



Staffordshire Children's Trust
Working together to improve the lives of children and young people

Staffordshire Anti-Bullying Strategy 2011 - 2014

The vision:

That "...children, young people and families find Staffordshire a great place to live, play, learn and achieve in, and that they will be supported to be healthy and safe from harm."

Staffordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Plan 2010

Staffordshire Revised Anti-bullying Strategy 2011-2014

Purpose:

- To state clearly the values and principles that Staffordshire's Children's Trust upholds around the way that adults and young people are treated and treat each other in the county's schools.
- To encourage the development in the county's schools of greater understanding of bullying and its impact.
- To promote effective action in the county's schools to minimise and deal with bullying.

Audience:

This strategy is intended for all Staffordshire schools and everyone in their school communities.

Scope:

The Children's Trust expects that all schools in Staffordshire will agree with the values and principles communicated in this document and that they will support them through the ethos, policies and procedures that they individually create.

It is hoped that other public bodies in the county will subscribe to and support within their own organisations the implementation of its values and principles.

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Our aim for the Anti-bullying strategy in Staffordshire

We want to make Staffordshire a County where children and young people feel included, valued and supported; and where everyone is recognised as being positively different.

Bullying is not an acceptable behaviour and we want it to stop.

What is bullying?

'Bullying' is a complex social behaviour and is difficult to define in a precise way. In Staffordshire we have adopted the Anti-bullying Alliance's definition:

'Bullying' is a subjective experience and can take many forms, making it extremely difficult to define. Children, young people and adults can instigate bullying. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops.

Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. This includes:

Name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; text messaging; emailing; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Definitions are different and individuals have different experiences; however from the accounts we have heard from children and young people we consider bullying to be:

- Repetitive, willful or persistent.
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group.
- An imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless.

Bullying can take many forms: for example: cyber-bullying, racist bullying and homophobic bullying. Bullying can take place in many settings: for example in school or on the way to school, in youth clubs and in leisure facilities. Some groups of children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying, for example children in care or children with disabilities.

Our Principles and Priorities:

That every school in Staffordshire should:

- **Ensure that everyone in the organisation is knowledgeable about bullying and supported to promote positive relationships:** for example awareness training is available for managers and all staff; staff and children are encouraged to discuss how safe they feel in their organisation and actions are taken to make improvements where needed.
- **Respond to incidents of bullying:** all forms of bullying are seen to be unacceptable in the organisation; all reported incidents are taken seriously and followed up sensitively
- **Keep a record of incidents and issues:** there is a written record of all complaints about bullying and the response taken. This record is reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate action has been taken and that any necessary changes to policies and procedures are identified.
- **Engage with parents and carers regarding concerns and complaints:** all reported incidents are taken seriously and followed up sensitively. Parents are included in planning and discussions where appropriate and are aware of the outcomes of actions taken.
- **Listen to children and young people and ensures that they have clear routes to responsive adults or peer mentors:** The views of children on how safe they feel within the school are sought on a regular basis, through discussion or questionnaire. All reported incidents are taken seriously. Children know what the school's policy on bullying is and how to seek help if needed.
- **Utilise support from the Children's Trust and other organisations where appropriate:** for example schools can join the Local Authority Anti-bullying Pledge Scheme and receive support and advice on improving their policy and practice around anti-bullying; they can commission training for staff and children; they can use information provided by the County Council, DCSF or Anti-Bullying Alliance on their websites.
- **Teach and support the development of young people's social, emotional and behavioural skills:** This has been promoted in recent years by the SEAL initiative.

Support for the strategy from County Council services

The County Council commissions the Educational Psychology Service to lead a partnership with the Special Educational Needs Support Service and the Inclusion and Well-being team to:

- Promote and support the Anti Bullying Pledge Scheme for schools
- Maintain Staffordshire's 'Action Against Bullying' website and keep it up to date. This site has materials and links that provide valuable information and resources to support schools' anti-bullying work.

- Develop training and support to address specific needs and issues as they are identified within schools
- Act as a focus for, and a channel for communication about, anti-bullying work generally within the county's schools

The Staffordshire Schools Anti-bullying Pledge Scheme

This scheme has been developed to assist schools with their anti-bullying work. Schools that join the scheme commit themselves to the following 'pledge':

We are working with staff, pupils and parents to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated. Our school community subscribes to the national anti-bullying charter:

- We discuss, monitor and review our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis.
- We support staff and pupils to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- We ensure that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that they feel safe to learn; and that they abide by our school's anti-bullying policy.
- We ensure that parents / carers who express concern about safety issues have them taken seriously and that we deal promptly with complaints.
- We seek to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilise the support of the LEA and relevant statutory / voluntary organisations when appropriate.

We will:

- Collect the views of our pupils and consult all other sections of our school community *at least every three years*. We will keep records of the information collected to help us evaluate the effectiveness of our policy and procedures.
- Actively work year on year to minimise and deal with bullying. We will keep a record of the outcomes of this work and communicate it to the school community alongside a summary of the school arrangements for minimising and dealing with bullying.

The scheme provides practical advice and support to help schools meet these commitments.

Schools who wish to sign up to the Staffordshire Schools Anti-bullying Pledge Scheme will find further information about the scheme at:

<http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/PupilSupport/Anti-Bullying/Pledge/>

Appendix

Detailed guidance for Staffordshire schools

Schools have a key role in developing communities where social and emotional well-being is a priority and bullying is not tolerated. Effective school leadership teams will promote an open and honest anti-bullying ethos which secures whole-school community support for the anti-bullying policy. Where staff actively demonstrate positive behaviour, they set a positive context for anti-bullying work in the school.

It is compulsory for schools to have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils, and to prevent all forms of bullying.

The principles of the national Anti-Bullying Charter mean:

For pupils who experience bullying:

- they are heard
- they know how to report bullying and get help
- they are confident in the school's ability to deal with the bullying
- steps are taken to help them feel safe again
- they are helped to rebuild confidence and resilience
- they know how they can get support from others.

For pupils who engage in bullying behaviour:

- sanctions and learning programmes hold them to account for their behaviour and help them to face up to the harm they have caused
- they learn to behave in ways which do not cause harm in future because they have developed their emotional skills and knowledge
- they learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused.

For schools:

- the whole school community is clear about the anti-bullying stance the school takes
- pupils, as well as staff and other members of the school, are fully engaged in developing and reviewing anti-bullying work in the school
- every chance is taken to celebrate the success of anti-bullying work
- all pupils are clear about the roles they can take in preventing bullying, including the role of bystanders.

For heads, governors and other school staff:

- they develop whole-school policies which meet the law and school-inspection requirements
- they promote a school climate where bullying and violence are not tolerated and cannot flourish
- they continually develop best-practice based on knowledge of what works
- there is a review of the school anti-bullying policy every two years and, as a result, the policy and procedures are updated as necessary
- curriculum opportunities are used to address bullying
- pupil support systems are in place to prevent and respond to bullying
- they have addressed school-site issues and promote safe play areas
- all staff take part in relevant professional development, and are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying
- all staff are aware of the importance of modelling positive relationships

- data systems gather useful information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying work, and this data is used for monitoring and evaluation, and is shared with the school community
- they work in partnership with parents, other schools and with Children's Services and community partners to promote safe communities.

For parents:

- they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying
- they are aware of procedures to use if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn, including the school's complaints procedure
- they have confidence that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and investigate/resolve as necessary, and that the school systems will deal with the bullying in a way which protects their child
- they are clear about ways in which they can complement the school on the anti-bullying policy or procedures.

Schools that sign up the Staffordshire Schools Pledge Scheme receive support to develop their approaches so that they meet the requirements of the national charter.

Training and support for schools on bullying and related issues:

Support and advice about bullying-related issues should initially be sought from the school educational psychologist. If they cannot themselves help, they will try to help you identify an appropriate source.

For the following specific areas of support/ training, please contact the following:

Secondary SEAL: School Improvement Officer Children and Young People's Personal Development and Wellbeing, Kingston Centre

Primary SEAL: Senior Practitioner Educational Psychologist (Behaviour) or SENSS Behaviour Co-ordinator, SEN District Office

'Stop, think, do' social skills work: SENSS Behaviour Co-ordinator, SEN District Office

Bullying related to SEN/ Disability involving a young person with autism: Autism Outreach Team

Bullying related to culture and/or race: Ethnic Minorities Advisory Unit