as stomach aches and headaches;
- bed-wetting in a previously dry child or young person;
- having nightmares or sleeping difficulties;
- coming home regularly with missing or damaged possessions;
- arriving home hungry;
- asking for extra money or stealing money;
- truanting; • deterioration in their work or handwriting;
- not eating;
- unexplained cuts and bruises;
- being aggressive and bullying others;
- giving improbable excuses for any of the above.

How bullying will be prevented, including on journeys to and from school

Creating a whole-school ethos

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- adopt a whole-school approach for promoting positive, respectful behaviour between staff and learners as part of our whole school approach to well-being - this approach will be woven through all school activity;
- create an environment which encourages positive behaviour and addresses the root causes of unacceptable behaviour – this will help create an inclusive and engaging environment where learners feel safe and are ready to learn;
- teach children and train staff about respect, positive behaviour, stereotypes and addressing prejudice;

- build confidence to enable unacceptable language to be challenged and addressed;
- ensure effective supervision between lessons with safe places provided for vulnerable learners during these times;
- communicate a clear message of positive behaviour, kindness, loyalty and team spirit.

Tailoring intervention

Young children who bully others using insults may not always understand the hurt they have caused and may be repeating what they have heard at home or in the community. We will address this through:

- sensitive restorative work;
- group activities exploring why some words are unacceptable can be used;
- meetings with parents/carers to remind them about the values of the school. When young people become adolescents, they are more likely to be influenced by their peers and therefore interventions should address the whole group or class so that the majority opinion can be heard.

When the school will take action in relation to bullying outside the school

Bullying outside school can include online bullying.

Welsh Government guidance states that while schools are able to regulate certain conduct off school premises, such as bullying behaviour, they can only impose sanctions when the learner is on the school site or under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff.

A sanction could be imposed while a learner is on a school trip, but not while the learner is on their journey home from school for instance. In such circumstances, the member of staff could indicate to the learner that they have been seen misbehaving and/or engaging in bullying behaviour and will receive a sanction; however, the member of staff must wait until the learner is next in school to apply the sanction.

The Welsh Government expects that any misbehaviour, including bullying, on the journey to and from school should be dealt with using the most appropriate policy, such as the school's behaviour or anti-bullying policies or by enforcement of the Travel Code.

How the school will respond to incidents

Staff should be mindful that a learner may approach any member of staff they trust. Staff training and regular updates will increase their readiness and confidence to notice and respond when issues of bullying present.

The most effective interventions are sustained over the long-term, developed with staff, learners, parents and partners in the community. These are monitored, evaluated and revised to reflect changes in circumstances or context. Interventions are supported by a school ethos which inhibits bullying and promotes empathy and respect for diversity. A single strategy or initiative is unlikely to provide a solution to bullying and the most effective anti-bullying strategy will usually include a range of tools which can be adapted to suit particular incidents and form part of the school's wider whole school approach to well-being.

Interventions may be at class level, year group level or only with the perpetrator/s. Whole-school response There are frequently learning opportunities for the whole class or year group which can be implemented without mentioning the name of the person who reported it. This protects against retaliation.

Whole-school response

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Responding to the perpetrator

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- give perpetrators the opportunity to put their side of the story before any decisions on penalties are made;
- determine the most appropriate sanction in line with behaviour policy;
- aim to address the root causes for the bullying happening in the first instance - this is likely to have the greatest impact in preventing the issue from continuing. Where isolation is used to tackle bullying, this will be used short-term and as part of a longer-term plan for addressing the root cause of the bullying. Staff will explain to learners the reason why they have been isolated and outline that the strategy is a short-term intervention as part of a longer-term plan to address the issue.

How to report bullying At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm

There are several ways in which learners can report bullying.

These include:

- peers;
- members of staff;
- parents or carers

Family Liaison Officer

Supporting the learner who has reported that they have been bullied

Effective listening

Those who are targets of bullying tend to feel powerless. One of the first steps when responding to incidents is to work to restore their capacity to make choices for themselves. Using effective listening techniques staff (or a peer supporter where these are used) can help the targeted learner to feel they are doing something about the problem.

We will:

- acknowledge calmly the anger or distress of the targeted child or young person speaking;
- try not to rush them if they need time to process their thoughts;
- be mindful that it may have required considerable courage to come and report what is happening;
- thank the learner for reporting the problem;
- explain to them the next steps of how their concerns will be taken forward.

Consider the Setting

We will:

- sit at the same level as the learner reporting their experience of bullying;
- place chairs at a slight angle rather than directly opposite each other to help reduce any conscious or unconscious sense of confrontation or opposition;
- ensure privacy to avoid learners overhearing what is said or seeing a meeting taking place (note that for safeguarding best practice, it should be possible for other staff to observe the meeting).

The Welsh Government has produced helpful guidance for children and young people:

- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: A guide for children
- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: A guide for young people

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying;
- ensure that learners know how to express, and report worries and anxieties about bullying;
- ensure that all learners are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying;
- involve learners in anti-bullying campaigns in schools;

- publicise the details of helplines and websites;
- offer support to learners who have been bullied;
- work with learners who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have;
- encourage learners to discuss anti-bullying;
- put posters around the school, in language that can be clearly understood by all learners

What parents/carers can expect

The Welsh Government has produced helpful guidance for parents and carers:

- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for parents and carers

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- ensure that parents / carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying;
- ensure that parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively;
- ensure that parents / carers know where to access independent advice about bullying;
- work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.

Having reported an issue regarding bullying to the school, if a learner or their parent/carer does not feel that the school has taken it seriously or has not addressed their concern to a satisfactory standard, they can make a formal complaint.

Our school complaints policy is available on the school website and made available on request from the school or federation governing body.

How incidents will be recorded and monitored

The Welsh Government expects schools to have in place mechanisms for reporting and recording bullying which are clearly communicated to the whole school community. The Welsh Government expects the information schools record and monitor to relate directly to their school's definition of bullying and broader provisions outlined in their school's anti-bullying strategy and policy.

The Welsh Government expects schools to record all incidents of bullying, outlining the specific types of bullying, including bullying around the protected characteristics. The Welsh Government 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. However, the local authority will require schools to provide certain information about specific types of incidents and these will be collected via our incident reporting form. If there is a good level of awareness in the whole school community about unacceptable behaviour it is likely that more learners will come forward to report it. A high number of incidents alone is not therefore an indicator that the school is ineffective. It could be the result of recent awareness raising work or anti-bullying activities.

Where schools report that they have no bullying, this may be as a result of the reporting mechanisms being ineffective whereby learners do not feel safe in raising their concerns. Schools reporting zero cases of bullying may be challenged through the inspection process to clarify what mechanisms the school employs to ensure learner wellbeing and inclusivity.

Where schools have recorded incidents of bullying, they should demonstrate that they are taking action to challenge bullying, address unacceptable behaviour and improve learner wellbeing.

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- implement an ongoing cycle of school-level data recording, monitoring and analysis of antibullying information;
- use school level anti-bullying data to identify priority areas for implementing whole school improvement;
- take action to make those improvements.

How learners and/or parents/carers can appropriately escalate the matter if they do not feel that their concerns are being taken seriously

Having reported an issue regarding bullying to the school, if a learner or their parent/carer does not feel that the school has taken it seriously or has not addressed their concern to a satisfactory standard, they can make a formal complaint. Under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, school governors are required to have and publicise a complaints procedure ensuring anyone with an interest in the school can raise a complaint, confident it will be considered properly and without delay.

How the school will evaluate and review its policy and strategy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated where required. In reviewing the policy, all members of the school community, including members of the governing body will be consulted.

At Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm we will:

- use surveys and group discussions to identify which aspects of the school's current policy and strategy work well and any areas for improvement;
- regularly seek the views of learners, parents/carers and staff, through surveys and discussions, to measure the extent of bullying behaviour present;

- monitor incidents of bullying and identify patterns of behaviour and the extent of bullying.

This will enable us to modify our anti-bullying policy if required to respond to specific trends and issues.

Appendix 1 – specific types of bullying

Specific types of bullying linked to protected characteristics

There are specific types of bullying related to protected characteristics. These can broadly be categorised into:

- bullying connected with age
- bullying involving learners with disabilities, which can include SEN
- homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic bullying
- bullying connected with race, religion and/or culture
- sexist and/or sexual bullying

Bullying involving learners with disabilities and/or SEN – defining disability and SEN

The definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is not the same as the definition of special educational needs (SEN) under the Education Act 1996 or the definition of additional learning needs (ALN) under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. There will be some children and young people who are covered by the Equality Act but not by the Education Act or Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and vice versa, although a significant number of children and young people are likely to be covered by all these acts.

Key issues for learners with disabilities and/or SEN experiencing bullying 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. The Welsh Government expects schools to be proactive in countering this trend.

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, for example, 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, for example, moving from a mainstream to a special school or pupil referral unit, or spending periods of time in hospital.

Disabled and/or SEN learners may also find it more difficult to resist perpetrators because they have fewer friends to defend them and have difficulties telling someone if it occurs. They can be extremely adversely affected by bullying. In addition to being distressing, it can isolate them further and set back their social and educational development.

Bullying of learners with disability and/or SEN can take the form of any of the traditional forms of bullying. However, there are additional forms of bullying that SEN/disabled learners may experience.

Conditional friendship

In these cases, a group will allow a target to believe they are accepted into the friendship group. The group may however be using the target or place conditions on them in order to be part of the group. They might make the target the subject of their jokes, use them to run errands or even engage in criminal activity for them.

Exploitative

In these cases, the bullying takes the form of deliberately subjecting a target to something they cannot tolerate. For example, if a target is especially sensitive to sounds or smell, exploitative bullying might be where the perpetrator repeatedly spreads food over their work or makes loud noises to startle them. The eventual aim is to get the target child or young person into trouble because they will gradually become more stressed until they have an outburst of anger and/or retaliate.

Manipulative

In these cases, the perpetrator manipulates the target, who at first may not realise what is happening. They might believe the other child/young person or group of children/young people like them and they are friends. However, the perpetrator might manipulate the target into high-risk relationships where the bullying becomes very controlling.

Positive action

While research suggests children and young people with disabilities and/or SEN are more likely to experience bullying than their peers, it is important to remember that not all disabled and/or SEN children and young people are bullied.

The Welsh Government expects schools to address bullying holistically while also taking into account the individual needs and circumstances of learners with disabilities and/or SEN; under the PSED, schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners due to their disabilities or SEN.

Social model

In 2002 the Welsh Assembly Government adopted the social model of disability as the foundation of its work on disability in Wales. 22 YGL Anti-Bullying Policy 2022 The social model of disability offers a different perspective on disability, whereby disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. The social model of disability looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for people with impairments or differences. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

The social model of disability makes the important difference between impairment and disability. It recognises that people with impairments are disabled by barriers that commonly exist in society.

It is not the inability to walk that prevents a person entering a building unaided, but the existence of stairs that are inaccessible to a wheelchair user. Disability is socially constructed, and the social model of disability requires society to remove the barriers so all people have equality. In schools this ethos is a key element of developing a truly inclusive environment and an effective disability equality scheme and anti-bullying policy.

Homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying

Homophobic, bi-phobic 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.

When a perpetrator identifies someone as 'different' this can be because the target does not conform to the 'expected' or 'gender appropriate' behaviour expected of someone. It is the learner's identity which is attacked. Homophobic, bi-phobic and/or transphobic bullying can therefore be experienced by a child or young person regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Key issues for LGBT learners experiencing bullying

A 2017 Stonewall report found that nearly three in five LGBT learners in Welsh schools who took part in a survey reported that their schools say homophobic and bi-phobic bullying is wrong, while just one in three report that their schools say transphobic bullying is wrong. The report also found that more than four in five LGBT learners report that they have never learned about or discussed bisexuality at school, making bisexual children and young people feel even more isolated, especially where sexual orientation can sometimes wrongly be conceived as a binary of being straight or gay/lesbian, and bisexual people's identity and experiences sometimes dismissed.

The Welsh Government expects schools to incorporate anti-bullying work in the wider context of an equalities and social justice approach to respectful and healthy relationships and violence prevention. This should be done as part of a whole-school approach to celebrating difference, including embedding LGBT issues across the curriculum.

Homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic insults used in place of other insults or indirectly

In schools where learners believe they will not be challenged when using homophobic insults and/or actions, they may use such language or actions towards others they are targeting for other reasons, such as SEN or race, religion or culture. The homophobic insults are being used as a proxy for the language and/or actions they know they are likely to be challenged for using, such as racist insults.

This behaviour can be observed through incident records or learner surveys, for example, if learners with SEN report higher than average incidents of homophobic bullying.

In schools, homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic language and actions can be wide-ranging and used directly or indirectly to:

- deride or disparage someone considered inferior or risible
- insult a learner with a lesbian, gay or bisexual parent/carer or relative
- use sexual orientation to denigrate the actions of another
- imply something is unacceptable
- intimidate someone or make them feel uncomfortable through insinuation
- undermine and bully a learner by suggesting that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, including by spreading rumours and malicious gossip
- bully a male or female learner considered effeminate or masculine respectively
- put down a learner with a gender non-conforming friend or family member
- imply gender variance is unacceptable

- verbally bully a target considered gender-fluid

Positive action

Homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying cases require very sensitive responses. The family of the target may respond in ways that distress the child or young person further due to community pressure, homophobic, bi-phobic and/or transphobic views, or possibly through being unaware of their child's sexual orientation.

The Welsh Government expects schools to work with families to ensure the right support, at the right time, is provided for the learner to ensure the best outcomes for that child or young person. Under the PSED schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners due to their having protected characteristics.

Sexist and sexual bullying

In 2015 Girlguiding UK found that 75 per cent of girls and young women said anxiety about potentially experiencing sexual harassment affects their lives in some way. The same survey found that 90 per cent of young women aged 13–21 agreed that the UK Government should make sure all schools are addressing sexual harassment and bullying in schools.

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 including harassment, groping, 'up skirting', 'down shirting' and use of humiliating sexist language. In rare cases violence may be used.

Sexual bullying may be physical, verbal or psychological. Behaviours may involve suggestive sexual comments or innuendo including offensive comments about sexual reputation or using sexual language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate. It may involve sharing of explicit images online, sometimes by multiple people, coercion or unwanted sexual touching

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, the Welsh Government expects schools to address the issue through their anti-bullying, behaviour or safeguarding policy (whichever is deemed most appropriate). Sexual bullying can affect boys and girls.

Positive action

Girls and young women are most frequently harmed by sexist and sexual bullying; however, boys and young men can also suffer sexist and sexual bullying and humiliation, for example, by a group of girls/young women or a former girlfriend. Where this happens, the Welsh Government expects that schools will not treat these cases any differently or less seriously than those involving girls and young women.

The Welsh Government expects schools to consider all learners as potentially at risk of sexist or sexual bullying, particularly where they are perceived by others to not conform to dominant or stereotypical gender roles. Under the PSED, schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners owing to their having protected characteristics.

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.

Most public bodies in the UK, including schools, use the working definitions of racism and a racist incident that were proposed in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in 1999. The report defined racism as:

- conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin

And a racist incident as:

- any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person

Forms of racism

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.

The Welsh Government expects schools to consider, for example, the following:

- **Anti-Gypsyism:** Gypsies and Travellers are the target of a number of misleading and harmful stereotypes, many of which are deep-rooted in the public consciousness in the UK. Negative representations in the media further exacerbate the prejudice experienced by these individuals. It has even been suggested that discrimination towards Gypsies and Travellers remains 'permissible' in the UK. A consequence of this environment is that the task of winning the trust of children and young people of Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds is rendered even more difficult and sensitive.

- **Anti-refugee prejudice:** the political discourse and media reporting around immigration has heightened tensions between communities and created a challenging climate for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. There is a trend of using dehumanising language when discussing immigration, for example, words such as 'swarming' and 'invasive'. Refugees and asylum seekers are often represented as a threat or a drain to public funds, and their motives for settling in the UK are regularly questioned. Schools must be alert to these influences and ready to counter negative narratives around refugees and asylum seekers. Schools should also be aware that some refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people may have endured traumatic experiences in their country of origin or during their journey to the UK, and of the further harm that could be caused by incidents of bullying.

- **Anti-Semitism:** hostility, dislike or fear of Jews and Jewish things, manifested in discriminatory attitudes and actions. As is also the case with Islamophobia, it is frequently exacerbated in Britain by events and underlying conflicts elsewhere in the world, particularly the Middle East.

- **Islamophobia:** hostility towards Islam which results in discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities and excludes Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. The term itself is not ideal, but undoubtedly the Welsh Government expects schools to play a part in countering anti-Muslim prejudice and hostility within their own spheres of influence. Islamophobia is not necessarily to do with hostility to Islamic religious beliefs, but with denying equal rights and respect to people of Islamic heritage.

The Welsh Government expects schools to consider, when recording incidents of racist bullying, that there should be distinct and separate categories for noting the basis of the racist bullying, for example, on the basis of religious heritage or on the basis that they are Gypsies and Travellers or refugees.

We know bullying is very often motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion or culture. At the root of such bullying is a view that some people are different or 'other'. By 'othering' them through remarks and insults it becomes easier to see any group as set apart and to dehumanise them. This can remove all compassion. The role of schools in helping every learner feel they belong is of immense value in building a cohesive society. Very young children do not see difference until they learn or adopt attitudes and prejudices which may be present around them.

Positive action

The Welsh Government expects schools to work with learners, their families and communities to ensure the right support, at the right time, is provided to learners to ensure the best outcomes for that child or young person. Under the PSED, schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners owing to their having protected characteristics.

Appendix 2 – online bullying and aggression

Understanding children and young people's lives in a digital age is a complex task and considering the implications for education is often a fine balance. On one hand there are calls to recognise the sophistication of children and young people's everyday uses of digital media, and for much greater integration of technology in education to equip learners effectively for their current and future lives. On the other hand, there are anxieties about the implications of extensive screen time and online harms that are hard to regulate and difficult to confine. Moreover, while many children and young people gain understanding and experience of digital environments from birth, their access to devices and experience of using technologies varies considerably. This disparity is not just linked to economic

circumstances but to the different ways in which digital toys and resources are taken up within different families.

Often digital technologies simply provide new ways of doing the same kinds of things people were doing already, for example, socialising online rather than through face-to-face engagement.

Where a technological future is inevitable, schools need to consider the digital impacts from which children and young people need to be protected while gaining digital competence, preparing them for the world ahead.

While technology facilitates traditional bullying behaviours such as insults or rumour-spreading it also provides additional ways to bully and humiliate others such as through the misuse of images or videos, live-streaming, using anonymous messaging apps or harassing someone online. Online bullying often occurs at the same time or follows on from traditional bullying but can occur in isolation.

The perception of being able to act anonymously online often leads to disinhibited and cruel behaviour that would be less likely face-to-face. Technology may help those who lack power or popularity offline to have power over others or bully online. In this way, learners who find themselves targeted offline may retaliate anonymously online.

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, for example, 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.

Why online bullying is uniquely distressing

Although offline bullying remains more common than online bullying learners report that the features of online bullying, stated below, make the experience uniquely distressing.

- the audience can be unlimited;
- it can occur anywhere and at any time, there is no respite from it;
- it can involve unknown people, although most cases involve known peers;
- technology facilitates the storage of images and messages for repeat viewing.

What is the role of schools?

Digital competence will be a cross-curricular responsibility, together with literacy and numeracy, within Curriculum for Wales 2022. The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) is the first element of Curriculum for Wales 2022 and was made available in September 2016. The DCF has four strands of equal importance ('citizenship', 'interacting and collaborating', 'producing', and 'data and computational thinking').

The focus of the 'citizenship' strand is on learners developing the skills and behaviours to contribute positively to the digital world around them, which includes protecting themselves online. The strand includes the elements of 'identity, image and reputation', 'health and wellbeing', 'digital rights, licensing and ownership', and 'online behaviour and cyberbullying' (online bullying). These skills will help learners to critically evaluate their place within the digital world, so that they are prepared to encounter the positive and negative aspects of being a digital citizen.

The 'interacting and collaborating' strand also allows learners to explore both formal and informal methods of communication, including social media and instant messaging. Learners will not only look at how to store data, they will also consider the implications of data laws and how to share information appropriately.

The fast-changing digital environment offers boundless positive opportunities for children and young people. At the same time there are added risks and new forms of bullying and aggression. To stay up to date, schools should regularly check the Online Safety Zone (hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety) within the Hwb digital learning platform.

Schools have powers to discipline learners for incidents taking place off the premises and powers to search or confiscate mobiles as a disciplinary penalty where learners have contravened the school behavioural policy and/or anti-bullying policy.

Positive action

The Welsh Government expects schools to address online bullying where it has an impact on the well-being of learners at the school. Where necessary, the Welsh Government expects schools to refer a case to the appropriate agency or service. Schools must act in cases that involve a safeguarding concern. All staff should receive regular training in safeguarding and online safety.

Online and mobile communications leave a digital trail. Keeping evidence is essential. Schools should be mindful that evidence can be taken down or disappear from viewer online platforms at any time, whether removed by individuals or at the request of corporate administrators of social media platforms. Screen-grabbing is a useful route to preserve evidence. The Welsh Government expects schools to log and record incidents as part of their wider safeguarding monitoring practice and

impact evidence. In some cases, further evidence may come to light at a later point and it may become necessary to review the entire history of the case again.

Signature Chair of Governors: Cllr H Williams

Signature Headteacher: Mrs T Havard

Handwritten signature of Mrs T Havard in cursive script.

Date: September 2025

Handwritten signature of Cllr H Williams in cursive script.