



# Ysgol Bethania

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Signed by:

*L. Modoi*

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Headteacher

Director /Proprietor

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Date:

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Date:

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## Mission Statement

The school is part of Shining Stars School and College. Shining Stars School and College is the operational name for the education services of Shining Stars School and College Limited. Shining Stars School and College is an organisation with a social purpose that seeks to transform the lives of children and young people who have additional learning needs (ALN) and complex needs. Our approach is grounded in the lived experience of the children and young people we support and in valuing their contributions. As experts by experience, children and young people should receive services that are personal to them.

## Introduction

This Anti-Bullying Policy is underpinned by the Essential Standards below. Along with the Shining Stars School and College Mission Statement, these Essential Standards set out the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

## Legislation

Ysgol Bethania is a school in Wales. Education is devolved in Wales; therefore this policy is based on Welsh legislation, statutory guidance and Welsh Government guidance that apply to schools in Wales. English guidance or English-only education legislation is not relied upon as the basis for this policy.

- **Equality Act 2010** - protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including in relation to protected characteristics.
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011** - ensuring pupils' right to use Welsh is respected and promoted.
- **Keeping Learners Safe** - Welsh Government statutory guidance on safeguarding children in education.
- **Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality** - Welsh Government statutory guidance for schools and settings in Wales on preventing and responding to bullying and harassment.
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** - supporting children's rights, including the right to be safe, heard and treated with dignity.

Where UK-wide legislation is referenced, it is included only where it applies in Wales or supports the school's duties in Wales. Education guidance issued for England only is not applicable to Ysgol Bethania and should not be used as the basis for decision-making under this policy.

## Essential Standards

- **Individualised Education** - Children and young people will receive education and support that is tailored to meet their specific needs and any diverse needs.
- **Dignity and respect** – Shining Stars School and College will ensure children and young people have privacy when needed and appropriate, are treated as equals, are given appropriate support to help them to be independent, to fulfil their potential, and to be involved in their respective local communities.
- **Equality** – Shining Stars School and College is an inclusive organisation that works hard to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Shining Stars School and College is committed to anti-discriminatory practice. In so doing, we recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children, including the barriers they face.

- **Safety** – Shining Stars School and College will ensure that appropriate safeguarding practice is in place so that children and young people do not receive unsafe care or treatment or be put at risk of any potential harm. A robust risk assessment strategy will be in place to minimise harm during activities and the delivery of education and support. Shining Stars School and College will ensure children and staff have the appropriate knowledge, qualifications, experience, competence, and skills to keep children and young people safe through appropriate learning and development opportunities.
- **Safeguarding from abuse** - Children and young people have an absolute entitlement to receive care and support without suffering any form of abuse or improper care. This includes disproportionate restraint, unnecessary or inappropriate restrictions on freedom, bullying, neglect, and abuse from their peers, carers, and all professionals involved in their care.
- **Complaints** – Shining Stars School and College will ensure that the systems in place for handling complaints are followed by staff to make sure that all complaints are monitored and considered seriously, handled, and responded to sensitively. The complaint investigation will be comprehensive and conducted in a timely manner, including informing the complainant about the outcome of their complaint. Any areas for learning will be identified and discussed to enable appropriate action.
- **Whistleblowing** – Shining Stars School and College have a robust whistleblowing policy, and staff have a duty of care to raise and report concerns. That it is known by all staff and is supported by staff training. We encourage the active reporting of any concerns raised by our staff, our children, and young people, and third parties, and we ensure that all such concerns are addressed in a timely manner. Any learning from such reports will be embedded into continuing professional development and will inform professional practice.
- **Good governance** – Shining Stars School and College have an Independent Safeguarding and Quality Improvement Governance Board to ensure that a robust governance framework is in place, including scrutiny and oversight of internal and external service audits. Good governance will help improve the delivery of services and identify and minimise risks to children and young people's health, safety, and wellbeing.
- **Legislative framework** – Shining Stars School and College will ensure that it complies with regulatory standards, regulations, and government guidance that underpins its services relating to schools in Wales.
- **Staffing** – Shining Stars School and College will ensure that its staff comply with these essential standards through appropriate levels of support, culturally appropriate training, and supervision that is reflective, empowering, and insightful to effectively assist them in their role.
- **Fitness to practise** – Shining Stars School and College will seek to recruit and retain staff who can evidence their competence, knowledge, and professional practice to provide safe and appropriate care in line with their roles and responsibilities.

Bullying can be a complex issue when groups of children and young people with different needs and challenges come together. Children and young people from outside the school may be involved. There may be allegations of staff bullying. It is therefore important that bullying is not seen exclusively as a peer-on-peer problem, but that adults working with children and young people can be the perpetrators as well as the victims of bullying. Where there is evidence of staff-on-staff bullying, this will be managed through the Shining Stars School and College Code of Conduct, employment procedures and any applicable Welsh safeguarding procedures.

## The Policy

Ysgol Bethania is committed to developing and maintaining an ethos of mutual respect. We seek to provide a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all children so they can learn in a relaxed, secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all children should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report it to a member of staff.

This policy applies to all incidents of bullying involving children and young people. Where there are concerns about children and young people being bullied by staff, these will be addressed through safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

- All children and young people have the right to be cared for and educated in a safe, respectful environment.
- Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Every child has the right to express themselves in English or Welsh and to be treated with dignity, equality, and respect.
- Ysgol Bethania promotes the UNCRC rights of children, including the right to protection from harm, the right to be heard, and the right to an education free from bullying.

All staff have a responsibility to address concerns and incidents of bullying, ensuring that children and young people are protected and safeguarded, and supporting and promoting their emotional wellbeing and welfare. Ysgol Bethania will ensure that all staff take account of Welsh legislation, statutory guidance and Welsh Government guidance that apply to schools in Wales, including *Keeping Learners Safe* and *Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality*.

If a child/young person is being bullied by peers in the school setting, these procedures apply.

Ysgol Bethania will ensure that carers, parents and placing social workers understand Ysgol Bethania's Anti-Bullying Policy. The school takes bullying seriously and has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying behaviour. Ysgol Bethania will act promptly and proportionately to minimise the impact of bullying on children and young people.

All staff who have responsibility for the welfare of children and young people should be familiar with Welsh Government guidance on school bullying, including *Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality*, and with guidance from the Children's Commissioner for Wales and anti-bullying resources available via Hwb. These Welsh sources provide the applicable framework for Ysgol Bethania as a school in Wales.

- [Rights-respect-equality-guidance-for-parents-and-carers.pdf](#)
- [Rights-respect-equality-guide-for-young-people.pdf](#)
- [Rights-respect-equality-guide-for-children.pdf](#)
- Rights, respect, equality: guidance for schools
- Respecting others: Anti-bullying overview
- Anti-bullying briefing pack – questions and answers

## Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others physically or emotionally. This includes verbal, non-verbal, emotional, physical and online forms, including cyberbullying, as well as harassment under the Equality Act 2010.

Welsh Government guidance definition: '*Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally*'.

### **Distinguishing bullying from other concerns**

Ysgol Bethania will consider the facts and context of each concern carefully so that the response is proportionate and appropriate. Bullying is usually repeated behaviour, or behaviour with the potential to be repeated, that is intended to cause physical, emotional or social harm. A one-off incident of conflict, disagreement or unkindness may not meet the definition of bullying, but it will still be taken seriously, recorded where appropriate and addressed through the school's behaviour, pastoral or safeguarding procedures.

A prejudice-related incident is any incident perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice linked to a protected characteristic, language, culture, additional learning need, disability, appearance, family circumstances or any other aspect of identity. A prejudice-related incident may be a one-off incident or may form part of a pattern of bullying. Such incidents will be recorded, challenged and monitored so that patterns can be identified and preventative action taken.

Where an incident suggests that a child may be at risk of harm, has been harmed, is at risk from exploitation, abuse, neglect, harmful sexual behaviour, online abuse, radicalisation, or any other safeguarding concern, staff must follow the Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Person without delay. Safeguarding concerns must not be managed solely as bullying or behaviour matters.

Ysgol Bethania recognises the Welsh Government definition of bullying set out in *Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality*. Other reputable safeguarding and child protection organisations may be used as supplementary sources of general information, but they do not replace Welsh Government guidance or Welsh safeguarding procedures that apply to schools in Wales.

Harassment related to a protected characteristic may be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Bullying includes: -

- verbal abuse, such as name calling and gossiping.
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages.
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating, or humiliating someone.
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone.
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours.
- controlling or manipulating someone.
- racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist, faith-based or other prejudice-related bullying.
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing.
- making silent, hoax, or abusive calls.
- online or cyberbullying.
- manipulation, such as staff bullying children to comply with their instructions.
- isolating young people/children.

NB: this list is not exhaustive.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect.

**Direct forms include:**

- physical violence or threats
- verbal assaults and taunts
- the destruction of property
- extortion and unwanted sexual interest or contact.

**Examples of indirect forms of bullying include: -**

- ignoring and withdrawal of friendships
- excluding and isolating young people
- malicious gossip
- offensive and threatening texting
- spreading rumours

- abusive or offensive graffiti.

Bullying may also include being forced to become involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Ysgol Bethania takes all forms of bullying seriously and will take the necessary action to address concerns, for example, bullying because of someone's race, disability, or sexuality.

There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour, and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour affects both the child or young person experiencing bullying and the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour. Ysgol Bethania expects all incidents of bullying to be addressed in proactive and constructive ways that provide opportunities for change, growth and development for everyone involved.

It is wrong to deal with perpetrators in an oppressive way, as this merely reinforces the belief that "might is right".

The effective management of bullying is an adult responsibility. Best outcomes are achieved when education staff, parents, carers and placing authorities work together to develop strategies to keep children and young people safe, address bullying behaviour and support restorative approaches where appropriate.

Ysgol Bethania will ensure that information about policies and procedures in relation to bullying is available in a user-friendly format at the request of children and young people, parents or carers.

### **Countering Bullying**

All children and young people need to be aware that education staff want to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

All education staff working with children and young people will be made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to consistently apply the policy of 'zero tolerance' when incidents are witnessed or reported. Education staff will reinforce the message to children and young people that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

The subject of bullying will be raised at both group and individual levels. Children and young people will be given opportunities to discuss bullying through pupil voice arrangements at school and to contribute ideas on how to implement the zero-tolerance approach. At an individual level, children and young people who are at risk of bullying, who have experienced bullying, or who have displayed bullying behaviour will be offered additional support, guidance and strategies to reduce risk and prevent further incidents. Risk management plans will be regularly reviewed for effectiveness.

Young people can be vulnerable to bullying at certain times, and education staff need to be aware of this and be vigilant. Furthermore, incidents of bullying are more likely to occur in certain locations, such as on school trips or at a Leisure Centre. It is therefore important that, where necessary, arrangements are made to ensure adequate supervision is available at such times to reduce the risk of bullying incidents. Risk assessments should be completed by the Headteacher, highlighting bullying hotspots and other risks within the school setting.

### **Playtimes and unstructured periods of the school day**

Ysgol Bethania recognises that bullying and peer conflict can be more likely to occur during less structured parts of the school day, including arrival, departure, transitions between lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes, use of toilets and cloakrooms, outdoor play, transport arrangements, school trips and any periods when children and young people are moving between supervised activities.

These times will be actively planned for, supervised and reviewed as part of the school's safeguarding and behaviour arrangements.

- Staff will be deployed strategically in areas identified through risk assessment, incident monitoring, pupil voice and staff observation as potential bullying hotspots.
- Supervision levels will take account of children and young people's ages, additional learning needs, communication needs, vulnerabilities, peer relationships and known risks.
- Staff on duty will actively observe interactions, intervene early where behaviour may escalate, and support pupils who find unstructured times difficult.
- Children and young people will be reminded how to seek help during breaktimes and lunchtimes, including who they can speak to and where they can go if they feel unsafe.
- Where a child or young person is vulnerable to bullying, has experienced bullying, or has displayed bullying behaviour, individual support or risk management arrangements may include planned safe spaces, supported play, structured activities, adult check-ins, adjusted groupings or increased supervision.
- Patterns of incidents during unstructured periods will be reviewed by the Headteacher or designated senior member of staff so that supervision, staffing, routines and environmental arrangements can be adapted promptly.

Young people will be encouraged to talk to education staff about incidents of bullying they experience or are aware of. In such situations, education staff must respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously, and ensure the matter is thoroughly investigated.

Children and young people should be encouraged to 'sign up' to an anti-bullying contract; if this is done at the point of admission, it sends a strong message about the culture and makes everyone aware that bullying will not be ignored or tolerated.

Signs that a child or young person may be experiencing bullying:

- Changes in "normal" behaviour – moodiness / clingy/emotional outbursts
- Truancy/school refusal / poor performance
- Changing route to school every day
- Bed wetting/soiling / nightmares/sleep problems
- Anxiety attacks; fear of going out; being left alone.
- Stealing (to obtain money for "taxes")
- "Losing" property / having clothing or items destroyed.
- Arriving home hungry (dinner money "taxed")
- Unexplained bruising / frequent "accidents."
- Poor peer relationships
- A tendency to be aggressive and bully others.
- Unexplained/psychosomatic illnesses (stomach/headaches)
- Obsessive washing / stop eating (when accused of being smelly/fat)
- Self-harming
- Children and young people who are generally isolated and excluded.
- Children and young people who receive lots of negative attention (allegedly in fun)
- Unhappy, distressed, and withdrawn children

## **Managing Bullying**

The subject of bullying should be openly discussed, and lessons should include regular discussions on the topic so children and young people are aware that staff understand the nature of the problem. As such:

- Bullying should be discussed at education staff meetings and Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings where relevant.

- Discussions about bullying should also be held informally whenever the opportunity arises.
- Placement and risk management plans should be reviewed and updated where there are concerns about bullying behaviour, involving children and young people who are experiencing bullying and those displaying bullying behaviour where appropriate.
- Posters on bullying should be displayed around the school and should detail the school/children's approach to managing incidents of Bullying.

Information should signpost children and young people to trusted sources of support if they are being bullied. This may include Childline, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Meic Cymru, local authority support services, and other age-appropriate anti-bullying or safeguarding services available to learners in Wales.

The Headteacher should make sure that:

- Children/young people are aware they can complain.
- Meet with the victim to establish the impact and details of the behaviour causing concern.
- Meet with the children/individuals involved to establish the impact and details of the behaviour causing concern.
- To determine the reasons for the behaviour, and to discuss the strategies to support the child/young person to address the behaviour.
- Increase supervision, where necessary, to ensure all individuals are effectively safeguarded:
- Potential consequences for the bullying behaviours known to children and young people, for example, (not earning rewards through the behaviour management system etc)
- Education Staff should look for patterns in children/young people's behaviour to determine and identify evidence of bullying and its impact.

Involvement of children and young people:

Ysgol Bethania will:

- Seek children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure children and young people know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure all children and young people are aware of the range of consequences that may be applied to those displaying bullying behaviour.
- Involve children and young people in anti-bullying campaigns.
- Publicise details of helplines and websites in the child or young person's guide and statement of purpose.
- Offer support to children and young people who have experienced bullying through several routes, including counselling, independent listeners and access to their social worker, if applicable.
- Work with children and young people who have displayed bullying behaviour to address the issues and reduce the risk of further incidents.
- Ensure children and young people have access to an independent visitor with whom they can share any concerns.

## **Post-Incident Responses**

### **Support for children and young people who have experienced bullying**

Education staff will offer a positive, sympathetic and supportive response to children and young people who have experienced bullying. The exact nature of the response will vary according to the needs of the child or young person and may include:

- Take immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child or young person's safety.
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell a member of staff.
- Explain to the child or young person the steps that will be taken.

- Support children and young people to learn and practice the skills of assertiveness so they can become more able to resist negative peer pressure.

Mediation may be considered only where this does not increase the vulnerability of the child or young person who has experienced bullying, where they want this to happen, and where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

### **Support for children and young people who display bullying behaviour**

Education staff will adopt a supportive, pragmatic and problem-solving approach to help children and young people who display bullying behaviour behave in more acceptable ways. Punishment alone is not helpful in managing this problem, but the positive use of consequences can help demonstrate that bullying is unacceptable.

Education staff will respond to incidents of bullying in a proportionate way. The more serious the cause for concern, the more serious the response. When consequences are necessary, they will be applied consistently and fairly.

In managing incidents of bullying, the following options will be considered:

- Talk to the young person, get the full story, listen to what's being said, and empathise with the young person.
- Reinforce the message that their behaviour is not acceptable.
- Adopt the approach that there is no justification for bullying.
- Explain that bullying takes many forms and isn't just physical aggression.
- Implement extra supervision and monitoring of the behaviour and situations (where applicable)
- Ensure, if relevant, that carers, parents, supervising social workers, social workers, teachers, and therapists are informed about any incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Education Staff should try to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour and consider the impact of the behaviour on the perpetrator.
- Ensure support is provided, such as counselling, mentoring, or relevant awareness training.
- Mediation with the child or young person who has experienced bullying may be considered only where they agree to this and the process is fully explained.
- Identify with the child or young person strategies and alternative ways to address the behaviour.
- Use of rewards / positive reinforcement to promote change.
- Review the viability of the placement where the behaviour of the child or young person requires more intensive support and, after agreed strategies have been implemented, the behaviour continues to present risks of harm to self or others.

### **Recording**

Each incident of bullying should be recorded in the bullying log. The record should include details of the date, time, location and nature of the bullying incident, and whether the bullying occurred between individual children or young people or as part of a group. The record should, as far as possible, be a verbatim account of what the child or young person said. Records should be legible, clear, concise and free from jargon and abbreviations. The child or young person must be given the opportunity to review the record and sign it off as factually accurate. The staff member should record the child or young person's response.

Disclosures about bullying must be reported immediately and, where applicable, referred to the Headteacher, Education Director, Proprietor and Designated Safeguarding Person. Where the concern meets the threshold for safeguarding action, the school will follow its Safeguarding Policy, Wales

Safeguarding Procedures and any relevant notification requirements for schools in Wales. The record must be written up within 24 hours of receiving the information.

If bullying incidents take place within the education environment, Ysgol Bethania will follow Welsh Government guidance that applies to schools in Wales, including *Challenging bullying: rights, respect, equality* and *Keeping Learners Safe*, together with any relevant Welsh guidance updates and training. English guidance, including *Preventing and Tackling Bullying*, does not apply to Ysgol Bethania and must not be used as the policy basis for the school.

We will ensure that all teaching staff are trained to recognise, understand, and manage incidents of bullying.

**Cross references**

Behaviour Management Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Code of Conduct

Dealing with bullying and the importance of friends.

Complaints Policy

*This policy is reviewed at least every 3 years. However, where there are changes to legislation/guidance, or in response to recommendations following any significant incident, the policy will be reviewed immediately.*