

Respecting others – children and young people 11–18

Inspiring rights, respect and equality – preventing and
challenging bullying



Draft guidance

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Respecting others – children and young people 11–18

Audience

Children and young people; parents/carers; families; schools; local authorities and organisations who work with school children to help with well-being and safeguarding issues.

Overview

This guidance gives information for preventing and challenging bullying in schools. This document is part of a set of guidance covering bullying. Each document gives advice for a key audience. This guidance gives advice to children and young people.

Action required

Children and young people, their parents/carers and families should be made aware of this guidance.

Further information

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

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 [@WG_Education](https://twitter.com/WG_Education)

 [Facebook/EducationWales](https://www.facebook.com/EducationWales)

Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at

<https://beta.gov.wales/consultations>

Related documents

Inclusion and pupil support guidance (2016)

Keeping learners safe guidance (2015)

Thinking positively: Emotional health and well-being in schools and Early Years settings (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010)

School-based Counselling Operating Toolkit (Welsh Assembly Government, 2011)

Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008: All Wales Travel Behaviour Code Statutory Guidance (2017)

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About words used in this guidance

'Children' describes anyone under the age of 18 because in law, this is how children and young people are described (the Children Act 1989).

'Parents' describes parents or carers.

'Perpetrators' are people who bully others.

'Targets' are people who are bullied.

'Prejudice' means when one person or a group makes an unfair or unreasonable judgement about another person or a group of people, without getting to know them. This judgement is based simply on one thing about them, such as the music they like, where they come from, skin or hair colour, religion or any aspect of their identity.

'Race': in this guidance we use the word only when we talk about racist bullying that picks on someone because of their racial group or the groups of their parents.

'Religion' describes spiritual beliefs and worship. It means faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

'Culture' describes people's way of life.

'Heterosexual': a heterosexual person is attracted to people of the opposite sex.

'Gay' and 'lesbian' people are attracted to people of the same sex.

'Bisexual people' are attracted to people of either sex.

'Harassment': in this guidance it means unwanted sexual behaviour that can occur again and again, online and offline. It can include unwanted touching, sexual suggestions, threats or photos sent.

'Discriminatory' describes behaviour that singles someone out for different treatment or bullying because of who they are.

'Bystanders' are people who are there when bullying happens. They do not try to stop it or defend the target.

Introduction

We can all feel safe, be respected and enjoy our rights if everyone works together to make this happen. When people are bullied, it works against this because it leaves a person or a group feeling unsafe, disrespected and with no power to solve it.

In Wales, all schools should work together with learners and their parents/carers to help make everyone feel happy and safe in school and on the journey to or from school.

People should be treated equally and there should be no discrimination or hate crime. This is the law (the Equality Act 2010).

Children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a list of rights for all children. No matter who you are, where you live, what you believe in, what your parents/carers do, what language you speak, what sex you are, whether you have a disability or not, or whether you are rich or poor, all children should be treated fairly on any basis. These rights apply to you up to the age of 18.

The UNCRC lists [42 articles](#) – rights that children have, to be safe, healthy and happy. These include:

- you have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind
- you have the right to a good-quality education
- you have a right to practice your religion
- your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people
- you have a right to a safe environment.

To enjoy your rights, you also have a responsibility to respect the rights of others and not do anything which stops them from having those rights too. Everyone should learn in a respectful culture that celebrates all our differences and promotes equality. Everyone is different and we can learn about and from each other to help us understand the world and our part in it.

In 2011 we (the Welsh Government) decided to take an extra step and make the UNCRC law in Wales.

This law is called the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure has changed the way we work. It means we have to consider children's rights in everything we do.

The law changes the way we and the staff who help us do our job (like schools), think about children's rights and how the things we do affect your rights.

The Measure says all ministers in Wales have to think about children's rights when making decisions. This is called 'due regard'. The decisions can be about anything, from deciding on how schools treat children to building roads.

Schools must have in place a plan to encourage positive behaviour and challenge bullying. They must have a written document (called a policy) explaining how this is being done.

Schools should consult with you about their anti-bullying policy and activities. They should make you aware of the policy and you should act and behave as the policy says.

What do we mean by bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying.

Many people think they know what is meant by 'bullying' but one person's idea might be different from someone else's view. In this guidance, bullying is defined as a behaviour that:

- happens on purpose
- happens more than once
- is meant to hurt or upset someone
- the targeted person feels powerless to stop.

There are many different ways people can be bullied. This could include:

- being called nasty names, teased, made fun of, threatened or put down
- being hit, kicked, punched, tripped up or knocked over
- having belongings stolen or damaged
- having rumours or gossip spread about you or people talking about you behind your back
- being left-out, excluded or isolated
- being forced to do something you don't want to do or know that is wrong.

Online bullying is bullying behaviour that happens through technology such as mobile/smart phones or the internet. This could include:

- hurtful, embarrassing or threatening material posted online (for example on social network websites)
- nasty messages sent as texts, e-mails or via other websites or apps
- being excluded from an online game
- fake profiles on a social network that make fun of others
- any misuse of intimate, explicit images of the person targeted.

Identity-based bullying is when the bullying is focused on what is different about a person's identity. It can be targeted at one or a whole group of people because they are thought to be different, whether this is true or not. This is known as prejudice.

Prejudice-related bullying involves aspects of a person's identity such as:

- race, religion or culture or your family background
- any special need or disability
- gender identity – the way you look or act
- sexual orientation – who you are attracted to (whether you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual)
- sexism – because of your gender (often in the form of harassment).

Prejudice and stereotypes may be learned from what children see and hear around them. They may not always understand the deep hurt their words or actions have caused. Prejudice-related bullying is wrong and should not happen. All prejudice-related behaviour or discrimination should always be challenged.

Is it banter or bullying?

People often try to excuse bullying by saying it was only a joke or banter. Those who bully (perpetrators) tend to say the targeted person simply cannot take a joke. It is banter when it is clearly understood by all those doing and receiving it and everyone finds it funny, for example when close friends regularly joke together, tease and enjoy it.

It is probably not banter if one person or a group is hurt or humiliated by it and/or if it is making fun of your identity (basic things about you which you cannot change). There is a boundary when banter becomes bad behaviour and, if it happens often, bad behaviour becomes bullying.

When it is not bullying

The following examples are bad behaviour but not usually acts of bullying:

- a fight that happens once
- banter between you and your friends that goes wrong, but is not repeated
- an argument between you and someone else of equal power, such as with your friend
- a friendship problem. One person does not want to be friends any more.

The above examples might be the start of bullying if nothing is done to stop it. If you have found it scary or distressing and you have not sorted it out between you, it might be helpful if you tell someone so that your school can do something to stop it right away.

When should you report an incident?

All bad or harmful behaviour should be reported whether it is bullying or not. It should be dealt with under your school's behaviour policy. If it seems minor at first, you may be able to sort it out on your own by finding the right time to discuss it calmly with the people who did it. You should be confident and firm, and explain to them how it made you feel and why you didn't like it. If you do not feel safe, do not take this step without the support of friends, a teacher or in a group activity aimed at dealing with bullying arranged at school. The following behaviours should always be reported to your school:

- all violence
- any unwanted sexual behaviour
- any racism

- any discriminatory behaviour which focuses on your identity – this describes who you are or your background, for example your race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social status (such as if you are rich or poor)
- any bullying of people with special needs or disability
- any behaviour that threatens you or makes you feel scared
- anything that happens online that could harm you.

Have you been bullied?

If you are worried that you are being bullied, you should tell someone. This might be your friends, your brother or sister, your parents/carers or an adult you trust at school. Or you could talk to a helpline if you prefer not to talk to someone you know. The most important thing is to share your concerns and not try to deal with the issue alone. Some helplines and websites are given at the end of this guidance.

Reporting it

Things to think about if you do report bullying include:

- to be sure of your facts – write down what happened and when. Were there any other people around witnessing it?
- to keep a timeline to show what happened and when, because it is easy to get confused when re-telling your story
- was there any evidence – if your belongings were damaged or there was a cruel text message, this can be important evidence, which you should keep until needed. Saving online messages or images does not stop you being able to block the sender
- if you were physically hurt you should photograph your injuries or the damage to belongings
- to remember that if you are being bullied regularly and it has been going on for a long time, each incident does not have to be serious – it is the picture of all the incidents taken together which makes up your evidence
- if the evidence is an unacceptable image on a mobile or online, do not forward the content to anyone – not even your school, parents/carers or friends (it might contain material which is illegal to share). Instead, you should speak with a member of staff or parent/carer and take the device with you
- reporting abusive online behaviour to the websites and online platforms where it happens.

What to do if you have reported bullying to your teacher and the situation is not improving

You can tell someone else at school, such as a different member of staff, your head of year or the headteacher. A friend or parent/carer can go with you.

If you do not feel that the school is taking your concerns about bullying seriously, you and your parents/carers have a right to make a complaint to your school. Schools have a complaints procedure which is a guide on how to make a complaint and will explain how they will deal with your complaint. This should only be used as a last resort after you have reported the problem to your school, and only used if the school has taken no action or the actions have failed.

If you or your family want to make a complaint about the way your school is dealing with any issue – including instances of bullying – ask for a copy of your school's complaints procedure. This can often be found on your school's website – if not you have the right to ask for a copy from your school.

The procedure will include the name of someone who can act as a contact point. This person can find someone to help you through the complaints process.

About feelings

Being bullied can leave you feeling very unhappy, depressed or isolated. Being bullied is not your fault. People bully others for all sorts of reasons.

- Don't believe the nasty things said about you.
- Remember you are a valued person.
- You have a right to be safe.
- You do not have to change your appearance or who you are.
- There are steps you can take.

Try to take some action. This can make you feel better because it proves you are not powerless. By telling someone, you are putting the first steps in place to getting things changed. It is not acceptable to be bullied.

If you feel very upset, sad or low, you should let someone know, talk to friends or family or use the helplines at the end of this document.

Useful tips if you are worried that you have bullied other people

Bullying someone is wrong and your bad behaviour needs to stop – but the bad behaviour does not make you a bad person. There are many reasons why someone might bully and you may need help in understanding why you act in the way you do. There is nothing wrong with asking for help to change your behaviour. You may need help understanding and managing your emotions such as anger. Asking for help is a brave choice and a step in the right direction for making things better.

If you do not want to talk to someone else about your behaviour, it might be helpful for you to think about the harm you have caused. Who was harmed? Also think about everyone around the person you bullied who might also be upset by what has happened. Now think about how you would feel if someone treated you in the same way that you have just acted. Would you like to be treated that way?

It may help you to think about what you were feeling at the time. Could you recognise this feeling in future and stop your actions (bullying) before it happens again? You should consider what needs to happen to make things right. If you have problems in addition to being bullied or bullying others, please ask for help.

I need help with:

a problem with bullying ☐

a problem with online bullying ☐



Useful tips for bystanders to help challenge bullying

If you have witnessed bullying and want it to stop you may find these actions helpful.

- You should report it to your school
- You could offer to go with the targeted person to tell the school or their family
- With your friends, you could walk with the targeted person between lessons, in corridors and at break times.

Moving on

Bullying, in whatever way you are involved, can be upsetting and can take up all your thoughts and emotions. To help remind you there are other enjoyable things to think about and do, you may find joining a new club, taking up a new interest or activity, or doing other things you enjoy during lunchtime or after school may help. You will most likely soon make new friends and enjoy yourself again. Remember, most people do not bully, so try not to let this change how you look at life and being around other people.

If you find it difficult to talk to someone at school or at home, you can contact MEIC which is a free 24-hour helpline for children and young people.

You can ask MEIC for advice and support about lots of things including bullying. MEIC can contact the school for you to talk to your school about bullying. Visit the MEIC website at www.meiccymru.org call them free on 08088 023456.

If bullying is making you feel really upset, you may be able to speak to a professional to help you deal with those feelings. Counselling is available to children in Year 6 and to all young people aged between 11 and 18. You can make an appointment yourself or ask your parents, someone caring for you, someone in school that you trust or a friend to make an appointment for you. You may want to check out your local council's website for more information.

Further help and advice

Anti-bullying charities

Bullies Out

Anti-bullying charity based in Wales that works with individuals, schools, colleges, youth and community settings. Their e-mentors offer online support.

www.bulliesout.com

e-mail: mail@bulliesout.com

Anti-Bullying Alliance

Information for schools, parents/carers and young people on all aspects of bullying.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape

Anti-bullying charity, workshops for children who have been bullied.

www.kidscape.org.uk

The Diana Award

Young ambassadors trained to help others.

www.antibullyingpro.com/

Children's rights

The Children's Commissioner for Wales

Find out more about children's rights from the website.

www.childcomwales.org.uk/

Equality and law

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-wales

Children in Wales

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

Helpines and advice

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Kooth

Counselling service

www.kooth.com

Meic

Informationn advice and advocacy for young people.

www.meiccymru.org/

CALL

Community Advice and Listening Line

www.callhelpline.org.uk

Homophobia**EACH**

EACH Action line 0808 1000 143 by charity Education Action Challenging Homophobia.

www.each.education

Racism

Childline offers [advice](#).

Family Lives

Parents' forums confidential helpline on

Tel: [0808 800 2222](tel:08088002222).

Show Racism the Red Card

www.theredcard.org

Disability**MENCAP**

Helpline Mon to Fri, 9am – 5pm **0808 8000 300**

<https://wales.mencap.org.uk>

Emotional health**Head Above the Waves**

Support for young people suffering depression or self-harming.

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

Samaritans

A safe place for you to talk anytime

www.samaritans.org/

Tel: 116 123 (free to call).

Welsh language line: 0808 164 0123 (free from 7pm – 11pm, seven days a week)

e-mail, live chat and other services available.

Rethink

Advice and information for vulnerable people with mental health issues.

www.rethink.org/help

Tel: 0300 500 0927

Crime

Internet Watch Foundation

Report illegal images of children.

www.iwf.org.uk

Victim Support

Report hate crime in Wales.

www.reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

If child sexual abuse or exploitation is suspected.

www.ceop.police.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

If you think a child is in immediate danger, don't delay – call the police on 999 or call us on 0808 800 5000.

www.nspcc.org.uk

Online issues

Internet Matters

Advice on online issues for parents and children.

www.internetmatters.org.uk

Childnet International

All aspects of online safety.

www.childnet.com