



POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON ANTI-BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

2026



Directorate of Learning and Skills

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Introduction

Challenging bullying in schools is a key priority for the Vale of Glamorgan Council. We are committed to ensuring that all learners feel safe, secure, valued, and supported to achieve their full potential. Eliminating all forms of bullying, harassment, and oppressive behaviour is essential in creating environments where learners feel safe and are able to exercise their right to learn.

“Our schools need to feel safe from bullying so we can learn and progress.” – Learner

To challenge bullying effectively, we support schools to develop inclusive, engaging learning environments in which well-being is prioritised. Learners should feel safe, ready to learn, and confident in forming respectful and positive relationships. Respect, tolerance, and kindness must be embedded throughout school culture.

Consultation with learners, staff and community members has allowed the development of a whole-school approach to preventing and addressing bullying, ensuring that policies, practices, and responses are informed by lived experience and shared values. This approach promotes clear expectations, consistent responses, and meaningful support for all members of the school community, embedding a culture where diversity is celebrated and bullying behaviours are actively challenged.

Some groups of learners face a higher risk of bullying, including learners with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Schools must recognise these increased vulnerabilities and take proactive steps to prevent prejudice-related bullying. Protected characteristics include:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity

6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

Prejudice-related bullying can also extend beyond the protected characteristics and may relate to social background, appearance, additional learning needs, or long-term illness.

What is Bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying, this guidance adopts the definition set out in **Rights, Respect, Equality: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies (2019)**:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally.”

Key elements of bullying include:

- **Intent to harm:** Bullying is deliberate. Learners who bully often target an aspect of identity, appearance, or vulnerability to cause maximum distress.
- **Harmful outcome:** The target is physically or emotionally hurt, isolated, humiliated, or fearful. Their self-worth may be damaged.
- **Repetition:** Bullying usually occurs repeatedly, though a single serious incident may indicate a risk of repetition.
- **Power imbalance:** Bullying relies on an unequal power dynamic—real or perceived—linked to age, physical strength, social status, confidence, or resilience.
- **Direct or indirect behaviour:** Bullying can be face-to-face or subtle, including social manipulation, exclusion, or digital means.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying can include, but is not limited to:

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging belongings

- **Verbal:** Insults, threats, name-calling, humiliation
- **Emotional:** Manipulation, isolation, intimidation
- **Indirect:** Rumours, setting someone up, exclusion
- **Online/cyberbullying:** Using technology to harm, intimidate, shame, or harass
- **Relational aggression:** Damaging friendships or social status
- **Sexual bullying:** Innuendo, unwanted touching, sexual harassment, sharing explicit images
- **Prejudice-related bullying:** Bullying linked to protected characteristics or stereotypes

“We think all bullying should be talked about. No type should be treated as less important than another.” – Learner.

Some behaviours described as "bullying" may constitute criminal offences such as assault, hate crime, sexual harassment, or malicious communications. Schools have a responsibility to record and respond appropriately, and parents and learners may report incidents directly to the police.

Prejudice-related bullying

Prejudice-related behaviour arises when individuals act in a discriminatory or harmful manner based on stereotypes, misconceptions, or biased attitudes that reflect wider societal inequalities. Such behaviour may be directed towards learners with protected characteristics, including those who are disabled (which may include learners with SEN), those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, those who are questioning their gender or are transgender, or those whose race, ethnicity, appearance, religion, or gender differs from that of the perpetrator. Prejudice-related behaviour may also target learners who do not fall within protected characteristics, such as those with additional learning needs that do not meet the legal definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, prejudice may be based on other factors, including social background or status. These behaviours can contribute to bullying and create a hostile or unsafe environment for learners.

There are many examples of prejudice-related behaviour. Some of these might include:

- stigmatising a learner with a disability or SEN
- using homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist or racist language
- actively trying to remove any religious clothing such as a hijab, kippah, turban, cap or veil
- using sexist comments, unwanted touching or the taking of images without permission
- commenting on someone's appearance such as their weight or hair colour.

Youth Voice

Learners across the Vale of Glamorgan have expressed a strong desire for schools to:

- involve pupils in shaping anti-bullying policies
- ensure policies are lived out in practice—not just written down
- prioritise kindness, respect, and safety
- ensure reporting systems are easy, safe, and taken seriously

Young people have consistently stated that anti-bullying work is most effective when they feel heard, respected, and involved.

Feedback gathered through learner voice groups, the School Council, focus groups and questionnaires consistently shows that pupils want teachers to understand the following:

“Listen to us properly and take us seriously”

Learners want adults to give them time to explain concerns without rushing or minimising what they say, for their feelings to be acknowledged not just the facts explained and that they need an adult they can trust.

“We need adults to intervene and help us when things aren't right”

Many learners said that that repeated 'jokes' or comments often escalate when ignored. This can be in education settings or through social media platforms, they want staff to actively challenge harmful behaviours, stopping incidents or challenging behaviours consistently not selectively.

“Explain what will happen after we report something”

The fear of not knowing what action could be taken is a huge barrier for learners reporting bullying or concerns, having clarity about the process or potential actions would support those to speak out. Learners value being kept up to date, even if the information cannot be fully shared, so they know they have not been forgotten or dismissed.

“Celebrate who we are, but also help us to celebrate others too”.

Learners say they want school to be a place where, diversity is visible and represented, negative stereotypes or discriminatory comments are challenged, not ignored and where dialogue and discussion has a place to understand different perspectives.

A School Approach

The Welsh Government's statutory guidance *Rights, Respect, Equality* outlines expectations for all schools:

- adopt a proactive, whole-school approach to preventing bullying
- embed positive behaviour and respectful relationships across the curriculum
- maintain a separate anti-bullying policy linked to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, and discipline
- consistently use the definition of bullying provided in the guidance
- record and monitor prejudice-related and bullying incidents
- provide information to the Local Authority when requested
- review policies annually with the involvement of the full school community

This document supports schools to meet these expectations.

Expectations of Schools and Governing Bodies

The Welsh Government guidance, 'Rights, respect, equality' provides statutory guidance for both governing bodies of maintained schools and local authorities to help address and prevent bullying in education settings in Wales. The guidance outlines the Welsh Government's expectations for schools to:

- take a proactive approach to prevent bullying and promote positive, respectful behaviour between staff and learners as part of their whole-school approach to health and well-being;
- have a separate anti-bullying policy, which links to broader school policies, such as behaviour, safeguarding and attendance and wellbeing and clearly sets out expectations for positive behaviour of learners off the school site;
- use the definitions of bullying, provided in this guidance, as a basis of their own definition and school's anti-bullying policy;
- record and monitor perceived and actual incidents of bullying in their schools, in compliance with relevant data protection requirements, to inform self-evaluation and help the school take pro-active steps to challenge bullying; and
- report recorded incidents to the LA when requested to do so
- regularly review their anti-bullying policy and strategies in collaboration with school staff, learners, parents and carers.

“We need to know that teachers care about our wellbeing—not just have it written down, it needs to be real” – Learner

Similarly, teaching staff have commented that:

“Our learners need to feel heard, be seen and know that action has been taken” – VOG teacher

Reporting and Recording

Schools must:

- provide clear, accessible reporting routes for learners, staff, and parents
- record all prejudice-related incidents and one-off serious incidents
- monitor patterns and respond promptly
- consider the learner's voice when determining actions
- follow safeguarding and data protection requirements
- inform the Local Authority in line with reporting expectations

My Concern and the Local Authority have worked together to ensure that the necessary categories are available on My Concern. Schools will be expected to record all incidents within the categories listed. Schools can seek support from Safeguarding Officers to continue to report and record using My Concern in the most effective way possible. Allowing for analysis of data to develop preventative structures, seek support or access further resources where necessary.

Developing and Implementing a School's Anti-Bullying Policy

The Local Authority encourages all schools to develop their own policy and to monitor their policies and procedures. This guidance document is intended to build on existing good practice in schools and to assist Governors, Head teachers, and staff to review their current policies to ensure that they fulfil the school's legal obligations.

**“We need to continue to create a culture of speaking up and sharing worries”
– VOG teacher.**

“The Welsh Government expects schools to develop their anti-bullying policy as a separate policy document, but that it should link to the school behaviour policy, which schools must have by law.” Rights, Respect, Equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools. pg 52. All Vale of Glamorgan schools are required to develop their anti-bullying policy in consultation with the whole school community. This includes learners, staff, governors, and parents. A child-friendly version is strongly recommended.

A school policy should include:

- the school's vision and values
- the school's definition of bullying
- why preventing and tackling bullying is important
- how awareness will be raised
- preventative measures
- how the school will respond to incidents
- reporting mechanisms and what learners/parents can expect
- recording and monitoring procedures
- arrangements for annual review



Policy- Anti-bullying Policy Ysgol Gynradd Cogan Primary School

Despite work by schools and other services, as well as local, Welsh and UK government initiatives, bullying remains a desperately worrying problem for many. Online spaces and social media continue to provide new tools and opportunities to bully others. Rights, Respect, Equality (2019)

Vision and Values

Our school is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all learners can achieve their full potential. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.

Our approach aligns with:

- *Rights, Respect, Equality: Statutory Guidance (2019)*
- the Equality Act 2010
- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- our school's vision, ethos, and behaviour principles

Creating an environment which encourages positive behaviour and addresses the root causes of unacceptable behaviour will help create an inclusive and engaging environment where learners feel safe and are ready to learn.

At Cogan Primary School, it is considered to be of great importance that pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and that it will be dealt with.

All children have a right to develop and achieve their full potential through the educational and social services system free from humiliation oppression and abuse. Pupils must feel safe and valued, within the school environment.

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children.

This policy has been developed in consultation with learners, staff, governors, parents/carers, and the wider school community.

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Why It Is Important to Prevent and Challenge Bullying

Our school believes that:

- every learner has the right to feel safe
- respect is central to positive relationships
- bullying damages wellbeing, learning, and community cohesion
- everyone has a responsibility to challenge discriminatory attitudes
- promoting kindness creates the foundation for high-quality learning

“Help us learn about each other’s experiences respectfully” – learner voice

In Cogan Primary School we will do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

Bullying should be dealt with as a whole-school issue.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person’s responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

It is of paramount importance that all children feel respected, safe and cared for.

We fully support and promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (UNCRC)

See appendix for legislation relating to bullying.

Raising Awareness and prevention

The school will raise awareness by providing ongoing staff training, embedding relevant learning within curriculum content, and delivering assemblies, events, and whole-school campaigns that reinforce a culture of respect and inclusion. Awareness will also be strengthened through active pupil leadership and participation, clear visual displays and consistent communication across the school environment, and regular engagement with parents and carers to ensure shared understanding and collaboration.

At Cogan Primary School, we will:

- Ensure that staff receive regular training on the anti-bullying policy and procedures

- Ensure that, on induction, all new staff are made aware of the policy, the approach taken by the school and how the procedures are administered
- Ensure that playground, lunch time and school transport supervisors and school administrators are fully aware of the policy and the procedures they should follow
- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in schools.
- Publish the anti-bullying policy on the school website
- Publicise details of useful helplines and websites
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied.
- Work with pupils who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have.

How anti-bullying work will be embedded in the curriculum rather than an isolated annual event (such as during anti-bullying week)

Creating an environment which encourages positive behaviour and addresses the root causes of unacceptable behaviour will help create an inclusive and engaging environment where learners feel safe and are ready to learn.

Reporting and Responding

At Cogan Primary School, there are several ways in which pupils can report bullying. These include:

- trained peer supporters or buddies
- a quiet and private space to talk
- anti-bullying pastoral leads and staff available at key times
- school nurses or counsellors
- feedback boxes
- tell a member of staff or DHT or HT

Supporting the pupil who has reported that they have been bullied

Effective listening

Those who are targets of bullying tend to feel powerless. One of the first steps when responding to incidents is to work to restore their capacity to make choices for themselves. Using effective listening techniques staff (or a peer supporter where these are used) can help the targeted learner to feel they are doing something about the problem.

We will:

- acknowledge calmly the anger or distress of the targeted child or young person speaking
- try not to rush them if they need time to process their thoughts
- be mindful that it may have required considerable courage to come and report what is happening
- thank the learner for reporting the problem
- explain to them the next steps of how their concerns will be taken forward

Consider the setting

We will:

- sit at the same level as the learner reporting their experience of bullying
- place chairs at a slight angle rather than directly opposite each other to help reduce any conscious or unconscious sense of confrontation or opposition
- ensure privacy to avoid learners overhearing what is said or seeing a meeting taking place (note that for safeguarding best practice, it should be possible for other staff to observe the meeting)

Saving evidence

Learners who are bullied should be encouraged, where possible, to keep evidence of the activity. Evidence may include:

- threats or images sent on or offline by messaging, conversations, notes or images, damaged clothing or other belongings, online conversations or notes
- witness statements or additional evidence from bystanders
- dates and times when things happened
- screenshots

Bullying ruptures healthy self-esteem, replacing positive beliefs about oneself with beliefs linked to shame, disgust, criticism, incapacity, powerlessness and helplessness. When deciding on next steps to increase the self-efficacy of the learner who reports being bullied, staff should where possible give pupils an element of choice. Choices offered to the targeted learner may include:

- how the incident will be handled
- whether changes to the learner's current journey to or from school should be considered in more detail
- whether the learner would like help from peer supporters or agrees to join a club or activity.

Whole-school response and Involvement of the School Community

There are frequently learning opportunities for the whole class or year group which can be implemented without mentioning the name of the person who reported it. This protects against retaliation.

Responding to the perpetrator

At Cogan Primary School we will:

- address the perpetrator/s according to the procedures and agreed sanctions in the school if they are found to have acted inappropriately
- give perpetrators the opportunity to put their side of the story before any decisions on penalties are made
- determine the most appropriate sanction in line with behaviour policy
- aim to address the root causes for the one-off incidents and/or bullying happening in the first instance - this is likely to have the greatest impact in preventing the issue from continuing.

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.

Staff will explain to pupils the reason why they have been isolated and outline that the strategy is a short-term intervention as part of a longer-term plan to address the issue.

What Learners can expect

Welsh Government has produced helpful guidance for children and young people:

- Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality. A guide for children
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-guide-for-children.pdf>
- Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality. A guide for young people
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-guide-for-young-people.pdf>

Schools should ensure that this information is readily available to all pupils.

At Cogan Primary School we will:

- Regularly speak with children and young people to gather their views on the extent and nature of one-off incidents and bullying
- Ensure that pupils know how to express and report worries and anxieties about one-off incidents and bullying
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in one-off incidents and bullying
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in schools
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites

- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied
- Work with pupils who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have
- Encourage pupils to discuss anti-bullying, for example through the school council
- Put posters around the school, in language that can be clearly understood by all pupils

What parents/carers can expect

Welsh Government has produced helpful guidance for parents and carers:

- Challenging bullying. Rights, respect, equality: guidance for parents and carers
- <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/rights-respect-equality-guidance-for-parents-and-carers.pdf>

At Cogan Primary School we will:

- Ensure that parents / carers know whom to contact if they are worried about one-off incidents and bullying.
- Ensure that parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- Ensure that parents / carers know where to access independent advice about one-off incidents and bullying.
- Work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to one-off incidents and bullying.

Having reported an issue regarding bullying to the school, if a learner or their parent/carer does not feel that the school has taken it seriously or has not addressed their concern to a satisfactory standard, they can make a formal complaint.

The school complaints policy is available on the school website and made available on request from the school or school governing body.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated where required. In reviewing the policy, all members of the school community, including members of the governing body will be consulted.

Effective schools will use surveys of learners' experiences to ask whether or not a learner, if bullied or subject to a one-off incident, reported it and were happy with the subsequent outcome. This gathering of feedback in order to learn lessons and continuously improve, more than any other, is of importance to establish trust among learners. Learners need to believe it is worthwhile to report being bullied and trust action will be taken on an individual and whole school level.

The school will review this policy annually, using:

- incident data, 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.
- 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
- staff feedback, using surveys and group discussions to identify which aspects of the school's current policy and strategy work well and any areas for improvement
- governor review and feedback, to ensure all individuals within the school communicate are part of the ongoing process
- Local Authority guidance

The Designated Person(s) for Anti-bullying is: The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

The Senior Members of Staff with responsibility for this policy area is:
The Headteacher

The Governor with oversight of this policy is:
The Chair of Governors

To be reviewed
As appropriate

Appendices

Appendix 1: Specific types of bullying and prejudice-related incidents

Taking direct reference from Rights, Respect and Equality, we can begin to explore further the areas of bullying linked to protected characteristics. When consulting with learners from across the Vale of Glamorgan they wanted it to know that they feel that equal attention needs to be placed upon the thoughts feelings and emotions of individuals, however consideration needs to be focussed upon those who they feel are potentially more vulnerable within their schools.

“We need to know that everyone is listened to no matter who they are or where they are from” – learner.

There are specific types of bullying related to protected characteristics. These can broadly be categorised into:

- bullying connected with age
- bullying involving learners with disabilities, which can include ALN
- homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic bullying
- bullying connected with race, religion and/or culture
- sexist and/or sexual bullying.

Bullying involving learners with disabilities and/or ALN

Reports from Mencap and the Anti-Bullying Alliance show that children and young people with disabilities and/or ALN are more likely to experience bullying than their peers. A study by the Institute of Education in 2014 found that even after controlling other factors that might influence the likelihood of a child being bullied, at age seven a child with ALN is twice as likely to be bullied as a child with no ALN. Welsh Government expects schools to be proactive in countering this trend.

Learners with a disability and/or ALN learners may be more vulnerable to bullying because:

- of negative attitudes towards disability or perceived disability
- of a lack of understanding of different disabilities and conditions
- they may not recognise they are being bullied
- they may be doing different work or have additional support at school
- they may be more isolated than others due to their disability or condition
- they may find it harder to make friends as a result of their disability or condition
- they may exhibit perceived bullying behaviour due to their disability or condition, e.g. autistic learners may not be aware of other people's personal space, or learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may interrupt conversations or talk over other learners
- they may experience lots of change, e.g. moving from a mainstream to a special school or pupil referral unit or spending periods of time in hospital.

Disabled and/or ALN learners may also find it more difficult to resist perpetrators because they have fewer friends to defend them and have difficulties telling someone if it occurs. They can be extremely adversely affected by bullying. In addition to being distressing, it can isolate them further and set back their social and educational development.

Bullying of learners with disability and/or ALN can take the form of any of the traditional forms of bullying. However, there are additional forms of bullying that ALN/disabled learners may experience.

Conditional friendship

In these cases, a group will allow a target to believe they are accepted into the friendship group. The group may however be using the target or place conditions on them in order to be part of the group. They might make the target the subject of their jokes, use them to run errands or even engage in criminal activity for them.

Exploitative

In these cases, the bullying takes the form of deliberately subjecting a target to something they cannot tolerate. For example, if a target is especially sensitive to sounds or smell, exploitative bullying might be where the perpetrator repeatedly spreads food over their work or makes loud noises to startle them. The eventual aim is to get the target child or young person into trouble because they will gradually become more stressed until they have an outburst of anger and/or retaliate.

Manipulative

In these cases, the perpetrator manipulates the target, who at first may not realise what is happening. They might believe the other child/young person or group of children/young people like them and they are friends. However, the perpetrator might manipulate the target into high-risk relationships where the bullying becomes very controlling.

Positive action

While research suggests children and young people with disabilities and/or ALN are more likely to experience bullying than their peers, it is important to remember that not all disabled and/or ALN children and young people are bullied.

Welsh Government expects schools to address bullying holistically while also taking into account the individual needs and circumstances of learners with disabilities and/or ALN; under the PSED, schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners due to their disabilities or ALN.

Social model

In 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government adopted the social model of disability as the foundation of its work on disability in Wales.

The social model of disability offers a different perspective on disability, whereby disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. The social model of disability looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for people with impairments or differences. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

The social model of disability makes the important difference between impairment and disability. It recognises that people with impairments are disabled by barriers that commonly exist in society.

It is not the inability to walk that prevents a person entering a building unaided, but the existence of stairs that are inaccessible to a wheelchair user. Disability is socially constructed and the social model of disability requires society to remove the barriers, so all people have equality. In schools this ethos is a key element of developing a truly inclusive environment and an effective disability equality scheme and anti-bullying policy.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are specific forms of bullying motivated by prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people (including those questioning their sexuality), someone with a LGBT relative or simply because a learner is different in some way. It is not characterised by specific acts but by the negative attitudes and beliefs towards LGBT people that underlie these.

When a perpetrator identifies someone as 'different' this can be because the target does not conform to the 'expected' or 'gender appropriate' behaviour expected of someone. It is the learner's identity which is attacked. Homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic bullying can therefore be experienced by a child or young person regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Key issues for LGBT learners experiencing bullying

A 2017 Stonewall report found that nearly three in five LGBT learners in Welsh schools who took part in a survey reported that their schools say homophobic and biphobic bullying is wrong, while just one in three report that their schools say transphobic bullying is wrong. The report also found that more than four in five LGBT learners report that they have never learned about or discussed bisexuality at school, making bisexual children and young people feel even more isolated, especially where sexual orientation can sometimes wrongly be conceived as a binary of being straight or gay/lesbian, and bisexual people's identity and experiences sometimes dismissed.

Welsh Government expects schools to incorporate anti-bullying work in the wider context of an equalities and social justice approach to respectful and healthy relationships and violence prevention. This should be done as part of a whole-school approach to celebrating difference, including embedding LGBT issues across the curriculum.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic insults used in place of other insults or indirectly

In schools where learners believe they will not be challenged when using homophobic insults and/or actions, they may use such language or actions towards others they are

targeting for other reasons, such as ALN or race, religion or culture. The homophobic insults are being used as a proxy for the language and/or actions they know they are likely to be challenged for using, such as racist insults. This behaviour can be observed through incident records or learner surveys, e.g. if learners with ALN report higher than average incidents of homophobic bullying.

In schools, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and actions can be wide-ranging and used directly or indirectly to:

- deride or disparage someone considered inferior or risible
- insult a learner with a lesbian, gay or bisexual parent/carer or relative
- use sexual orientation to denigrate the actions of another
- imply something is unacceptable
- intimidate someone or make them feel uncomfortable through insinuation
- undermine and bully a learner by suggesting that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, including by spreading rumours and malicious gossip
- bully a male or female learner considered effeminate or masculine respectively
- put down a learner with a gender non-conforming friend or family member
- imply gender variance is unacceptable
- verbally bully a target considered gender-fluid.

Positive action

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying cases require very sensitive responses. The family of the target may respond in ways that distress the child or young person further due to community pressure, homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic views, or possibly through being unaware of their child's sexual orientation.

Welsh Government expects schools to work with families to ensure the right support, at the right time, is provided for the learner to ensure the best outcomes for that child or young person. Under the PSED schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners due to their having protected characteristics.

Sexist and sexual bullying

In 2015 Girlguiding UK found that 75 per cent of girls and young women said anxiety about potentially experiencing sexual harassment affects their lives in some way. The same survey found that 90 per cent of young women aged 13–21 agreed that the UK

Government should make sure all schools are addressing sexual harassment and bullying in schools.

Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes repeatedly expressed in ways that demean, intimidate and/or harm another person because of their sex or gender. It may sometimes be characterised by repeated inappropriate sexual behaviours including harassment, groping, 'upskirting', 'downshirting' and use of humiliating sexist language. In rare cases violence may be used.

Sexual bullying may be physical, verbal or psychological. Behaviours may involve suggestive sexual comments or innuendo including offensive comments about sexual reputation or using sexual language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate. It may involve sharing of explicit images online, sometimes by multiple people, coercion or unwanted sexual touching.

It is also commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes. Sexual bullying and sexual harassment are terms which are often used interchangeably in schools, with sexual bullying often regarded as a type of sexual harassment. Whether the incident is considered sexual bullying or sexual harassment, Welsh Government expects schools to address the issue through their anti-bullying, behaviour or safeguarding policy (whichever is deemed most appropriate). Sexual bullying can affect boys and girls.

Positive action

Girls and young women are most frequently harmed by sexist and sexual bullying; however, boys and young men can also suffer sexist and sexual bullying and humiliation, e.g. by a group of girls/young women or a former girlfriend. Where this happens, Welsh Government expects that schools will not treat these cases any differently or less seriously than those involving girls and young women.

Welsh Government expects schools to consider all learners as potentially at risk of sexist or sexual bullying, particularly where they are perceived by others to not conform to dominant or stereotypical gender roles. Under the PSED, schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners owing to their having protected characteristics.

Bullying linked to skin colour, nationality, religion and/or culture

This form of bullying describes a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded or

powerless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith (including lack of faith), national origin or national status.

The equality Act 2010 offers protection based on a range of characteristics including race, ethnicity, religion and belief. The Act defines race as including skin colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation targeted at an individual because they possess a protected characteristic, or are perceived to have a characteristic is against the law. If a school treats racist bullying less seriously than other forms of bullying, it may be in breach of the Equality Act.

As the Act applies to how a school treats a pupil but does not apply to relationships between pupils, the working definitions of racism and a racist incident proposed in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in 1999 remain relevant.

The report defined racism as:

Conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin

This is an expansive definition and reflects the personal, political, as well as institutional nature of racism.

The report describes a racist incident as:

Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person

A racist incident becomes racist bullying when it is persistent, intentional and involves an imbalance of power.

Forms of racism

Please also see Vale of Glamorgan Anti-Racism Policy

Racism targeting skin colour, religion, nationality, national status and culture is widespread and schools must continue to be alert in order to consistently challenge it. The Local Authority, EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission), Welsh Government and ESTYN expect schools to consider for example, the following:

Racism targeted at Gypsies, Roma and Travellers – Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are the target of a number of misleading and harmful stereotypes, many of which are deep-rooted in the public consciousness in the UK. Negative representations in the media further exacerbate the prejudice experienced by these

individuals. It has even been suggested that discrimination towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers remains 'permissible' in the UK. This is unacceptable and racist attitudes and stereotyping must be challenged in schools. As with all children, it is also important to build trust so that children and young people of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds feel confident and able to report racism.

Anti-refugee prejudice – The political discourse and media reporting around immigration has heightened tensions between communities and created a challenging climate for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. There is a trend of using dehumanising language when discussing immigration, e.g. words such as 'swarming' and 'invasive'. Refugees and asylum seekers are often represented as a threat or a drain to public funds, and their motives for settling in the UK are regularly questioned. Schools must be alert to these influences and ready to counter negative narratives around refugees and asylum seekers. Schools should also be aware that some refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people may have endured traumatic experiences in their country of origin or during their journey to the UK, and of the further harm that could be caused by incidents of bullying.

Anti-Semitism – This is hostility, dislike or fear of Jews and Jewish things, manifested in discriminatory attitudes and actions. The online space has seen a proliferation of Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in recent times, some of which are being repeated by school pupils. Again, these must be countered through preventative education. Anti-Semitism is frequently exacerbated in Britain by events and underlying conflicts elsewhere in the world, particularly the Middle East.

Anti-Muslim prejudice– Hostility or misinformation around religion of Islam which results in discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities. The Local Authority, EHRC, Welsh Government and Estyn expect that schools should play an active part in countering anti-muslim prejudice and hostility within their own spheres of influence. This may be done through education about the religion and the use of positive role models, for example. Anti-Muslim prejudice is not necessarily to do with hostility to Islamic religious beliefs, but with denying equal rights and respect to people of Islamic heritage and perpetuating media-driven, unfounded stereotypes.

The Local Authority, EHRC, Welsh Government and Estyn expect that schools to consider, when recording incidents of racist bullying, that there should be distinct and separate categories for noting the basis of the racist bullying, e.g. on the basis of religious heritage. This will ensure patterns of behaviours and attitudes can be more easily detected, and a response can be put in place. Racist incidents should be

reported to the local authority on a termly basis in order to show that the school is responding appropriately and to access any further support that may be needed.

Under Public Sector Equality Duty, all schools have a responsibility to foster good relations with those who have protected characteristics and those who not. It is known that bullying is very often motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion or culture. At the root of such bullying is a view that some people are different or 'other'. By 'othering' through remarks and insults it becomes easier to see any group as set apart and to dehumanise them. This can remove all compassion. The role of schools in helping every learner feel they belong is of immense value in building a cohesive society. Very young children do not see difference until they learn or adopt attitudes and prejudices which may be present around them. Schools should ensure their learning environments, materials and curriculum are inclusive and that all children treat those around them with respect.

Positive action

The Local Authority , EHRC, Welsh Government expects and ESTYN expect schools to work with learners, their families and communities to ensure the right support, at the right time, is provided to learners to ensure the best outcomes for that child or young person. Under the PSED, schools are also under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners owing to their having protected characteristics. This may include close monitoring in terms of attainment data, the use of embedded anti-racism education and resources and the utilisation of positive role models.

Bullying incident recording form

Name of person reporting incident (please note anonymous if this is an anonymous report):	
Name of person recording incident:	
Date of report:	

Type of bullying incident (please tick all that apply):

Physical	☐	Relational	☐
Verbal	☐	Prejudice-related	☐
Indirect	☐	Exclusion and isolation	☐
Online or via mobile	☐	Face to face	☐
Other (please state):			

For prejudice-related bullying please select the category which best describes the prejudice involved:

Racist (focused on race, religion or culture)	☐	Related to gender identity	☐
Homophobic (LGBT+)	☐	Related to ALN or disability	☐
Sexual	☐	Related to family status or looked after child (CLA) status	☐
Transphobic	☐	Related to disadvantage	☐
Sexist	☐	Focused on appearance	☐
Other (please state):			

One-off prejudice related incident recording form

Name of person reporting incident (please note anonymous if this is an anonymous report):	
Name of person recording incident:	
Date of report:	

Type of one-off prejudice related incident (perceived and actual) please tick all that apply:

Physical	☐	Relational	☐
Verbal	☐	Exclusion and isolation	☐
Indirect	☐	Face to face	☐
Online or via mobile			☐
Other (please state):			

For prejudice-related INCIDENT please select the category which best describes the prejudice involved:

Racist (focused on race, religion or culture)	☐	Related to gender identity	☐
Homophobic (LGBT+)	☐	Related to ALN or disability	☐
Sexual	☐	Related to family status or looked after child (CLA) status	☐
Transphobic	☐	Related to disadvantage	☐
Sexist	☐	Focused on appearance	☐
Other (please state):			

Support and Guidance Links for schools and their communities

The Anti-Bullying Alliance

Brings together over 130 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

The ABA produce resources and tools to help schools and local authorities develop anti-bullying strategies. The ABA was established by the NSPCC and the National Children's Bureau in 2002 and is hosted by the National Children's Bureau.

➤ www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Act Against Bullying

A national charity which highlights new forms of bullying, particularly bullying through social exclusion.

➤ www.actagainstbullying.com/

➤ Tel 0845 230 2560

Bullies Out

A Welsh based anti-bullying charity providing help, support, training and information to individuals, schools, youth and community settings affected by bullying.

➤ www.bulliesout.com

Kidscape

Provides training for professionals, courses for bullied children, a helpline for parents and carers of bullied children; books, videos, free booklets and leaflets about the prevention of bullying, many in several languages.

➤ www.kidscape.org.uk

➤ Tel: 020 7730 3300

National Bullying Helpline

The National Bullying Helpline offers practical help and advice for children and adults dealing with bullying at schools or work.

➤ www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/

➤ Tel: 0854 22 55 787

Bully Free Zone

Provides a peer mediation service, written and telephone advice, and provides training for children and young people, parents, teachers, youth workers and other professionals.

➤ www.bullyfreezone.co.uk

➤ Tel 01204 454958

Children in Wales

Work with partners to develop a shared understanding of bullying and bullying behaviours, and to build regional and national co-ordination. Work includes Co-ordination of the Preventing Bullying Behaviours Group, influencing policy and strategy around bullying, training on cyber-bullying.

➤ www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/bullying/

Children's Commissioner for Wales

➤ <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/anti-bullying-resources/>

Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying.org

The world's first website dedicated to cyberbullying has plenty of useful advice on combating cyberbullying, including how to take screenshots of online bullying for evidence.

➤ www.cyberbullying.org/

Chatdanger

A website about the potential dangers online (including bullying) and advice on how to stay safe while chatting.

➤ www.chatdanger.com

Internet Matters

Advice on online issues for parents/carers and children and young people.

➤ www.internetmatters.org.uk

Bullying Online

Provides an email advice service for children and young people as well as online help and information, for schools as well as pupils.

➤ www.bullying.co.uk

NSPCC

What to look out for and how to deal with cyberbullying. Advice for parents and young people.

➤ www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/#cyberbullying.

Childnet International

Advises on Internet safety and has a range of leaflets for children and parents in a number of languages, including Hindi, Punjabi and Maltese

➤ www.childnet-int.org

LGBT

Stonewall Cymru

Is an LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

➤ www.stonewall.org.uk

Schools Out!

Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education

➤ www.schools-out.org.uk

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH)

Established to challenge discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation. **National Helpline** for young people experiencing homophobic bullying: (Monday to Friday, 10am–5pm; Saturday, 10am–midday)

➤ Helpline Tel: 0808 1000143

➤ <https://each.education/>

Umbrella Cymru

Offer support, advice, guidance and training to young people, families and professionals about anything related to gender or sexual diversity, identity or equality.

➤ www.umbrellacymru.co.uk

➤ Tel: 0300 302 3670 / 07860039527

CLIConline

The Welsh Government's national information and advice service for young people aged 11 to 25 provides information on sexual orientation and homophobic bullying.

➤ www.cliconline.co.uk

Racism

Show Racism the Red Card

provides resources and workshops for schools to educate young people, often using the high profile of football about racism

➤ www.theredcard.org/education/

Kick it Out

uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for schools

➤ www.Kickitout.org

Mental Health and Well-being

YoungMinds

Support to help improve the mental health of children and young people.

➤ www.youngminds.org.uk

➤ Tel: 0808 802 5544 (parents'/carers' helpline)

Time to Change Wales

Campaign for young people, which aims to change attitudes towards mental health, ending stigma and discrimination.

➤ www.timetochangewales.org.uk/en/mental-health-stigma/young-people/wecanwewill

Heads Above The Waves

Support for children and young people suffering depression or self-harming.

➤ <http://hatw.co.uk/straight-up-advice>

Childline

Offers a free, 24-hour helpline and counselling service for children in distress or danger.

➤ www.childline.org.uk

➤ Tel: 0800 1111

Meic

Meic is the helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. The service is funded by Welsh Government and the website contains school resources and lessons on themes such as bullying (including online bullying), mental health, healthy relationships and sexual health.

➤ Website: <https://www.meiccymru.org/>

➤ Freephone: 0808 80 23456 55

Live fear free

0808 8010800

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>

Hate Crime

Victim Support: Hate crime toolkit

A toolkit, suitable for learners aged 10-16, to raise awareness and improve understanding about the laws surrounding hate crime. It will enable learners and their families to speak confidently about protected characteristics and to celebrate the different values, interests and backgrounds of others. It can be led by practitioners or parents/carers and includes a presentation, an animated video and an information pack.

Hate crime awareness project educational resource: See it, Say it, Sort it!

These resources are designed for learners aged 11-16. The resources can be used as a collective or individually during lessons to highlight Hate Crime as an issue and raise awareness of the importance of reporting hate crime. Each activity has information and a resource/resources.

On-line sexual harassment

'Just a Joke?' toolkit (9-12 year olds)

Resources to support practitioners tackle the issue of peer-on-peer online sexual harassment with 9-12 year olds in an appropriate and engaging way. The pack includes a film and leaflets aimed at parents and carers

'Step Up, Speak Up' toolkit (13-17 year olds)

The 'Step Up, Speak Up' toolkit for practitioners includes guidance and a series of lesson plans and activities designed to address the issue of online sexual harassment amongst young people 13-17 years old

Sexual images

- [sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-guidance-for-education-settings-in-wales-final-english-011220.pdf](#) (gov.wales) Guidance document no: 266/2020 Date of issue: December 2020
- Sharing nudes and semi-nude images: how to respond to an incident (gov.wales)