

Anti-Bullying Strategy

2006-2009

Wiltshire County Council

Free from Fear

‘Bullying: Defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but three main types are physical, verbal and emotional.’

From: Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government 2006.

Introduction

All services for children and young people in Wiltshire recognise the concern about bullying. It is the right of every individual to work, play and learn in an atmosphere that is free from victimisation and bullying. Services will promote care, respect and value diversity. All statutory partners through the Children's Trust will champion anti-bullying as a key priority to raise the self-esteem and well-being of children and young people.

Bullying is defined:

'as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but three main types are physical (hitting, kicking, theft etc), verbal (racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling etc) and emotional (isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group etc).'

From: Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government 2006.

The Children and Young People's Plan for Wiltshire 2006-2009 highlights the need from young people for improvements to anti-bullying. Young people have reported on-going concerns regarding bullying. The Children and Young People's Partnership formed in 2001 to build on the Pathways Project. The Pathways Project, which preceded Every Child Matters identified the things that stand in the way of children and young people achieving the desired outcomes 'Obstacles to Health and Development'. This is Wiltshire's Preventive Strategy. Twenty Four obstacles were originally identified and one of them related to emotional health and well-being. These were re-grouped into 13 areas with one of them being 'Bullying and Discrimination. In March 2006, the Children and Young People's Partnership reviewed this work and anti-bullying emerged as an important theme across a number of areas.

Health Related Behaviour Survey (Balding)

This is the second year Wiltshire County Council has commissioned this Survey conducted by Exeter University in June and results are still being analysed. It involved 3,858 children and young people from Year 4 (8-9 year olds), Year 6 (10-11 year olds), Year 8 (12-13 year olds) and Year 10 (14-15 year olds). There were 2,508 primary aged children and 1,350 secondary aged pupils from schools. Different questionnaires were given to primary and secondary pupils. Of the children and young people asked, 'Are you afraid of going to school because of, sometimes, often and very often being bullied?'

Year 4	Year 6	Year 8	Year 10
Female	Female	Female	Female
45%	35%	40%	34%
Male	Male	Male	Male
37%	24%	36%	20%

The need for a comprehensive anti-bullying strategy across all services that work with children and young people has never been more urgent.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2007-2010

The LAA sets out to gain greater autonomy for local action through an agreed set of outcomes and plans. The outcomes require shared commitment and partnership working and are an important opportunity to deal with intractable local issues preventing children and young people from thriving. There are four blocks: Children and Young People, Healthier Communities and Older people, Safer and Stronger Communities and Economic Development and Enterprise. The work of the Children's Trust will form the majority of the Children and Young People block. Anti-bullying is part of the strategy to improve the emotional well-being of children and young people.

National and Local Legislation and Guidance

Recent national developments have called for effective methods to combat bullying and this strategy needs to be seen in the light of a whole range of relevant legislation, educational guidance and policies, such as:

- Every Child Matters, anti-bullying contributes to all five outcomes
- National Service Framework Change for Children Department of Health, Standard 1, 'Promoting Health and Well-Being, Identifying Needs and Intervening Early'
- RESPECT Action Plan, deals with pupil behaviour
- The Children's Commissioner, Al Ansley Green's Report 2006, Bullying is 1 of 8 themes requiring action
- 'Healthcare Needs Assessment for Children and Young People up to 18 years with Mental Health Disorders Living in Wiltshire' P Milner and J Williams, the most important topic raised by pupils was bullying
- November 2003 DfES Charter for Action, Anti-Bullying Charter
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, articles 12, 19 and 28 on bullying
- Human Right Act 1998 requires all schools legally to have an anti-bullying policy (many have these as part of their Behaviour Policy)
- National Healthy Schools Status Section 2.4 Emotional Health and Well-Being, schools should have a policy for tackling bullying
- Ofsted Inspection Framework, section on Personal Development and Well-Being reports on whether learners feel safe and adopt safe practices
- Race Relations Act 2000 requires schools to promote race equality with requirements linked to anti-bullying policies

Why Are Children and Young People Bullied?

All children and young people are vulnerable to being bullied. Some become bullies at times in their lives. There are a variety of reasons for this including

physical or learning difficulties and disabilities, differences in size and shape, religious differences, perceived sexual orientation and being a member of a minority or ethnic community. Children Looked After can also be bullied. However, it should be recognised that ordinary, everyday interactions between children and young people are potential bullying situations. Bullied children often bully other children so it is important to break this cycle.

The Effects of Bullying

Bullying affects children and young people's social and academic lives. It is a major cause of depression, which affects learning, attendance, achievement and has lasting effects throughout adulthood. It can lead to self loathing and self harm and cause or contribute to eating disorders. The Samaritans estimate that each year in England and Wales 24,000 young people (10-19) attempt suicide and a sizeable proportion of these young people cite having been bullied as the cause. Bullying may lead to being permanently excluded from school thus losing essential opportunities for a child or young person to develop from childhood to adulthood.

Cyber Bullying

New technologies, such as text messaging, Internet chat rooms, web sites and mobile telephones mean that bullying and the strategies to prevent it are constantly changing. Cyber bullies send e-mails or text messages containing insults or threats directly to children and young people or spread hateful comments through websites and online diaries (blogs) 24 hours a day. Happy slapping has become a craze where groups of three or four young people slap and punch others in the face while one, so called friend, records the incident on their mobile and swaps the video clip around friends. Bullying has moved from being the sole responsibility of schools to everyone in the wider community.

Vision Statement

All children's services will work together to create and sustain safe and supportive environments and develop a positive behaviour and learning environment for all children and young people in Wiltshire.

Partnership

A joined up approach to eradicating bullying is required across Wiltshire. The following partners are involved:

- Behaviour Support Team
- Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Connexions
- District Councils
- Educational Psychologists
- Education Welfare Service
- Health Promotion Team
- Parents and Carers
- Police
- Primary Care Trusts
- Schools and Colleges
- Strategic Health Authority
- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Crime and Community Partnership
- Youth Development Service
- Youth Offending Team
- Voluntary and Community Partners

Partners are encouraged to sign up to the strategy and to include anti-bullying activities in their own plans.

Aims of the Anti-Bullying Strategy

- Raise awareness of the damaging effect of bullying on the emotional health and well-being, life chances and achievement of children and young people
- Galvanise all partners of Wiltshire's Children's Trust towards enabling children and young people to be free from the fear of bullying
- Disseminate best practice locally and nationally in eradicating bullying

Objectives

- Record and monitor incidents of bullying
- Provide training on the most appropriate activities to minimise the effects of bullying
- Gather the views of children and young people to inform policy and shape solutions

Priorities for action to reduce bullying

- Audit and manage information
- Provide guidance, support and training
- Disseminate good practice
- Involve children and young people in the development of anti-bullying

Audit and Manage Information

- Explore options and agree on the reporting and recording of incidents of bullying throughout Wiltshire
- Develop community profiles of bullying behaviour
- Gather information from the Children's Trust statutory partners about what they do to reduce bullying
- Develop a common language and understanding of anti-bullying across all children's services in Wiltshire
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Strategy

Provide Guidance Support and Training

- Develop an Anti-Bullying Policy as a guide to good practice for schools
- Produce school guidance on aspects of anti-bullying
- Provide training on anti-bullying
- Provide support and encouragement to deal with bullying through the ETHOS Personal Social Health Education and Citizenship Issues for Schools Newsletter

Disseminate Good Practice

- Gather good practice from schools, settings, youth groups and elsewhere to improve anti-bullying support
- Celebrate National Bullying Week and the Local Walk Tall week in November each year

Involve Children and Young People in the Development of Anti-Bullying

- Liaise with children and young people for their ideas and views for promoting anti-bullying
- Seek information from School Councils on their involvement with anti-bullying

Useful Websites

- www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org
- www.slipperyfish.org.uk