

## Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed Anti-Bullying Policy

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### **Vision:**

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

### **Understanding Bullying - A definition:**

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

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

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

- 1) It is usually repetitive and persistent (we acknowledge that a single event may leave a learner traumatised and worried that this might happen again in the future).
- 2) It is intentionally harmful and deliberate.
- 3) It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
- 4) It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are being targeted.
- 5) It is a one-way process, rather than a dispute/argument between two (or more) learners.

### **Objectives**

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

1. Has appointed a lead professional with responsibility for managing a strategic approach to anti-bullying. The lead professional for anti-bullying is the Deputy Head.

2. Ensures that the whole community including parents, learners and staff understand what bullying is.
3. Reinforces the anti-bullying message with the whole staff community through regular general and specific training, staff meetings and information communication.
4. Equips learners with strategies, which enable them to respond to bullying behaviour.
5. Reinforces the anti-bullying ethos with learners, Personal Social Education (CAD), class/tutor time, assemblies; and in general, through the curriculum, using projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs, debates and daily interactions between staff and learners.
6. Uses the school website to share the school anti-bullying policy and the Welsh Government Rights, respect, equality guidance for parents and children.
7. Reinforces the anti-bullying message with parents through formal and informal parental communications.
8. Collates, listens to and records details of learner opinions on incidents of prejudice, discrimination, harassment and bullying, in order to improve school policy and procedures.
9. Ensures that parents, staff and learners are aware of the procedures to follow if they are the target of bullying or if they feel that they might be behaving in bullying ways.
10. Ensures that parents, staff and learners understand the signs of bullying.
11. Provides support to those who are the targets of bullying and those who are perpetrating bullying behaviour.
12. Provides restorative justice meetings and/or conferences, facilitated by school staff or the youth offending service, as appropriate.
13. Ensures that all learners understand the school's relationships policy.
14. Ensures that all learners understand that the school will respond to behaviour that is harmful to others.

Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed does not tolerate any form of bullying.

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

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

*Some of the reasons why people may be bullied include:*

- Sex based bullying which includes unwanted, inappropriate and/or uninvited physical contact, sexually abusive or sexist comments, sexual insinuations and offers, sending or asking for pornographic material
- Racially motivated bullying
- Faith based bullying
- Bullying due to cultural differences
- Bullying due to special educational needs and/or disability
- Homophobia
- Bullying due to appearance
- Bullying due to personal hygiene
- Bullying due to academic ability including more able and talented or learning difficulties
- Bullying due to perceived wealth or poverty

### *Equality Act 2010*

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

### *Cyberbullying*

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

Cyberbullying can take many forms such as:

Threats and intimidation;

Harassment or stalking;

Vilification and defamation;

Peer rejection and exclusion;

Identity theft;

Unauthorised access and impersonation;

Publicly posting, sending or forwarding personal or private information or images;

Manipulation

Blackmail

The following technologies are regularly used as vehicles for cyberbullying:

Smart phones;

Instant messenger apps and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

Chatrooms and message boards  
E-mail  
Webcams  
Social network sites/apps  
Video-hosting sites/apps  
Virtual learning environments (VLEs)  
Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds

The school recognises that in the case of cyberbullying, the target and perpetrator may not be on the school premises when the incident occurs. The school recognises that it has a responsibility to support parents in addressing off-site incidents, including advising parents to liaise with Gwent Police if appropriate.

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

Cyber bullying is far more likely to be resolved when parents work together with school and follow school advice by encouraging their children to block websites or apps and to use the Internet appropriately.

### *Signs of bullying*

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

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

- Is reluctant to use toilet facilities
- Is reluctant to discuss the reasons for any of the above

### ***Prevention of Bullying***

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

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

### ***Procedures for investigating a case of suspected bullying***

Bullying events are identified in several ways:

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

An allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. It will be investigated thoroughly. Clear procedures will be followed to stop the bullying. All learners will be supported if they have been bullied. Regular check-ins will help to ensure the bullying has stopped.

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

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

- Target(s), perpetrator(s) and witness(es) will be interviewed by the member of staff investigating. All parties will be reassured of the discretion of the school in dealing with such matters within the limits of our duty to report. The target(s) will be reassured that the matter is being treated seriously and being investigated.

- If the target reports the matter, they will be spoken with first. If not, any witnesses will be interviewed, followed by the target, the accused perpetrator and finally any bystanders.
- All learners involved in the situation will be listened to without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described.
- A written summary of all discussions will be made. This summary will be agreed by the individuals involved. This is important as it will enable the target and witnesses to feel reassured that action is being taken, and for the accused party to feel that they have had a fair hearing.
- A problem solving approach, which avoids blame, will be more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving change. Restorative approaches may be a useful approach.
- All prejudice related incidents and bullying and bullying incidents related to SEN, appearance and personal hygiene will be recorded and reported using the SIMS behaviour management system.

### ***Action by the school:***

If it is felt that bullying has taken place, the target will be informed that action will be taken to prevent bullying from continuing. Consequences may be issued in line with the School's Relationships Policy. The school may also suggest the formulation of a Safety plan for the target.

The perpetrator needs to understand the effects of their actions upon the target, and will be given support in order to modify their behaviour including ELSA or counselling if appropriate.

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

### ***Partnership with Parents***

Whenever there is a serious case of bullying, the parents/guardian of both the target and the bully will be informed in writing or by personal contact. This contact will be carried out by the relevant Wellbeing and Progress lead.

### ***Follow Up***

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

## **Dealing with bullying through the Curriculum**

We will:

- Raise awareness regarding the bullying and anti-bullying policy.

- Develop an anti-bullying ethos.
- Include anti-bullying messages during registration periods, CAD (PSE) lessons and Assemblies.
- Teach pupils how to manage their inter-relationships with others in a constructive way.
- Ensure that ALN pupils are included in the work on bullying in the curriculum in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs.

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

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

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

### ***Links with other policies***

- Relationships
- Attendance
- Safeguarding
- Strategic Equality Plan
- Acceptable use of ICT

**Date of policy:**

**Signed Chair of Governing Body:**

**Date for review (every two years)**

### **Appendix 1**

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

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

1. Explain to the bully that the words/actions are upsetting; he or she may not be aware of this. However, if the bullying continues, try not to show your feelings.

2. If you are with friends, ask them to stay with you.
3. Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
4. The bully will not stop if they think they can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends.
5. Tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf.
6. Remember that the diversity within our school community is important and valued.

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

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

***Cyberbullying:***

Remember it is helpful if allegations of bullying are supported with evidence. If bullying occurs via social networking sites or mobile technologies, take screen shots and keep at home as potential evidence to be shared with the police. Parents or pupils, should not forward any information electronically to the school.

**Appendix 2**

***Parents' guide to bullying behaviours***

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

***If your child is being bullied:***

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

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

When you inform the school of these details, the member of staff will explain how the school will proceed; this will normally begin with an investigation into the allegations (see policy for details). Be reassured that the school will respond sensitively to the needs of all the learners involved. All information will be considered and investigated thoroughly.

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

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

*If your child is involved in the bullying:*

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

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

To stop your child from being involved in bullying behaviour:

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

Please note that the school will need to take action if bullying behaviour occurs. The matter will be responded to sensitively, but it needs to be effective for all those involved. Where identified adjustments need to be made for learners with additional

needs, the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO)) may also be involved in decision making.