



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Everyone at Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve to their maximum potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this being able to happen and prevents equality of opportunity. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent this happening and this policy contains guidelines to support this ethos.

### Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person concerned to defend themselves. This can take the form of name-calling, violence, threatened violence, isolation, ridicule or indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories about someone.

It is important that everyone – pupils, parents and staff – know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

Bullying can occur in four main ways:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, taking or damaging belongings, sexual harassment or aggression.
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups, malicious rumours.
- Cyber – sending malicious messages by mobile phones, e-mails or social networking sites.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting.
- Physical.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal name calling, sarcasm, rumours, teasing.
- Racist taunts, graffiti, gestures (see Equality Policy).

## **Who are the Bullies?**

Girls and boys can act as bullies. However, most reported incidents involve individual boys or groups of several boys. When girls engage in bullying, it is usually as part of a group, and it often involves indirect bullying which is more difficult for teachers to detect.

## **Child Protection**

We must always be aware that instances of bullying may be the result of child protection issues and staff should be aware of the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school has a separate Child Protection policy and the procedures outlined for Child Protection issues at Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth School should be followed.

## **Who are the Victims?**

Any child can be bullied, but there are certain factors which can make a child more prone to being a victim of bullying, including:

- a lack of friends.
- being shy.
- coming from an over-protective family environment.
- coming from a different racial or ethnic group.
- being different in some obvious respect from the majority.
- having Special Educational Needs.
- being a 'provocative victim' – a child who behaves inappropriately with others, barging in on games or being a nuisance.

**None of these factors can excuse the bullying, but they may account for it happening.**

## **Where does Bullying take place?**

It is an unfortunate fact of life that bullying occurs in every school. Any school that states that bullying does not occur is in denial, misleading parents and putting their pupils in danger. One must accept that bullying exists and to develop a policy that aims to prevent bullying from occurring, but has rigorous strategies in place to deal with it when it occurs.

In primary schools up to three-quarters of bullying incidents take place in the playground. In secondary schools bullying is also most likely to occur in outside areas, but can also occur in the classroom, corridors or toilets. Schools will want to take account of the fact that bullying can occur on the journey to and from school as well as on the school premises.

Cyber bullying is an increasing problem in society and parents and schools must monitor the use of mobile phones and computers.

## **How can Bullying be identified?**

By its nature, bullying tends to take place underground, out of sight and earshot of teaching and other school staff. Perhaps the most important element in identifying bullying is the creation of a positive school culture in which bullying is not tolerated and the reporting of bullying is seen as a positive and valued act by pupils.

However, there are possible signs of bullying that parents and school staff should be aware of and to which they should respond with enquiry. Some key signs may include:

- Is frightened of walking to and from school;
- Doesn't want to go on the school/public bus;
- Begs to be driven to school;
- Changes their usual routine;
- Is unwilling to go to school;
- Begins truanting;
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn, or lacking in confidence;
- Starts stammering;
- Attempts or threatens self-harm or runs away;
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- Feels ill in the morning;
- Begins to do poorly in school work;
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- Has possessions go "missing";
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- Is bullying other children or siblings;
- Stops eating;
- Is frightened to say what's wrong;
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above points.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Actions to tackle bullying**

1. Create a happy, warm ethos in the school where all pupils feel safe.
2. Curriculum provision – especially PSE lessons, circle time and SEAL lessons to reinforce the school's ethos and to help the pupils to develop strategies to withstand bullying.
3. We ensure that the children understand that members of staff care for them and are ready to listen and help.
4. To ensure an 'open door' policy so that the school is always ready to listen to any problems that worry parents.
5. Encourage pupils to always tell a member of staff about bullying, not to join in bullying, to challenge bullying behaviour by showing disapproval and not to exclude someone from a group.
6. Peer support schemes enable pupils to help other pupils. These take the form of buddying and befriending schemes to generally support others who need it and help those involved in bullying incidents.
7. Ensure satisfactory supervision during the day – in class and on the yard.

8. Every member of staff should be aware that bullying can take place in the classroom or during break times. We must be aware of signs that indicate an unusual change in an individual's behaviour and attitude.

Prevention is better than cure, so at Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth we will be vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously.

### **Procedures and Responsibilities**

#### **Pupils**

Pupils should:

- trust that the staff will act if a child is being bullied.
- understand that there is a consequence to their actions.
- inform members of staff if they or their friends are being bullied.
- not to ignore any incidents of bullying.
- to try and be kind and to help others.

#### **Staff**

Members of staff should:

- be aware of any areas of the school site where bullying could take place.
- create many opportunities to discuss bullying in the classroom.
- praise good behaviour regularly.
- ensure that everything done in school gives the message that 'bullying is not right'.
- make time to listen to children, taking what they hear seriously, ensuring that a child will not be embarrassed or mocked.
- deal with all reported incidents of bullying immediately. Dealing with the incident quickly and sensitively prevents issues from becoming more complex.
- investigate incidents carefully by interviewing the alleged victim, the alleged bully / bullies and any bystanders, in the spirit of finding a solution to the problem for all concerned. They should avoid making accusations without being certain of the facts.
- take short-term measures while the incident is being investigated. The alleged victim and the alleged bully may need to be separated, or a monitoring system may need to be put in place, but follow-up measures must be implemented to resolve the issues in the longer term.
- ensure that appropriate communication is maintained at all times between the school and all the parents concerned.
- to avoid the labelling of pupils at all costs i.e. he or she is a victim or he or she is a bully (this is the same as never saying that a child is lazy, silly etc)
- keep records of alleged bullying using the appropriate forms.

#### **Headteacher / Senior Management Team**

- Ensure that all allegations are noted and filed.
- Follow the same procedures as those noted above for staff.
- Give a verbal warning to pupil / pupils.
- Speak to the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged bully.

- Decide on any sanctions to be implemented which must be age related.
- To provide support if necessary for the victim e.g. a `buddy` to take care of him / her.
- To provide support and guidance for the bully to prevent this happening again.
- The headteacher may decide that the bullying is of such a serious nature that he issues a formal warning of exclusion in the presence of parents.
- The headteacher may consider temporarily excluding the bully.
- The governing body will be informed if exclusion is deemed necessary.

## **Parents**

- Parents should inform the school whenever they have concerns about their child's well-being. Normally the concern should be raised with the class teacher. If the incident is deemed to be serious or ongoing, it should be reported directly to the headteacher.
- When an incident of bullying occurs, parents and staff should agree a timetable so that adequate time is given to the school to investigate and deal with any problems effectively and so that parents know by when they can expect a response.
- Parents of the alleged bullies will be involved in positive ways to help resolve the problems. ( All parents need to accept that their child could be the victim or the perpetrator of bullying )
- If parents continue to have concerns or if the problems reoccur, they should go back to the school and discuss their concerns with school staff.
- If parents are not satisfied with the way that the situation has been dealt with, they should write to the headteacher to make a formal complaint. If still dissatisfied after the head teacher has investigated, parents can write to the Chair of the Governing Body asking that the situation be formally reviewed.