



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Adopted: Spring 26

Review: Spring 29

### Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy is due to be reviewed at the time stated, unless circumstances determine that this policy needs to be reviewed at an earlier time.

**Signed: Chair of Governors**  
**Mr J. Orchard**

**Headteacher**  
**Mr K. Stroud**

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Introduction

At Maes yr Haul Primary School every person has a right to feel safe, happy and included. All bullying of any sort is therefore unacceptable. We recognise the effects that bullying can have on pupils' wellbeing, feelings of worth, school work, and their wider relationships. Our school actively promotes a positive, inclusive, rights-respecting environment in line with Welsh Government statutory guidance. Our school community - governors, staff, parents and children, uphold our school values; *"be kind, be considerate, be resilient, be responsible"*.

Bullying is a complex behaviour and challenging bullying is achieved by addressing the root causes of unacceptable behaviour and creating an inclusive and engaging environment, with priority placed on wellbeing so learners feel safe and are ready to learn. It is imperative that learners are taught both at home and in school about building and maintaining respectful relationships. This is the cornerstone on which positive behaviour is based. We explicitly recognise bullying as a safeguarding, wellbeing and equalities issue, with strengthened expectations set out in Welsh Government's statutory guidance ['Rights, Respect, Equality' \(April 2026\)](#)

### Aims

- To provide a learning environment free from any threat or fear.
- To reduce and to eradicate wherever possible, all instances in which pupils feel frightened, excluded or unhappy.
- To ensure appropriate and proportionate support for both the child targeted and the child displaying bullying behaviours.
- To ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the policy and fulfil their responsibilities.

### Definition of Bullying

We use the Welsh Government definition of bullying as *"behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally"*.

## The Power of Language

Language shapes attitudes, expectations and behaviour. As a school committed to fostering respectful, inclusive relationships, we recognise the importance of using language that avoids stigma, blame or the reinforcement of power imbalances. This principle remains fully endorsed in Welsh Government guidance, which encourages schools to avoid labelling learners and instead to focus on behaviour and positive change.

We actively avoid using combative phrases such as “stamp out bullying” or “combat bullying,” as these reinforce binary notions of power that are unhelpful in developing a rights-respecting, relational school culture. This aligns with the strengthened emphasis in the 2025 draft guidance on building positive relationships and understanding the root causes of behaviour.

The school avoids labelling learners as “bullies” or “victims.” Instead, we describe the *behaviour* that occurred (e.g., “a child displaying bullying behaviour” or “a child who was targeted”). This prevents the development of fixed identities and supports restorative approaches.

Language used with pupils reflects our commitment to restorative principles. Staff speak in ways that encourage accountability, empathy, and repair of harm — not blame or shame. When discussing incidents with pupils, staff will model respectful, non-judgemental language that supports emotional safety and de-escalation. This contributes to the 2025 guidance’s stronger focus on mental health and wellbeing as part of anti-bullying practice.

The school acknowledges that language itself can be a form of prejudice-based bullying. Therefore, discriminatory, derogatory or identity-based language (including around race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any protected characteristic) is explicitly challenged and reported. We reinforce to pupils that language matters online just as much as face-to-face, and that digital communication can escalate harm quickly.

### There are distinctive elements of bullying behaviour:

There are a number of distinctive elements associated with bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Intention to harm** – bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm. Those who bully others are often skilled at knowing exactly how to humiliate or hurt their target, picking on key aspects of their appearance, personality or identify that produces the effect wanted. They seek out the area in which they have power over their target.
- **harmful outcome** – someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally. They can be isolated, humiliated or made fearful. Their sense of self-worth is reduced.
- **direct or indirect acts** – bullying can involve direct aggression such as hitting, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours, revealing private information about someone or sharing intimate images with people for whom the information/images were not intended.
- **repetition** – bullying usually involves repeated acts of negative behaviour or acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, such as a fight, is not usually considered bullying. Yet any incident can be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour which develops subsequently.
- **unequal power** – bullying involves the abuse of power by one person or a group who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, popularity or psychological resilience.

### **Bullying can take many forms, including:**

- **physical** – kicking, tripping someone up or shoving them, injuring someone, damaging their belongings or gestures of intimidation
- **verbal** – taunts and name-calling, insults, threats, humiliation or intimidation
- **emotional** – behaviour intended to isolate, hurt or humiliate someone.
- **indirect** – sly or underhand actions carried out behind the target’s back or rumour-spreading.
- **online** – using any form of technological means, mobile phones, social networks, gaming, chat rooms, forums or apps to bully via text, messaging, images or video.
- **relational aggression** – bullying that tries to harm the target’s relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person’s additional learning needs (ALN) or long-term illness, targeting their family’s social status, isolating or humiliating someone or deliberately getting someone into trouble.
- **sexual\*** – unwanted touching, threats, suggestions, comments and jokes or innuendo, sexualised harassment including online. (This could require enacting safeguarding procedures)
- **prejudice-related** – bullying of a learner or a group of learners because of prejudice. This could be linked to stereotypes or presumptions about identity. Prejudice-related bullying includes the protected characteristics. (This could require enacting safeguarding procedures, e.g. under ‘Prevent’). Prejudice can and does also extend beyond the protected characteristics and can lead to bullying for a variety of other reasons such as social status and background.

\*See also the following guidance documents

[Guidance for education settings for peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour](#)

### **Signs that may signify that a pupil is being bullied may include: -**

- being unwilling to come to school
- beginning to do poorly in school work
- displaying personality changes
- complaining of feeling unwell (frequently)
- having unexplained bruises and injuries
- having possessions destroyed or go missing
- showing reluctance to go on to the yard
- refusing to say what is wrong, or giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above
- seeking the presence of adults

These signs and symptoms are for the whole school community of school staff, parents/carers and children to act upon. All should be encouraged to respond and report where they have any misgivings about what they see.

### **What is not bullying?**

Some behaviour, though unacceptable, is not considered bullying. The Welsh Government expects these instances to be dealt with in accordance with the school’s behaviour policy and to try and prevent an incident potentially escalating to become bullying.

The following examples are cases which would not normally be considered bullying:

- **friendship fallouts** – Most often a friendship feud is not bullying. Children who are learning and growing will often get on one minute and fall out the next, often on a weekly or daily basis. However, as children get older friendship fallout has the potential to deteriorate into bullying behaviour that is enabled by the fact that former friends have an intimate knowledge of the fears and insecurities of one another. Children and young people who are targeted by former friends feel the betrayal deeply and are frequently isolated from their former friendship group.
- **a one-off 'fight'** – the Welsh Government expects it to be addressed according to the school's behaviour policy unless it is part of a pattern of behaviour that indicates intentional targeting of another individual.
- **an argument or disagreement** – between two children or young people is not generally regarded as bullying. Nevertheless, they may require assistance to learn to respect others' views and to learn to get along.
- **a one-off physical assault** – the Welsh Government expects it to be stopped and addressed immediately. Police involvement in cases where physical assault has happened may also be appropriate.
- **insults and banter** – children and young people will often protest that an incident was a joke or banter. If two friends of equal power are in the habit of bantering with one another it is not deemed to be bullying. This kind of banter can often lead to upset in a group of friends while falling short of bullying. However, if one learner uses banter to humiliate or threaten another who is powerless to stop it and made fearful by the act, the border between banter and bullying is likely to be crossed.
- **a one-off instance of hate crime** – unless this behaviour is repeated it would not usually be regarded as bullying but it could be criminal behaviour, which the Welsh Government would expect to be dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. If considered necessary, the school would also need to involve the police. (This could require enacting safeguarding procedures, e.g. under 'Prevent').

### **Creating an Anti-Bullying Climate in School**

Our behaviour policy explains how we promote positive behaviour in school to create an environment where pupils behave well; where pupils take responsibility for each other's emotional and social well-being and include and support each other. Our aim is to create a climate where bullying is not accepted by anyone within the school community.

Our curriculum is used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy.
- Increase understanding of the different roles within and root causes of bullying and help build an anti-bullying ethos.
- Promote all children to develop and practice good values such as empathy, respect, tolerance and kindness that will help to prevent incidents of bullying.
- Teach pupils how to manage their relationships with others in a positive and constructive manner.

Whilst our school may take part in one-off events related to the anti-bullying agenda (such as during anti-bullying week) we recognise that challenging all forms of bullying is likely to be more far more effective when such work is embedded into the curriculum rather than an isolated annual event. Our pupils may also encounter anti-bullying themes and discussions through topic work, assemblies,

role-play and stories to show what pupils can do to prevent bullying, and to create an overall anti-bullying climate in school.

Bullying will not be tolerated and we make this clear in the information we give to pupils and parents when they join our school. Pupils will have opportunities (for example, through school council) to discuss any concerns about bullying and will be supported to do so. Staff will support pupils to distinguish between bullying and other behaviours and if bullying is occurring, we will ask pupils to provide as much information as possible so that staff can make every effort to address this, for example through additional supervision.

As part of ongoing safeguarding training, staff will be supported to detect harmful behaviour earlier, such as recognising micro-aggressions and stereotypes. Whole-school reviews will incorporate reviews of any bullying trends, learner views and the potential impact on mental health.

## **Strategies for dealing with bullying**

### **Pupils Being Targeted**

What can you do if you are being bullied?

***Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!***

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!
- Be assertive – tell the perpetrator you don't like their behaviour. Walk confidently away. Go straight to a member of staff, do not wait for it to happen again, do not let the fact that someone has apologised, said they didn't mean it, or it's a joke stop you from telling a member of staff. It is better that staff know what has happened.
- Be proud of who you are. You are amazing as you are.
- Fighting back can make things worse. Talk to a member of staff and your parents.
- Generally, it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

Teachers *will* take you seriously, *will* investigate and *will* work with you to solve any issues in a way which will end the bullying or unacceptable behaviour and will not make things worse for you. The school will offer targeted wellbeing support (e.g. ELSA-style support, referral to external services) to address emotional impact.

[\*\*Rights, Respect, Equality – a guide for children.\*\*](#)

### **Parents**

As a parent what can you do?

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, children may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard. Parents will be aware that there may be many reasons for this behaviour change and while it may be bullying, equally bullying may not be the cause of behaviour changes in a child.
- If you feel your child may be a target of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. The issue will be taken seriously, it will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken if bullying is found to have occurred.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are a target of bullying.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, so that he/she will not be afraid to ask for help. Encourage children to speak to their class teacher.

- Our pupils are young and are still developing and learning. While bullying will not be tolerated and there will be consequences, it is important that as adults, we separate the unacceptable behaviour from the child doing the bullying. We need to remember that it is the behaviour that is wrong, and hence teach children to not accept the behaviour, rather than focussing negative attention towards the perpetrator.
- Be positive with your child, ensure that you speak to your child positively about school and other children.
- Do not overly focus questions on the behaviour of one child alone at the exclusion of more general questions and discussions about school.

### [Rights, Respect, Equality – guidance for parents and carers](#)

#### **Role of the Headteacher**

The headteacher sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to

- communicate the anti-bullying policy and to ensure that all staff follow it.
- through school curriculum and ethos, strive to ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.
- ensure that a record is kept of any incidents of bullying, the actions taken following an allegation and any outcomes.

In extreme cases where initial discussions with the perpetrator and the parents have proven ineffective, the headteacher may contact external support agencies such as the Access and Inclusion Service for advice and support.

#### **Interventions after an incident of bullying:**

The way forward will often depend on the age of the child and the particular circumstances of the bullying incident. 'Rights, Respect, Equality' makes a number of suggestions for appropriate interventions, but we will choose from these and others as appropriate depending on the situation, age of children and root causes of any such bullying behaviour.

These may include:

- **mediation** – this involves helping the perpetrator and target of bullying talk about the issue and agree on a solution.
- **restorative approaches** – built on values, which separate the person from the behaviour. They promote accountability and seek to repair any harm caused in a situation.
- **building resilience** – strengthening the learner's ability to effectively cope, adjust or recover from being bullied or facing other sources of trauma, stress or adversity; equipping learners with a solid foundation or emotional resilience by ensuring that they feel accepted.
- **peer support** – is about children and young people feeling accepted and included by other learners. It can help individuals feel like they belong in a school and can be an important factor in reducing bullying and conflict. It can be encouraged in schools in both informal and formal ways.
- **school sanctions** – the school can use disciplinary sanctions, as set out in our policies, to address bullying. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

### **In particular for the targeted pupil:**

In discussion with the learner and in some cases parents a way forward will be developed to support the targeted person. This may include:

- Opportunity to discuss what has happened, reflect on events and situations and share feelings or worries if appropriate with adults in school, a small trusted group of peers or the Perpetrator
- Nurture support to re-build confidence, identify their strengths, build resilience, develop friendship choices etc.
- Support to move on from the incident.

### **Pupils Displaying Bullying Behaviour**

Behaviour is addressed proportionately through restorative approaches, sanctions where required, structured support and teaching alternative positive behaviours. Our response will explicitly consider root causes such as ACEs, unmet needs, ALN, or external influences.

### **Bystanders and others**

There are times when a bullying incident may require specific whole school, year group or class or even individual work to be undertaken to prevent bullying reoccurring. School will assess this and put in appropriate programs as it deems necessary. Curriculum activities, e.g. through RSE or online safety, will reinforce safe bystander actions.

### **Reporting, Recording and Monitoring**

To meet strengthened Welsh Government requirements for systematic data collection and monitoring:

The school will:

- Record *all* allegations, confirmed incidents, and prejudice-related behaviours using a standardised digital system.
- Categorise incidents (e.g., racist, sexist, homophobic, online, disability-related, RSE-linked).
- Monitor data termly for patterns, repeat concerns, vulnerable groups and locations.
- Provide anonymised reports to the Governing Body termly.
- Use data to inform supervision planning, curriculum priorities and staff training.

### **Multi-Agency Collaboration**

Where appropriate, we will work in partnership with agencies such as NHS (CAMHS, School Nursery), Local Authority inclusion services, third sector organisations specialising in hate crime, equality, mental health or online safety in order to support pupils involved.

### **The Right of Parents / carers to escalate the matter**

Having reported an issue to the school, if a learner or parent / carer does not feel that school has responded in accordance with the policy or has not addressed the concern to a satisfactory standard, they can make a formal complaint. The school complaints policy is available on the website or by contacting the school office.

**Other Policies**

This policy may be read in conjunction with other relevant policies for our school, including:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Prevent Policy
- RSE Code / Policy
- ALN Code
- Online Safety

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