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# Respecting others: Anti-bullying overview



## Guidance

Guidance document No: 050/2011

Date of issue: September 2011

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| <b>Audience</b>            | Schools, local authorities, parents/carers, families, learners and school governors; social workers, health professionals and voluntary organisations involved with schoolchildren.   |
| <b>Overview</b>            | This guidance provides information for all involved in tackling bullying in schools. Local authorities and schools should find it useful in developing anti-bullying policies and strategies, and responding to incidents of bullying. This document forms part of a series of guidance materials covering bullying around race, religion and culture; bullying around special educational needs and disabilities; homophobic bullying; sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying; and cyberbullying. |
| <b>Action required</b>     | For use in developing anti-bullying policies and strategies.  |
| <b>Further information</b> | Enquiries about this guidance should be directed to:<br>Pupil Engagement Team<br>Welsh Government<br>Cathays Park<br>Cardiff<br>CF10 3NQ<br>Tel: 029 2080 1445<br>Fax: 029 2080 1051<br>e-mail: PETshare@wales.gsi.gov.uk   |
| <b>Additional copies</b>   | This document is only available on the Welsh Government website at <a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills">www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills</a>   |
| <b>Related documents</b>   | <i>Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance</i> National Assembly for Wales Circular 23/2003 (2003)<br><i>National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) Report</i> (2008)<br><i>Inclusion and Pupil Support</i> National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 (2006)<br><i>School-based Counselling Services in Wales</i> (2008)<br><i>School Effectiveness Framework</i> (2008)  |

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## Introduction and context

Every learner in every school has the right to learn, free from the fear of bullying, whatever form that bullying may take. Everyone involved in a learner's education needs to work together to ensure that this is the case. Schools need to take an active approach to tackle all forms of bullying, and should be taking action to prevent bullying behaviour as well as responding to incidents when they occur.

### **The nature of bullying**

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- repeated often over a period of time, while recognising that even a one-off incident can leave a learner traumatised and nervous of future recurrence
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Individual learners' perspectives on what constitutes bullying is also a key element to take into account.

Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression
- verbal – name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.

### **Core anti-bullying guidance**

This guidance is aimed at maintained primary, secondary and special schools, and pupil referral units, though much of the good practice advice is relevant to all types of school. It provides school governors, headteachers, teachers and other staff with information on how to prevent and respond to bullying.

This guidance builds on the core anti-bullying guidance *Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance* (National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 23/2003).

*Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance* provides information on tackling bullying in schools and the steps that schools should take to support learners who report bullying outside of school. It offers direct practical solutions to both prevention and dealing with incidents of bullying, and gives the legal background and an explanation of the roles of all involved in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The main areas covered by *Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance* are:

- the need for school-based policies and the methods for developing these
- the legal responsibilities of schools
- the types of bullying, why it happens, the risks to learners and learners' attitudes
- gathering and using information on the incidence of bullying
- strategies for combating bullying, which can include use of the curriculum, the development of specific strategies, working with victims and deciding when it is appropriate to take tougher measures
- ways of working with parents/carers to gain their support to a whole-school approach, and to deal appropriately with cases of bullying whether they are parents/carers of the bully or the victim
- dealing with bullying and its prevention outside the classroom, which involves considering the supervision and environment of playgrounds and school grounds
- tackling the difficulties of the key transitions that children face
- case studies as examples of where progress has been made in tackling difficult bullying problems
- a list of potentially useful sources to help inform anti-bullying strategies
- advice for learners, parents/carers and families on how to deal with bullying incidents and information and contact details.

*Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance* can be accessed from [www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers](http://www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers)

## The Welsh context

The Welsh Assembly Government documents *The Learning Country* (2001) and *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* (2006) set the context for developments in education and training across Wales. *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* includes a section focused on schools and learning, where the vision is to 'ensure that the benefits of improvements are enjoyed by all, in a fully comprehensive system of learning that serves all our local communities well'.

The Welsh Government vision, as articulated in *Children and Young People: Rights to Action* (2005), is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It has seven core aims which seek to ensure that all children and young people:

- have a flying start in life (Articles 3, 29 and 36)
- have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities (Articles 23, 28, 29 and 32)
- enjoy the best possible health, and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation (Articles 6, 18–20, 24, 26–29, 32–35, 37 and 40)
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities (Articles 15, 20, 29 and 31)
- are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised (Articles 2, 7, 8, 12–17 and 20)
- have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional well-being (Articles 19, 20, 25, 27, 32–35)
- are not disadvantaged by poverty (Articles 6, 26, 27 and 28).

The 54 Articles that make up the Convention can be accessed at [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/uncrcarticles/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/uncrcarticles/?lang=en)

Children who are bullied are less likely to achieve these seven core aims. Therefore, if the Welsh Government's vision is to be realised, schools need to be supported to understand, prevent and respond effectively to all types of bullying.

The UNCRC Action Plan *Getting it Right 2009* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) sets out key priorities and actions to be undertaken by the Welsh Government in response to the *Concluding*

*Observations for the UK from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2008.*

These documents are available on the Welsh Government's website at

[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/rights/uncrc/reporting/20072010/actionplan/?skip=1&lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/rights/uncrc/reporting/20072010/actionplan/?skip=1&lang=en)

[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/uncrcconcludingobservations2008/?skip=1&lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/uncrcconcludingobservations2008/?skip=1&lang=en)

Work on preventing and responding to bullying will need to be seen within the wider context of work on behaviour and attendance in schools. In March 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government made a commitment to undertake a National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) and a report was published in 2008. This was followed by the *Behaving and Attending: Action Plan Responding to the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (2009)*, which sets out the response to the recommendations in the NBAR report. The actions laid out intend to strengthen the ongoing work of the Welsh Government, local authorities and schools in improving and promoting positive behaviour and attendance. This, in turn, is intended to enhance the nurturing and support of children and young people to guide them during their education and to help them to reach their potential.

The full NBAR report can be accessed at

[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/nbarreview/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/reports/nbarreview/?lang=en)

The Action Plan can be accessed at

[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/nbarsummaryactionplan/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/nbarsummaryactionplan/?lang=en)

Published in 2008, *The School Effectiveness Framework: Building effective learning communities together* has been designed to improve children and young people's learning and well-being, through tri-level reform – that is, government, local authorities and schools working collaboratively to bring about change. It aims to ensure that all activities and programmes are aligned in a coherent manner with the central aim of securing improved learning and well-being for children and young people.

The full document can be accessed at

[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooleffectivenessframework/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooleffectivenessframework/?lang=en)

## **The importance of a whole-school approach to anti-bullying**

It is essential to develop a strong inclusive ethos where bullying and prejudice is not tolerated. Human rights are guarantees that protect individuals and groups from actions that affect their freedom and human dignity. This rights-based and inclusive ethos is the foundation upon which all bullying can be effectively addressed.

In addition, headteachers must determine measures on behaviour and discipline that form the school's behaviour policy, acting in accordance with the governing body's statement of principles. Anti-bullying policies should be developed as part of the school's wider behaviour policy and should include specific references to all forms of bullying.

Prevention and response go hand in hand. In effective schools these approaches are, in fact, interdependent. This is a particularly important dynamic when considering bullying that is prejudice-related. Where bullying behaviours may be predicated on values or beliefs that require challenge, it is critical that the school takes action to deal with both the behaviour and the underlying attitudes that drive it.

The challenge for all schools is, first and foremost, in creating a safe learning environment which actively protects learners from harm and prevents bullying behaviour from taking place. Responding promptly and effectively to incidents if they do arise gives confidence and assurance to all members of the school community.

*Respecting others* sets out general advice on developing a whole-school policy on bullying.

### **School-based counselling service**

Effective counselling forms a key part of whole-school approaches to preventing and responding to bullying. The Welsh Government is taking forward a national strategy for school-based counselling, the aim of which is to develop a school-based counselling service that is independent, safe, accessible and of a high standard. All secondary schools have access to a qualified, trained counsellor.

The full national strategy document can be accessed at [www.wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/publications/guidanceandinformation/counsellingstrategy/counsellingstrategy-e.pdf?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/publications/guidanceandinformation/counsellingstrategy/counsellingstrategy-e.pdf?lang=en)

The *School-based Counselling Operating Toolkit* is a joint publication between the Welsh Assembly Government and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Its primary purpose is to provide a resource to build upon the national strategy and includes standards, guidance and exemplar materials for counsellors and counselling services in Wales to enable counselling providers and schools to deliver services that are safe, accessible and of a high standard.

The toolkit can be accessed at [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/wellbeing/schoolcounselling/counsellingtoolkit/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/wellbeing/schoolcounselling/counsellingtoolkit/?lang=en)

## **Personal and social education (PSE) and social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)**

PSE offers a range of opportunities to explore issues related to all types of bullying.

- The *Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) has personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity as core elements. Children have opportunities to learn about themselves and their relationships with other children and adults within and beyond their family.
- The revised *Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008) aims to equip children and young people to be more informed and confident to interact effectively with others, and enables them to develop the intrapersonal skills needed to be emotionally literate.

For more on PSE visit [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/curriculuminwales/pseal/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/curriculuminwales/pseal/?lang=en)  
[www.wales.gov.uk/pesub/home/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/pesub/home/?lang=en)

**"Our school is very caring now, it's just a better environment; it is a happy school and a nice sharing school."**

Learner in a school that introduced the SEAL programme

SEAL is a comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools.

When a school implements SEAL effectively across the whole school, it establishes strong foundations to its work to prevent bullying. At the core of SEAL are the social and emotional skills that are all-important because high levels of these skills create a social climate that does not tolerate bullying behaviour of any kind. Learners are encouraged to develop the skills associated with empathy which drives them to refrain from hurting others and to challenge those that do so. They are encouraged to build a learning community where they feel responsible for including their peers, and can develop and practice the skills associated with building positive relationships. They are supported to learn and practice the skills of assertiveness so they become more able to resist negative peer pressure, and are taught strategies to help them resolve conflicts before relationships are damaged or ill feeling escalates into bullying.

For more information on SEAL visit  
[www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/pseseal/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/pseseal/?lang=en)

A number of other whole-school approaches have been shown by rigorous evaluations to promote the development of personal and social skills at primary level. These include the Incredible Years Dinosaur Social and Emotional Skills Curriculum for Children and Teacher Classroom Management programmes, and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS). For both primary and secondary there is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme and the KiVa Anti-bullying Programme.

For more information on these visit  
[www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com)  
[www.olweus.org](http://www.olweus.org)  
[www.kivakoulu.fi/frontpage](http://www.kivakoulu.fi/frontpage)

## Specific types of bullying

Using *Respecting others* and building on good practice, schools know how to prevent and respond to bullying in general, and will have a range of strategies in place. There are specific types of bullying relating to identities that should be part of these existing strategies.

Schools may benefit from some additional support when devising preventative and responsive measures to different types of identity-based bullying. To this end, the Welsh Government has produced a set of type-specific anti-bullying guidance for schools.

The set includes:

- bullying around race, religion and culture
- bullying involving learners with special educational needs and disabilities
- homophobic bullying
- sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.

Advances in communication technologies, and access to them by children and young people, has required schools to be vigilant and innovative in finding solutions to their misuse. The set of type-specific guidance therefore also includes guidance on cyberbullying.

These guidance materials can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website at [www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers](http://www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers)

Each piece of specific guidance sets out to provide the definition of the type of bullying and highlights some of the key measures and issues that schools will wish to consider in preventing and responding to it. The following sections are included in each separate piece of guidance.

- Section 1 looks at **understanding** the type of bullying and its key characteristics, as well as, in some cases, the level of this type of bullying in Wales.
- Section 2 looks at **the law** and outlines the current legal framework.
- Section 3 looks at **preventing** the type of bullying, and considers the importance of a whole-school and inclusive approach and using opportunities within the curriculum.

- Section 4 looks at **responding** to bullying, and provides advice on how to monitor and record incidents, and how to distinguish bullying from other negative behaviour.
- Section 5 looks at **resources** and further reading, including useful websites. It includes a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs).

The specific, unique elements of each part of this set of guidance can be considered as follows.

### **Bullying around race, religion and culture**

- The Equality Act 2010.
- The importance of teaching about controversial issues such as cultural and religious diversity, ethnicity, prejudice, race and racism.
- The importance of monitoring and recording incidents of bullying around race, religion and culture, and considering the similarities and differences between racist behaviour and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

### **Bullying around special educational needs and disabilities**

- The Equality Act 2010.
- Issues in managing the implications of multi-site settings. For instance, for learners who use a mix of special and mainstream provision, bullying can be a particular concern as they are repeatedly moving in and out of different environments.

### **Homophobic bullying**

- The Equality Act 2010 and Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 (repealed in 2003).
- Considering and understanding different models of family and developing learner support systems.

### **Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying**

- The Equality Act 2010.
- Characteristics of sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying behaviour.

## Cyberbullying

- Considering how cyberbullying is different to other forms of bullying in that, for example, the audience for the bullying can be very large and reached rapidly.
- The need to understand its ever-changing nature as technology and culture develops.
- The importance of updating existing policies and practices, making reporting cyberbullying easier, promoting the positive use of technology, and evaluating the impact of prevention activities.
- Promoting the positive use of technology.

## Acknowledgements

The Welsh Government would like to thank those who provided case studies and information for this guidance. A full list is given in each of the five guidance documents.