Cowbridge School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Formulated by: Mrs Thomas
Reviewed by: Mrs Thomas
Adopted by CCS SPW Committee: 08.03.22
Last Reviewed: March 2024
Review every 2 years or subject to changes in legislation
Next Review: Spring 2026

Date of any amendments made to policy & brief points:

Date	Section	Approved by
January 2022	Re-write	SPW Comm 08.3.22
March 2024	No changes	SPW Comm 21.3.24

Cowbridge School Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Context

This policy follows the guidance:
- Welsh Government, 'Respecting Others' 23/2003;
- Welsh Government, 'Respecting Others' 055/2011;
- Welsh Government, Behaving and Attending: Action Plan responding to the National Behaviour and Attendance Review 076/2009;
- Welsh Government, Behaviour in Schools – Safe and Effective Intervention 071/2009;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Cowbridge School Behaviour and Discipline Policy;
- Vale of Glamorgan Directorate of Learning and Skills Policy and Guidance on Anti-Bullying in School January 2021.

2. Objectives of this Policy

2.1 Cowbridge School Anti-Bullying Policy outlines what we will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy has been drawn up through the involvement of the School community including:
- Pupils through the mechanism of Year and School Council;
- School governors;
- School staff;
- Parents.

2.2 We recognise it is a basic entitlement of all pupils in Cowbridge School to engage in their everyday activities and education, free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. It is expected that all members of the School community will actively work to identify, report and tackle incidents of bullying.

3. Our school community

- Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis;
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately;
- Ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy;
- Reports back to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the School to uphold the anti-bullying policy;
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilises support from other relevant organisations, when appropriate.

4. Definition of bullying

4.1 Bullying is "Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally".

4.2 Bullying can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking; hitting; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and electronic messaging (including through web-sites, social networking sites and instant messenger); sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

5. Forms of bullying covered by this Policy

5.1 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/ 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;

5.2 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;
- **Relational aggression** – bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's additional learning needs (ALN) 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.

5.3   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.

6.   What is not defined as bullying?

6.1   Some behaviour, although unacceptable, is not considered bullying. These instances should be dealt with in accordance with the School's behaviour policy to deal effectively with these incidents and prevent them from potentially escalating to become bullying. It is essential that these one-off incidents are recorded by the School and that this data is regularly reviewed by the school alongside data on bullying to inform future practice. 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.

6.2   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**: This will 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:** This will be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Police involvement may be used in cases where physical assault has happened, however, this will only be the case if this is deemed to be serious and when the school's de-escalation strategies have not worked.
- **Prejudice-related incidents:** A prejudice-related incident can be defined as "Any incident which is perceived to be prejudice or discriminatory by the victim or any other person hearing or witnessing the incident".

Such incidents are unacceptable within the school community. Whilst not meeting the definition of bullying because they may not be repeated over time, they are no less hurtful to the child or young person subject to this. These incidents could be linked to behaviour based upon stereotyping or presumptions about identity.

7.   What are the signs of bullying?

- Reluctance to go to school;
- Appearing frightened of / 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 / handwriting;
- Not eating;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Being aggressive and bullying others;
- Giving improbable excuses for any of the above.

8.   Preventing, identifying and responding to bullying

8.1   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.

8.2   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.

8.3   If pupils 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, pupils are more likely to feel a sense of belonging.

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

8.5   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 for positive behaviour.

8.6   We will:

- adopt a whole-school approach for promoting positive, respectful behaviour between staff and pupils as part of our whole school approach to well-being - this approach will be integrated through all school activities;
- 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;
- Consider all appropriate opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the School Council;
- Ensure all staff follow procedures when they identify bullying;
- Work with staff and, where relevant, outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.

8.7   Other strategies used by the School will include:
- promoting a strong ethos which instills tolerance and respect for difference and diversity;
- providing training for all staff members to raise and maintain awareness including new staff;
- periodic consultation with pupils to find to assess their experiences;
- raising awareness of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in one-off incidents and bullying;
- publicising outside organisations such as Child Line who can offer help to pupils who are being bullied;
- Work with pupils who have been bullying or taking part in prejudicial incidents in order to address the problems they have;
- ensuring that there are confidential and varied means of alerting the School to bullying;
- ensuring efficient patrolling of the School by staff, especially toilets, lunch queues and secluded areas;
- attempting, where appropriate, to avoid age group isolation e.g. reading scheme, Sixth Form peer mentoring scheme;
- utilisation, where appropriate, of the Sixth Form peer mentoring system;
- prompt investigation of incidents, including contact with parents of the bullied child and children exhibiting bullying behaviour in order to agree a course of action;
- Involving pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in school.

9.   Responding to Bullying

9.1   Any bullying or prejudice-related incidents must be reported. These incidents can only be tackled effectively if we know there is a problem. Pupils who are being subject to bullying or other pupils who know or suspect that someone else has been subject to such actions should report this directly to the Achievement Team. Alternatively, the issue can be reported to a 6th Form mentor if appropriate, Form

Teacher, Leader of Achievement or any other adult a pupil feels comfortable in talking to. The School can also be contacted by letter or email. All contact will be treated as confidential.

9.2 If the report of bullying is from a parent, then the victim's Achievement Assistant (Year specific) should be the first point of contact.

9.3 It would be helpful in these circumstances if parents could:
- try to stay calm;
- be as specific as possible about what has happened;
- make note of what action the School intends to take;
- ask if there is anything that that they can do to help their child at school;
- stay in touch with the School.

9.4 It would be helpful in a general sense if parents would encourage children to be friendly and tolerant to others and not aggressive.

9.5 Step 1

- The person receiving the complaint will keep a written record of the conversation. The incident will then be referred to the appropriate Head of Year in the first instance. If necessary, the victim will be interviewed by the appropriate member of staff. A written record will be kept. The Head of Year and any staff who subsequently deal with the issue must complete and maintain accurate records. These sheets should be signed and dated.
- The alleged perpetrator will be interviewed separately. The alleged perpetrator will be provided with the opportunity to put their side of the story before any decisions on penalties are made. A written record will be kept.
- Any witnesses will be interviewed and a written record will be kept.
- In the event of a complaint being upheld parents of both parties will be informed.
- Coping strategies with the victim will be discussed to avoid the situation. Reassurance will be offered. The child demonstrating bullying behaviour will be counselled by staff members, told to stop and given an official warning. The underlying cause of any bullying will be discussed. This will be recorded. The pupil will be informed of the procedures that will take place should the incident occur again and this will be in line with the School's Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy.
- The bullying incident or one off prejudicial incident will then be reported to the Local Authority in line with Welsh Government guidance.

9.6 Step 2

If the behaviour is repeated, the pupil's parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation. The pupil will be placed "on report" and sanctions applied which are individual and proportionate. All teachers will be alerted to the problem, where this is appropriate.

9.7 Step 3

- Any repetition of this behaviour could result in short term "inclusion" with the pupil

working away from the normal timetabled lessons, for a period of time, in line with the individual nature of the issue. 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.

- The School may access outside agencies along with parents to attempt to correct behaviour. This may include the School Police Liaison Officer.
- In cases of severe and persistent bullying or prejudice-related incidents, exclusion from school may follow.

9.8 Pupils subjected to bullying will need to be reassured that any repercussions will lead to sanctions being applied against the bully.

9.9 These procedures do not cut across, compromise or pre-empt the right of the parents or the pupils from making a direct complaint to the Police.

9.10 In most circumstances, a restorative approach will be applied and mediation between the pupils and a suitably Senior member of staff will take place. The aim of which will be to restore relationships and eliminate further unacceptable behavior. Mediation could take place between pupils and the School's Police Liaison Officer. Parents cannot be present during mediation meetings between pupils.

9.11 Some of the above steps may be bypassed depending on the specific nature of the case.

10. Recording and Monitoring of Bullying and one off prejudicial related Incidents

At Cowbridge we will:
- implement an ongoing cycle of school-level data recording, monitoring and analysis of anti-bullying and one off incident information;
- use school level anti-bullying and one off incident data to identify priority areas for implementing whole school improvement;
- take action to make those improvements;
- share appropriate data with the local authority.

11. Involvement of pupils

We will:
- regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying;
- ensure that students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying;
- ensure that all students are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying;
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in schools;
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites;
- Offer support to students who have been bullied;
- Work with students who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have;
- Fulfill our duty in completing a termly report to the Local Authority specifying the nature and frequency of bullying and one-off prejudicial incidents.

12. Liaison with parents/carers

12.1 We will:
- Ensure that parents/carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying;
- Ensure parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively;
- Ensure 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.

12.2 After reporting an issue of bullying to the school, if a pupil or parent/carer does not feel that the School has taken the incident seriously or has not addressed concerns to a satisfactory standard, they can make a formal complaint.

12.3 The School complaints policy is available on the school website and made available on request from the School.

13. Monitoring & review, policy into practice

13.1 This policy will be reviewed at least once every two years and updated as required. In reviewing the policy, all members of the school community, including members of the governing body will be consulted.

13.2 At Cowbridge School we will:

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

14. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:
- the school governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy;
- the school governors, the Headteacher, senior leaders, teaching and support staff to be aware of this policy and implement it accordingly;
- the Headteacher to communicate the policy to the School community;
- pupils to abide by the policy.