

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION SETTINGS

2006 - 2008

GATESHEAD COUNCIL ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY 2006-2008

Background

Gateshead Council seeks to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and young people can develop and grow making full use of the range of facilities available to them.

Children, young people and adults are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding and to participate in any activity free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

In Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2005) the government identifies as an aim in its Outcomes Framework that 'children and young people should be safe from bullying and discrimination'.

The strategy is also closely linked to actions proposed in the draft children and Young People's Plan under "Stay Safe" and "Make a Positive Contribution" and specifically to the priority outcome "Children and young people feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination".

Definition

Bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as a repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verbal in nature, by those in a position of power which is formally or situationally defined, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification. (Besag, 1989).

There are many definitions of bullying but most have three things in common.

Bullying is:

- deliberately hurtful behaviour;
- often repeated over a period of time;
- difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms but three main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, destroying belongings.
- Verbal – name-calling, insulting, racist remarks.
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups.

Aims:

- to raise the profile of bullying and its effects on children and young people's emotional health and well-being, life chances and achievement.
- to establish a culture in which bullying is not acceptable through the promotion of policies and practices which prevent or reduce opportunities for bullying to arise and deal swiftly, fairly and sensitively with any which do.
- to involve parents, carers and the children and young people themselves in developing and implementing anti-bullying strategies.
- to embody equality of opportunity; celebrate diversity and be responsive to individual needs and differences.
- to promote the highest standards of emotional intelligence and care for others.

- to respond openly and honestly, embodying solution-focused, no blame approaches.
- to value multi-professional contributions to solving complex problems.

National Context

A summary of surveys of bullying conducted between 1997 and 2002 (Smith, 2005) concludes that bullying is a continuing problem and is perceived as such by the majority of pupils even when they think their school is good at dealing with this. In one survey involving 7,066 boys and girls aged 13 to 19, 12% to 13% reported having experienced severe bullying; this figure rose to 25% for children from minority ethnic groups. More than 40% of the remainder felt that they had been less severely bullied. Name-calling was the most common form of bullying reported by both girls and boys and being deliberately left out was common for girls.

The evidence suggests a possible slight decrease in bullying with positive results from a variety of interventions, including solution-focused brief therapy; bully courts; mentoring by older pupils; training pupils in the implementation of peer support schemes, buddying and befriending, particularly in primary schools and lunch-time activity clubs in secondary schools. Circle Time; active listening and counselling approaches; working with parents; improving school grounds and co-operative group work were all rated as successful by schools responding to an evaluation of a second edition of the Government's anti-bullying guidance for schools "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence" (2000).

More research is needed regarding which are the most effective interventions for different situations. Whether it is better for schools to target bullying directly or focus more on the class climate and relationships is not yet conclusively established.

Since September 1999 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have had specific duties to combat bullying. Schools must have anti-bullying policies and procedures and LEAs must ensure that their schools comply with their duties.

In September 2005 the government published Every Child Matters: Change for Children, setting up a framework of five outcomes under which local authorities should organise and evaluate their work with and on behalf of children and young people. These five are:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-Being

Priority national targets and indicators are related to these and Inspection judgements will be derived from them.

Each Outcome contains 5 aims. Being safe from bullying and discrimination is the third aim under **Stay Safe**. Developing positive relationships and choosing not to bully or discriminate is the third aim under **Make A Positive Contribution**.

The relevant indicator under **Stay Safe** is the percentage of 11-15 year olds who state they have been bullied in the last twelve months.

Inspection Judgements which relate to bullying are:

- 2.1 children and young people and their carers are informed about key risks to their safety and how to deal with them.
- 2.2 children and young people are provided with a safe environment.
- 2.7 looked after children live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation.

- 2.8 children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation.

The relevant indicator under **Making a Positive Contribution** is the percentage of 10-19 year olds admitting to:

- (a) bullying another pupil in the last twelve months
- (b) attacking, threatening or being rude due to skin colour, race or religion.

Inspection judgements which relate to bullying under **Make A Positive Contribution** are:

- 4.1 Children and young people are supported in developing socially and emotionally.
- 4.2 Children and young people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, are supported in managing changes and responding to challenges in their lives.
- 4.3 Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision-making and in supporting the community.
- 4.4 Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour by children and young people.
- 4.6 Children and young people who are looked after are helped to make a positive contribution.
- 4.7 Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution.

The evidence to support these judgements will include:

- 4.1.4 Children and young people have opportunities to provide mentoring support to others.
- 4.3.4 Children and young people are encouraged to take part in and to initiate voluntary activities to support the community and environment.

Local Context

Gateshead has for many years been at the forefront in developing approaches to bullying prevention, through the provision of training, guidance and good practice initiatives in schools. Valerie Besag, before her retirement from the Gateshead Psychological Service, produced a training manual for schools and colleges "We Don't Have Bullies Here" and then a CD-Rom, Coping With Bullying (1999) which, through the sponsorship of the Rotary Club, was circulated to all schools nationally giving guidance for pupils, staff and parents. Our schools have embodied anti-bullying exercises in their induction programmes for pupils in Year 7 and have used buddying, peer mediation and lunch-time clubs amongst other preventative approaches. Every Gateshead school has gained or is working towards the Healthy School Award which includes the prevention of bullying in its Emotional Health and Well-being target. Anti-bullying approaches have been promoted through the Behaviour Improvement Project (BIP) and the creation of the Behaviour and Emotional Support Teams (BESTs). An Anti-Bullying Working Group has been formed with representatives from the Raising Achievement Service, the Support and Welfare Services within Access and Inclusion and the Primary Care Trust. This group reports to the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy Group. The Working Group has carried out an audit of good practice across Gateshead schools, to which 37 schools replied. From the audit it was recommended that the following issues be addressed:

- Provide a mechanism to review schools' anti-bullying policies and determine how these would be monitored.
- Provide training and information regarding resource materials available to schools which address the issue of bullying.

A means of reviewing behaviour policies incorporating changes to policy development within the Primary and Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Strategies was produced and included in the publication of the Behaviour Support Service's Information to Schools, in addition to being given to all BIP Primary schools with their social, emotional and behavioural support (SEBS) materials.

Before and during anti-bullying week in November 2004 Gateshead played host to 'Scary Guy', a charismatic American who uses his personal experiences to promote tolerance, consideration and compassion for everyone regardless of race, creed or disability. In partnership with the BIP and Positive Futures, funding was provided to ensure that all secondary schools and a number of primary schools experienced him. His messages were supported by the children and young people of Gateshead with pupils still referring to his visit and the messages he brought.

As part of anti-bullying week 2005, an awareness-raising presentation on homophobic bullying issues was delivered at Gateshead's Autumn Social Inclusion Conference for school representatives.

For anti-bullying week 2006, plans to hold a regional conference for staff on bullying prevention are being developed through BIP with our partner local authorities. Schools will be supported to stage their own awareness-raising events for pupils.

This Anti-Bullying Strategy links with the first actions under the "Stay Safe" and "Make a Positive Contribution" sections of Gateshead's draft Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009. Both describe the actions the Council and its partners will take to ensure children and young people feel safe from bullying harassment and discrimination which is given additional emphasis by its inclusion amongst the 10 priority outcomes identified in the Plan.

During the Spring Term 2006 the Council commissioned Vantage Technologies to assist in designing a web-based questionnaire for pupils which will provide a means for them to record bullying incidents on-line. The aim will be for the victim to make the first report. However, this may also come from another interested party such as an observer, friend, member of staff, parent or carer. A nominated member of the school's staff will be quickly alerted to recorded incidents to enable an initial response.

This system will assist schools and the Council in their duties to analyse and report on incidents and categories of bullying. Reports will cover type and locality of bullying incidents and whether there are contributory factors for either the victim or bully such as racially-, sexuality- or disability-motivated incidents.

Through purchasing Vantage's Sentinel system and being part of their Anti-Bullying pilot project, the Council will receive all the pilot modules developed by other participating local authorities which relate to the recording and monitoring of types of bullying incidents within individual educational establishments and across the Authority.

Strategic Priorities

- Children's and young people's views are heard, supported and considered in planning and evaluating anti-bullying approaches.
- Children and young people, parents and carers are confident that policies and practices are in place across educational settings and extra-curricular organisations to ensure children are kept safe from harassment and bullying.
- All staff have had training and feel confident to implement strategies to prevent bullying situations arising and to deal with any situations involving perceived bullying.

- All staff know how to access information and support to help them in the prevention of bullying.
- Staffing expertise and resources are available to provide advice and support to schools.
- Multi-agency approaches are valued and effectively employed.

Key Outcomes/How Will We Know the Strategy is Working?

KEY OUTCOMES

- The Council will join Vantage Technologies Sentinel web-based programme pilot starting in the summer term 2006. Our role will focus on the development of an on-line recording system for pupils to register their views about bullying and its prevention.
- Schools involved in the Sentinel pilot will use the information from the pupil surveys to review and, where necessary, improve their procedures regarding the prevention of bullying and the prompt and effective resolution of any perceived occurrences of bullying.
- There will be a reduction in the number of pupils refusing to attend school as a result of perceived bullying.
- An Anti-Bullying Award Scheme for Schools will be introduced during the academic year 2007-08. To achieve this award schools will:
 - (a) establish and maintain an anti-bullying interest group within school, involving pupils, staff and community link personnel and parents.
 - (b) ensure that their anti-bullying policy provides information as to what the school is currently doing to support vulnerable young people. This policy will be reviewed annually.
 - (c) demonstrate their commitment to multi-agency approaches to tackle bullying through accessing their support. Such agencies might include the Psychological Service, the Behaviour Support Team, the Special Educational Needs Support Service, the Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs), the Healthy Schools Team, the Education Welfare Service, the Link Inspector or the Inspector for SEN/Inclusion and the Youth and Community Learning Service.

Multi-agency work might involve:

- regular staff/pupil training on social and emotional issues including bullying prevention.
- case consultation
- individual/group consultation
- material development
- policy review
- (d) Establish and maintain a Peer Support Scheme within school, eg Buddy Scheme, Peer Mediation Scheme etc.
- (e) Participate in an annual Anti-Bullying Awareness Raising Event, coordinated with other schools and support agencies.

- (f) Regularly provide information to parents regarding how to raise a concern and who with, how typical concerns are dealt with, and the types of responses often employed to tackle a perceived bullying situation. This information should also include details of who the school's anti-bullying governor and staff coordinator are.

Members of the Local Authority's Support Agencies will be trained to:

- assist schools in preparing for and maintaining their accreditation.
- carry through the process of accrediting schools.

The Anti-Bullying Working Group will

- collate data regarding training needs
- offer training and resource materials to schools
- analyse data in order to highlight trends and set targets for the reduction of bullying incidents
- engage children and young people regarding anti-bullying policy, strategy and practice
- promote and support the participation of representatives from Gateshead's Youth Assembly in the Regional Young Anti-Bullying Alliance Group
- promote the Anti-Bullying Award Scheme and support schools to achieve this.
- co-ordinate the Sentinel pilot scheme and support schools to use this electronic database system.

Schools and Council Organisations Working With Children and Young People will

- identify how they will put this strategy into practice;
- involve children and young people in the development of this policy and practice;
- produce a document which is published, disseminated and available for all those who are directly, or indirectly, involved with the organisation;
- have a group who will have the responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy;
- make clear that everyone has a responsibility for the safety of others;
- identify and provide appropriate training in relation to bullying behaviour for adults, children and young people;
- raise awareness of adults, children and young people about bullying;
- provide and encourage a safe, listening environment in which adults, children and young people feel free to discuss their concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- regularly and openly discuss the issue of bullying;
- develop close links with agencies which might help reduce bullying behaviour;
- make a commitment to take effective and appropriate action in dealing with bullying behaviour;
- develop appropriate mechanisms for:
 - making children and young people who allege they have been bullied immediately safe
 - investigating incidents and clearly stipulating what action will be taken as part of that investigation
 - recording incidents and the subsequent action taken
 - giving consideration to confidentiality issues
 - involving parents and other organisations
 - monitoring and evaluating the actions taken
- provide appropriate training and support for the victims of bullying;
- provide appropriate help for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- conduct an audit to identify **where** and **when** bullying is taking place and use this to inform the action they take;
- give careful consideration to how their Anti-Bullying Policy links with the Child Protection procedures.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- Progress in relation to the Anti-Bullying Strategy is monitored by the Social Inclusion Strategy Group.
- Schools' policies and approaches are monitored annually by the core team of the Gateshead Healthy School Award. The Anti-Bullying Working Group provides support to schools in reviewing their policies and approaches.
- The number of schools achieving or working towards the Anti-Bullying Award will be recorded and monitored by the Anti-Bullying Group from 2007-08 onwards.
- The Anti-Bullying Working Group will monitor and audit schools' records of bullying incidents.
- The Anti Bullying Working Group will assist schools through training and the dissemination of information about best practice approaches and available resources, in the evaluation of these.
- The Council will use data from the Sentinel system to indicate the percentage of 11-15 year olds who state they have been bullied during the previous twelve months.
- The Council will use data from the Sentinel system to indicate the percentage of 10-19 year olds admitting to
 - (a) bullying another pupil in the last twelve months
 - (b) attacking, threatening or being rude due to skin colour, race or religion
- Consultation on this strategy will take place during the summer term involving a wide range of stakeholders, including all schools and relevant Council, Voluntary and Health Organisations working with children and young people, as well as with the children and young people themselves.