Children and Young People's
Anti-Bullying Strategy
2015 - 2020

Gateshead Council

educationGateshead
raising achievement for all

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Purpose of the Strategy

This strategy is effective from January 2015 to December 2019 and provides a framework setting out how Gateshead Council and its partners will tackle bullying and harassment involving Gateshead's children and young people in educational and community settings. This is in accordance with the council's statutory duties and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education Act 2011 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.

Introduction

Gateshead Council seeks to provide a safe and secure environment in which all children and young people can develop and prosper, making full use of the range of facilities available to enable them to reach their full potential.

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

This strategy supports Gateshead's vision for children and young people as set out in 'Vision 2030, the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gateshead', which aims to ensure children and young people are empowered and supported to develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society.

Strategic Priorities

In order to address issues of bullying, Gateshead Council recognises that bullying involving children and young people can take place anywhere.

"These principles should support educational and community establishments in revising their individual anti-bullying policies and procedures".

The council and its partners aim to:

- reduce bullying and harassment across Gateshead; as reported through the HRBS;

- promote children and young people's voices with regard to bullying and harassment through the Youth Assembly and School Councils;

- ensure that all schools have an anti-bullying policy;

- ensure that agencies and organisations are aware of their responsibilities and work in partnership to tackle bullying;

- support the development of positive emotional health and wellbeing in children and young people;

- promote the achievement of an accredited Anti-Bullying Award by all schools;

- promote hate crime/incident reporting via the Gateshead ARCH system;

- share best practice in the area of anti-bullying;

- signpost support on request to schools/academies;

- publicise a range of training opportunities; and

- provide advice and guidance on issues relating to bullying including how to record and monitor incidents of bullying in schools.

In addition to setting out our strategic priorities, this strategy sets out how we will take forward these priorities in Gateshead's Children and Young People's Plan under 'Attainment, achievement and ambition' and 'Starting and staying healthy and safe'. We have used the following principles to underpin this:

- Bullying relies on observers doing nothing to stop it.

- Tackling bullying is the responsibility of every person and every service.

- Bullying can happen anywhere.

- Anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator of bullying.

Definition

There are a number of definitions of bullying. In Gateshead the definition we use is:

"Bullying is 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)

And

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power." (The Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA) 2014)

Although there are many definitions of bullying, most have three things in common, namely that it is:

• Deliberately hurtful behaviour;

• Often repeated over a period of time; and

• Difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves from, due to an imbalance of power, perceived or otherwise.

There are several factors that might leave young people at greater risk of becoming the target of bullying. Often these are linked to an actual or a perceived 'difference' that affects a young persons' status in peer groups or makes them 'stand out'. **These may include:**

• having a disability;

• having learning difficulties or long term health conditions (including mental health problems);

• social choices (such as belonging to different social groups or dress sense);

• level of affluence;

• religion/belief;

• ethnicity;

• sexual orientation;

• gender identity; or

• may be unrelated to any of these.

Some of these factors are protected under the Equality Act 2010. Schools and all public bodies have a number of responsibilities and duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to equality and diversity. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of 'protected characteristics' (previously called 'grounds').

The relevant characteristics for services and public functions are:

• disability*

• gender reassignment*

• pregnancy and maternity

• race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality*

• religion or belief*

• age

• sex, and sexual orientation*

• marriage and civil partnerships

Bullying can take many forms. It can be overt or more subtle. Four of the main types are:

1. Physical - including hitting, kicking, taking or destroying belongings.

2. Verbal - including name calling, insulting, mimicking, coercion, harassment, intimidation.

3. Emotional/Indirect - including spreading nasty stories about someone, shunning (excluding someone from social groups), behaviour that might result in psychological harm/trauma.

4. Cyber/technological - including mobile phone calls, text messages, pictures or video clips, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking websites, sharing private messages or communications.

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*Under the Equality Act 2010 police and partner organisations monitor hate crime/hate incidents. In Gateshead the monitoring of hate crime/hate incidents is undertaken via the ARCH system (See Appendix 1)

National Context

NSPCC statistics (March 2013) indicates that almost half (46%) of children and young people say they have been bullied at school at some point in their lives. However, 18% of children and young people who worried about bullying said they would not talk to their parents about it.

According to figures from Childline, 31,599 children contacted them about bullying during 2011/12.

A survey of pupils in England estimates that 16,493 young people aged 11-15 (94.4%) are frequently absent from state schools or home educated because of bullying. (Red Balloon, 2011).

In addition:

• 38% of disabled children worried about being bullied.

• Over half (55%) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people have experienced homophobic bullying at school (Chamberlain, Tamsin; George, Nalia; Golden, Sarah; Walker, Fiona and Benton, Tom (2010).

• Between 8%-34% of children and young people in the UK have been cyberbullied and girls are twice as likely to experience persistent cyberbullying as boys. (DfE, 2011).

Local Context

In Gateshead 87% of our schools are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding, with 96% of all schools judged good or better under the category of 'Behaviour and Safety of Pupils'.

Partners in Gateshead have for many years been successful in developing approaches to bullying prevention, through the provision of training, guidance and good practice.

We recognise the importance of educating children, young people, parents/carers and practitioners to fully understand what bullying is, the devastating impact it can have on young people and the need to look at creative ways of dealing with it. We recognise that this may require variations in approach, a need to be flexible and an understanding to the needs of those children who may be particularly vulnerable, for example with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Anti-bullying approaches continue to be promoted through all agencies working with young people.

The council's Anti-Bullying Strategy Working Group includes representatives from a variety of services within Gateshead Council and other partners including, but not exclusively representation from schools. This group reports to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Information from the Child Health Profile (March 2014) shows that children and young people under the age of 20 make up 22.5% of the total population of Gateshead.
In Gateshead:

• 7.3% of school aged children and young people are from a minority ethnic group.

• The level of child poverty is higher than the England average with 23% of children and young people under the age of 16 living in poverty.

• The rate of family homelessness is similar to the England average.

• 8.7% of children aged 4-5 years and 21.9% of children aged 10-11 years are classed as obese.

• The rate of young people between the ages of 10-15 who are admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm is higher than the England average.

In 2012 as part of the Gateshead Healthy Schools Programme, a total of 2,756 pupils were involved in the Health Related Behaviour Survey (HRBS). The pupils were from 43 primary schools; aged 8 and 10 years old and in year groups 4 and 6 and from 5 secondary schools and one short stay school; aged 12 and 15 years old and were in years 8 and 10. (SHEU: Schools Health Education Unit)

Overall 77% of Gateshead primary children sampled said that their school takes bullying seriously which is higher than the 68% of primary aged children's responses in the wider SHEU (Schools Health Education Unit) reference sample.

Continued...

Local Context (Continued)

However, in Gateshead, primary pupils indicated that:

• 31% were afraid to go to school because of bullying, at least sometimes.

• 29% said that they had been bullied, at or near school in the last 12 months.

• The types of behaviour that were most widely reported as causing distress included: being called nasty names, being teased or made fun of and being pushed or hit for no reason.

• When asked where it happened, 25% of pupils reported outside at break-time and 16% in the classroom at break-time. 7% reported during a lesson.

• 23% reported that they thought they were bullied because of the way they looked.

• 3% reported that they thought others might fear going to school because of them.

Gateshead's secondary aged pupils indicated that:

• 28% reported a fear of going to school at least sometimes because of bullying.

• 18% said that they had been bullied at or near school in the last 12 months.

• 59% said that their school took bullying seriously.

From the responses to the question: "Are you ever afraid of going to school because you may be bullied":

• 30% of Year 6 said that they were afraid of going to school because of bullying at least sometimes.

• 34% of Year 8 said that they were afraid of going to school because of bullying at least sometimes.

• 21% of Year 10 said that they were afraid of going to school because of bullying at least sometimes.

Statutory Responsibilities (Education)

Pupils have the right to be educated in an atmosphere which is free from fear. Head teachers and others responsible for running schools have a duty to do all that they reasonably can to protect pupils in their charge from intimidation, assault or harassment. This right and this duty are enshrined within documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights.

"Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying".

Section 89 of the Education and Inspection's Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the schools' behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

The Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2010 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;

2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and

3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the new Equality Duty. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body (generally the governing body or the proprietor) of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

Safeguarding children and young people

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed 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, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issues which have contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Bullying outside school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted upon. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Conclusion

Gateshead Council agree that children and young people are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding and to participate in any lawful activity, free from bullying, harassment and discrimination and will continue to seek to provide a safe and secure environment for children and young people to develop and prosper.

This strategy therefore provides a framework on how Gateshead Council and its partners will tackle bullying and harassment in educational and community settings in accordance with the council's statutory duties and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

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

ARCH - Recording, Reporting & Monitoring of Hate incidents

Hate crimes and incidents are taken to mean any crime or incident where the perpetrators hostility or prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised.

Individuals may be targeted because of their actual or perceived:

• Disability;

• Gender identity (transphobic);

• Race or ethnicity (racist);

• Religion or belief;

• Sexual orientation (homophobic); or

• A combination of these.

Individuals may also be targeted due to other issues which identify them as 'different'. A tragic example of this was the murder of Sophie Lancaster who was attacked due to her appearance and membership of the 'goth sub-culture'.

In Gateshead we will ensure that any incident or crime perpetrated due to prejudice will be identified, recorded and dealt with as a hate crime/incident.

Hate crime/incidents can cover a range of actions, including but not limited to:

• Verbal abuse

• Threatening behaviour

• Deliberate 'outing' or threat of 'outing'

• Criminal damage

• Offensive graffiti

• Arson or attempted arson

• Physical attack

• Harassment by phone, text, email, or via the internet

• Abusive correspondence

ARCH is a secure online reporting and case management system, designed to provide a coordinated approach to stop hate crime. Once a report form is completed, an automatic referral can be generated and sent to a number of member support agencies including Gateshead Council, The Gateshead Housing Company, Gateshead Victim Support and Northumbria Police.

Using the ARCH case management system these agencies can share and update information about the case with each other and most importantly, ensure a response is made to the victim and action taken against the perpetrator where at all possible. Information from the ARCH system can be used to monitor the number, location and pattern of hate incidents occurring in Gateshead and develop relevant interventions in response.

Useful Documents

Supporting Bullied Children Advice (DfE 2014)

Preventing and Tackling bullying (DfE 2014)

OFSTED - No Place for Bullying Tackling and Preventing Prejudice-based Bullying (DfE 2013)

OFSTED - Exploring the school's actions to prevent and tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying (DfE 2013)

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE March 2014)

Children and Families Plan 2011

Gateshead Council Plan 2012-2017

Working Together to Safeguard Children - March 2013

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Health Related Behaviour Survey (SHEU: Schools health Education Unit) 2011

Anti-Bullying Contacts

Anti Bullying Alliance
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Anti Bullying Ambassadors
www.antibullyingpro.com

BIG Award
www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk

BullyingUK
www.bullying.co.uk

Ditch the Label
www.ditchthelabel.org

Diversity Role Models
www.diversityrolemodels.org

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH)
www.eachaction.org.uk

Kidscape
www.kidscape.org.uk

Stonewall
www.stonewall.org.uk

Schools OUT
www.schools-out.org.uk

Think U Know
www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Show Racism the Red Card
www.theredcard.org

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