



NID DYSG HEB FOES

Ysgol Brynhyfryd

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Ysgol Brynhyfryd Anti-bullying Policy: Contents

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Ysgol Brynhyfryd Anti-bullying Policy

A summary – our aim:

Our students have the right to be educated in a safe environment where they are not subjected to any form of bullying. It is the School's responsibility to ensure this happens.

Our School's core value is centred on respect and it will be clear and well communicated to everyone in our community. A range of preventative anti-bullying strategies will be put into place and an effective whole-school approach developed so that incidents of bullying requiring a response will be minimised. If bullying does occur, our support and sanctions will be proportionate and promptly implemented.

Geraint W Parry Headteacher

This Policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, governors and parents. It takes into account the 2011 Anti-bullying Survey carried out at YBH and existing County¹ and Welsh Government guidance². A student-friendly version of this policy is available which provides examples of bullying incidents and strategies to address bullying that young people will be able to engage with.

Background context

Our aspiration and challenge is to create a bully-free school. Unfortunately, bullying exists in all organisations and in all walks of life. There is no quick-fix response to bullying and our work needs to be ongoing. It is essential to engage with parents (and the wider community) and encourage them in supporting the School's anti-bullying work as bullying is not confined to school time and what goes on within its environment.

As parents and carers are the main educators in the lives of children,³ they are clearly instrumental in reducing bullying, for example, through being positive role models, discussing respect and equality issues and in explaining the inappropriate use of social media.

¹ Denbighshire Anti-bullying Strategy 2012 "Crossing the Line" [Draft] and Action Plan for 2013-14.

² Respecting Others: Anti-bullying (Welsh Government 2011).

³ It is worth remembering that schooling only represents about 18% of a child's week.

Bullying is among the main concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being. It is also a main concern for children themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; it destroys their sense of security; it impacts on attendance and attainment; it can marginalise those groups who may be particular targets; and it can have a life-long negative impact on the lives of individuals. At its most extreme, bullying has known to lead to suicide.

Everyone at Ysgol Brynhyfryd has a shared responsibility to work together to prevent and tackle bullying in order to protect the well-being of all of our students, particularly the most vulnerable. We need to build stronger communities in which diversity and equality are both valued and celebrated.

There are two main elements to our anti-bullying work:

Preventative work – this work is ongoing and sustained, providing a consistent ethos and framework for our actions. Preventative work should aim to minimise the occurrence of bullying. However, even where effective preventative work is undertaken some incidents will still occur.

Responsive work – This comes into effect when bullying occurs, and is most effective within a consistent whole-school approach to our preventative work.

There is evidence that a substantial amount of bullying is fuelled by prejudice and intolerance. Groups of children who are particularly vulnerable to bullying include children in the care of the local authority, young carers, those with disabilities, children from traveller families, and children affected by parental substance misuse and domestic violence. We must be alert to all forms of bullying and undertake preventative and responsive work to show our commitment to eliminate it.

This policy does not provide detailed instructions on how to deal with bullying incidents but provides a general framework for action⁴. As every bullying incident is unique and inevitably complex, flexibility of approach is essential within a common referral route⁵.

⁴ More detailed advice and guidance for parents and students is to be found on the School website (TBA).

⁵ See the Anti-bullying Referral Route Map.

The nature of bullying

The Department of Education defines bullying as **"Behaviour by an individual or group repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."**⁶

We will use 3 types of bullying identified by the Welsh Government in recording and reporting bullying incidents. These relate to **how** bullying occurs:

physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression.

verbal – name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.

indirect – spreading nasty stories, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours and bullying using electronic devices including the use of images e.g. e-mails, texts, Smart Phone communication and social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, ask.fm and MySpace.

Additionally, other specific categories of bullying are used⁷. These are separate from the way bullying occurs and mainly relate to actual or perceived difference i.e. bullying related to:

- race, religion, or culture
- special educational needs or disabilities
- appearance or health
- sexual orientation⁸
- related to young carers, looked after children, or otherwise related to a child's home circumstances
- sexist or sexual bullying.

What bullying is **not** also requires definition as this needs to be dealt with differently i.e. one-off incidents or unintentional hurt. These incidents should be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy's referral route and sanctions. It is important to record all behavioural incidents of this nature (using the 'School Pod) as an apparently one-off situation may be repeated and become bullying.

Year Leaders report that many alleged bullying incidents turn out to be disagreements. A lot of staff time and resources are unnecessarily spent investigating alleged incidents that are reported principally due to a lack of understanding about what constitutes bullying – many students are not clear about the difference between bullying and arguments. A priority therefore is to better

⁶ Department of Education, July 2011.

⁷ Derived from the Equalities Act 2010.

⁸ According to Stonewall Cymru, 96% of gay students hear homophobic language and 3 in 5 gay students say that teachers witnessing the bullying never intervene.

inform and educate students about the nature of bullying through Tutorial work and displays. This work should be complimented with strategies to help students to resolve disagreements.

Too rigid an approach to anti-bullying incidents is likely to be counter-productive. Unnecessary interventions by staff (or parents) can easily escalate a situation and make it worse. Our challenge is to follow procedure whilst having the flexibility to use our experience, common sense and discretion to act proportionately. For example a 'little chat' with a clear warning of future sanctions will generally have the desired effect. Whatever the outcome, it is important to reassure the bullied student that reporting an incident is the right thing to do and that their report will be investigated and dealt with promptly.

There are a number of 'grey' areas related to bullying. For example:

- when it occurs exclusively out of school
- with regard to proof of who the bully is when investigating cyber/social media incidents
- with incidents between over 18s and under 18s
- during transit to and from school e.g. on buses
- between schools – e.g. within our consortium or between local primary and secondary schools
- One persons 'banter' can be perceived as bullying

As a general rule, any alleged incident of bullying is of interest to us when the well-being and welfare of our students is at stake. Our students therefore need to be made aware that the **intent** to bully is the important distinction, not where or how the bullying takes place. The School will need to adapt the standard referral route in these cases.

Legislation relevant to bullying

Equalities Act 2010 – this requires us to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It also requires us to foster good relations between students who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 – this requires us to prevent all forms of bullying.

Children Act 1989

This requires us to address bullying incidents as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer,

significant harm'. Where this is the case, our safeguarding member of staff (C Ranson) should report her concerns to the County's Social Services Department. Even where child protection is not considered to be an issue, the student may need safeguarding. We may need to draw on a range of external services to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a student doing the bullying.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications (including cyber-bullying), could be a criminal offence. With incidents of this nature, the School's safeguarding member of staff will inform the School's Police Liaison Officer (currently PC Heledd Wynne Evans).

The Whole School Approach – our preventative and responsive work

(a) The way we tackle bullying

Our prevention and response strategies go hand in hand – they are interdependent.

Exploring bullying through our curriculum and pastoral time is an ongoing activity. An anti-bullying awareness programme is to be delivered by Personal Tutors in the autumn term during Year 7. Our prevention work starts soon after students arrive from their primary school – it is important to begin this work straight away as new friendship groups are being established. This will help students to identify the nature of bullying, understand the issues involved and to clarify the School's Anti-bullying Policy.

Whilst bullying incidents generally diminish as students get older, they still occur. Therefore, a refresher programme is to be delivered by Personal Tutors at the beginning of Year 9 as this time appears to be when incidents of bullying spike. The PSE programme and assemblies are appropriate ways to revisit our work on anti-bullying with our oldest students. Moreover, Yr 12 students can become Peer Mentors using tutorial time to support others. With training, Peer Mentors use their experience and status to positively influence others.

Our PSE programmes help to tackle bullying through one-off events, visiting speakers and via links to other school initiatives e.g. Healthy Schools schemes. Activities linked to national initiatives / events are a rich source of reflection to tackle issues linked to respect and equality - these should be used to enrich our work e.g.

National Anti-bullying Week, Black History Month, Gay Pride rallies and the *Kick racism out of football* campaign.

The curriculum is an ideal vehicle for education about bullying issues and anti-bullying strategies. Each Subject will identify opportunities for coverage of bullying issues across each Key Stage – very often this requires little extra work e.g. in English a poem about bullying could be written or in ICT issues about cyber-bullying could be discussed. When our work is reinforced in this manner it has a much bigger impact. The delivery of this work will be mapped and monitored by the SLT member of staff with responsibility for Behaviour to assess areas of good practice and deficit. Each Subject will note the delivery of anti-bullying work in their Schemes of Work or Teachers' notes.

Raising awareness and promoting the School Policy must be an ongoing activity by the whole of our community. A wide range of opportunities exist e.g. guidance in the Student Planner, the Home-School Agreement, the School Prospectus, corridor displays, newsletters, assemblies, the School Website, working with parents, student forums and external agencies. Our School Homily is a daily reminder of our respect and equality agenda. Additionally, the Thought for the Day activity undertaken during morning registration can be used to reflect upon these issues.

Students are to be consulted and surveyed on a regular basis (e.g. through Year Forums, Prefect and School Council meetings) to find out about their concerns and listen to their suggestions with the purpose of improving our preventive and responsive strategies.

A 'Friendly Zone' located outside will be provided for vulnerable students where they can feel secure and be confident that they will be in a bully-free area. This area is monitored and supported by our Senior Prefects and/or Staff.

(b) The role of staff

A strong School ethos that has respect and equality at its core is the heart of our Policy. Whilst everyone in the School community has a role to play in preventative and responsive strategies, specific responsibilities are held by a variety of post-holders:

It is the responsibility of the **Head teacher** to:

- Lead the School ethos and deploy staff to deal with bullying
- Line manage the SLT member of staff with responsibility for School Behaviour

- Liaise with the SLT member of staff responsible for safeguarding in dealing with serious incidents that could lead to exclusion or referral to external agencies
- Deputise for the SLT member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding in his/her absence

It is the responsibility of the **SLT member of staff in charge of Behaviour** to:

- Lead (and periodically review) the School's Anti-bullying Policy, ensuring it feeds into and reflects the Whole School Behaviour Policy
- Line manage LINKs with regard to managing bullying incidents
- Liaise with the SLT member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding with the management of serious bullying incidents
- Provide/organise staff training to ensure that all staff know the Policy and are confident and able to contribute effectively to its implementation
- Where appropriate, make staff aware of vulnerable students e.g. during morning briefings, or via the staff email system
- Monitor the success of anti-bullying initiatives, develop and promote new ones
- Liaise with external agencies when required
- Keep the School Website up-to-date with advice and information for students, staff, parents and other interested groups

It is the role of the **Heads of Year** to:

- Lead an investigation into an alleged bullying incident following the anti-bullying referral route (see the referral route map)⁹
- Record incidents of bullying
- Liaise with their LINK teacher with bullying incidents that persist or escalate
- Apply agreed School sanctions when bullying has occurred
- Give support to the bullied and bully
- Contact parents by letter – communication in writing reduces the chances of misunderstandings and is a clear source of evidence of actions taken (a telephone call can also be used for urgent incidents but should always be followed up with a letter); parental interviews, if undertaken, should be formally written up and included in the Anti-bullying Log
- Monitor bullying incidents and take appropriate follow-up when required
- Liaise with Personal Tutors, other staff and external agencies

⁹ Or agree a lead investigator (or agree to work together) when bullying incidents are reported between Year groups.

It is the role of **all teaching** and **support staff** to:

- Promote anti-bullying strategies in their work and share the School's values with all those concerned
- Investigate and promptly refer to Year Leaders any alleged incidents of bullying
- Provide a safe environment for students where bullying is seen not to be tolerated – bullying behaviour should always be challenged
- Act as role models – staff can reinforce our culture of respect i.e. they do not use sarcasm, nicknames, labelling (e.g. English/Welsh students), favouritism and bullying behaviour themselves
- Be familiar with and follow the Anti-bullying School Policy – new staff are given a Handbook and School Policies are to be found on the network's 'T' drive
- Participate in anti-bullying training provided by the School or external providers and be aware of vulnerable students

(c) What students can do themselves to tackle bullying

Students have the right to be educated in a bully-free environment. With rights of course come responsibilities. Respecting others is the key to eradicating bullying. How we speak and behave towards each other is crucial – ignorance of inappropriate speech (for example using the term 'gay') and behaviour is not an excuse for bullying. Students are responsible for:

- Knowledge of and adherence to the Anti-bullying School Policy – you should read the anti-bullying page in your Planner (lead by Personal Tutors at the beginning of each academic year) and ask your Personal Tutor to explain any aspect of the Policy you do not understand
- Your own actions – you should not bully, retaliate to bullying, be passive observers and should always discourage others from bullying
- Reporting genuine bullying incidents (not disagreements) in the first instance to their Personal Tutor or Year Leader, anonymously if necessary via the Student Support Post Box located in the concourse. Alternatively, the School can be alerted to a bullying incident by email using our contact address **ysgolbrynhyfyd.co.uk** (alternatively our dedicated text number 07503 698560 can be used) – your concern will be passed onto the relevant Year Leader
- Seeking help from your Year Leader or Personal Tutor if you think you are bullying someone else (or thinking about bullying someone else) – support programmes are available to help you
- Discussing incidents truthfully with your parents, seeking their advice and wisdom
- Avoiding the bully in and outside of school whilst tensions are high and/or when investigations are taking place

It is crucial for us to make it clear¹⁰ that on no account should anyone being bullied retaliate as this only escalates the incident and transfers some blame onto the bullied person. Incidents are far harder to resolve if retaliation has taken place.

(d) The role of parents and carers

Parents can help by:

- Educating your children about the nature of bullying and how to cope with bullying incidents – the School Anti-bullying Policy is published on the School Website¹¹ and this location will also provide additional support and guidance
- (Being positive role models yourself – your children will often emulate your language and behaviour (both positively and negatively)
- Supporting the anti-bullying work of the School – by reinforcing the respect ethos of the Anti-bullying Policy and supporting the sanctions / support actions used by the school
- Discussing issues related to cyber-bullying; controlling and monitoring your child's use of mobile technology and social media
- Responding calmly to bullying incidents – talk about the incident with your child, reassure them that they have done nothing wrong and discuss potential constructive solutions to the incident
- Being proactive in situations where your child is the bully – supporting the School Policy reinforces our aims
- Avoiding contact with the bully and/or their parents as this often escalates the incident and can make the situation impossible to resolve
- Contacting the relevant Year Leader of your child to discuss any concern regarding bullying – it is helpful to write down your concerns and forward them to the Year Leader for future reference

Responding to bullying incidents – the School anti-bullying referral route

Students should feel confident that we are trying to create an environment in which bullying plays no part. As there is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms are taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

¹⁰ via our whole school approach e.g. notice boards, Tutorials, Student Diary and Year assemblies

¹¹ www.ysgolbrynhyfryd.org.uk

When a student encounters bullying we will ensure that agreed mechanisms are in place to allow them to:-

Report the incident and feel they have been listened to, and taken seriously.
Have it properly **recorded** so it can be monitored, appropriate action taken and followed up.
Feel that **appropriate action** has been taken in response to the incident.

(a) Reporting incidents

When reporting an incident it is helpful if students keep to the facts and include dates, times and the names of any witnesses. Any evidence of bullying should be brought to the attention of the person investigating the incident e.g. texts and screen-shots.

Students will be reminded that keeping details of the incident confidential cannot be guaranteed, particularly if the incident is serious, persistent or involves child protection¹².

Students can report bullying in a number of ways:

- In person to any member of staff who will reassure the student and report the incident as soon as possible to the relevant Year Leader (or the SLT member of staff responsible for safeguarding). The Year Leader will investigate the incident following the School's Anti-bullying Referral Route
- To their parents or carers – in the first instance parents should contact their child's Personal Tutor or Year Leader in writing (or by telephone if the incident is deemed to be more urgent); unannounced parental visits are to be avoided as staff are likely to be teaching or unavailable; under no circumstances should parents or carers come onto the School site and confront the alleged bully – an appointment with the Year Leader must always be arranged in advance
- Using the Student Support Letter Box that is located near to the Ganolfan Fugeiliol. This is opened daily by the safeguarding teacher who will pass on the alleged incident to the relevant Year Leader
- Via email using **ysgol.brynhyfryd@denbighshire.co.uk** – students should request a meeting with their Year Leader

(b) Recording incidents

Bullying incidents are recorded on SIMS by the Year Leader.

Responding to incidents

¹² Free to call national help lines such as ChildLine (call 0800 1111 to talk to a counsellor) are a useful confidential resource for help and guidance.

It is our intention to respond promptly and effectively to all alleged bullying incidents. This helps to inspire confidence in our procedures and gives assurance to the bullied student. The School's Anti-bullying Referral Route sets out how we will respond to incidents – this includes the use of graduated sanctions and support for the bullied and bully.

We will always try to deal with bullying incidents firmly, consistently and fairly. However, it is inevitable that our response may not always meet the expectations of either the student and/or parent. In these circumstances the Year Leader should be contacted by parents to discuss the matter further. If this does not settle the matter, then parents should contact the Senior Leadership Teacher with responsibility for Behaviour Policy for an appointment. We aim to resolve all concerns by working together before this point is reached. The School's complaints procedure should be followed as the last resort.

Dissemination of this Policy:

- Staffroom
- All teaching staff – via the staffroom tray, email and 'T' Drive on the School network – see the Antibullying folder
- Support staff – via email and in person
- Parents and carers – notified by the newsletter with hard copies provided by request
- Governors via SLT
- School Website www.ysgolbrynhyfryd.org.uk
- School's Police Liaison Officer
- Ruthin and the School library
- Administration (Gwenan Jones) - for inclusion in the supply teachers' induction pack
- Staff Handbook
- School Prospectus

Links to other relevant School Policies:

- Behaviour Policy 2017
- Dignity at Work Policy
- ICT Policy
- PSE Policy
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy