



Approaches to securing 'positive behaviour' in Carmarthenshire schools

'Every learner in every school has the right to learn, free from the fear of bullying, whatever form that bullying may take. Everyone involved in a learner's education needs to work together to ensure that this is the case.'

('Respecting Others: Anti-bullying Overview,' WG, September 2011)

A Carmarthenshire context:

Carmarthenshire schools have developed a range of effective policies and strategies in support of securing 'positive behaviour' over much time and experience. The key focus has always rested relentlessly and appropriately on encouraging and enhancing a culture of positive and behaviour amongst our children and young people. We recognise the clear need to secure and embed this key element in a relative and supportive manner for learners of all ages and backgrounds. This paper focuses on some of the main areas of practice currently employed within our schools. We are delighted that its content blends effectively with much of the revised Estyn framework for school inspection, emphasising the ongoing need for our learning communities to pro-actively support children's well-being and progression in an holistic and caring way. In addition, our work is further supported through the implementation of the five ways of working as outline in the Wellbeing of Future Generation's (Wales) Act 2015 where we clearly state –

'Promote high standards of attendance, behaviour, care, support, guidance and attitudes to learning in school so that learners can enjoy schooling free from any major detrimental issues.'

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BUDDSODDWYR | **INVESTORS**
MEWN POBL | **IN PEOPLE**

Overview of Approaches and Strategies:

- **School policy:** central to any successful behaviour strategy is the need for a clearly defined and embedded policy. In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 –

'The governing body of a maintained school shall ensure that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of its pupils are pursued at the school.'

Our schools therefore implement such policies and strategies through their Governing Body, with the most common and regular examples often defining themselves as one or both of the following -

- **Positive Behaviour Policy**
- **Anti-bullying Policy**

A Primary School example:

Here's our anti bullying policy. Firstly it explains how we will teach pupils about bullying, its effects and how we can combat it together, and secondly, the measures we will take to keep everyone in our school community safe and help to develop positive relationships

Bullying is unkind behaviour which deliberately causes harm to someone or hurts their feelings. It can be direct including: hitting, kicking, saying unkind words, damaging someone's possessions or indirect including: using mobile phones or twitter/social networking/email etc to send hurtful messages or images. Usually the bully picks on the same individual or group time after time although an individual action such as sending one cruel text message can count as bullying as it can set in motion a chain reaction which could have far reaching consequences for the victim.

We believe bullying thrives in a culture of silence and that we need everyone's help to tackle it so we aim to work with parents, staff and pupils so that everyone knows:

- *What bullying is*
- *How we will try and stop bullying in our school*
- *What to do if you are bullied or are aware that someone else is someone being bullied*

Our pupils will explore the following issues through the curriculum and whole school initiatives:

- *What bullying is, why people bully and how to tackle bullying effectively*
- *Key concepts such as: friendship, rights and responsibilities and respecting diversity*
- *How to get help if someone is concerned about bullying at home or school*
- *The impact of particular types of bullying e.g.: cyber bullying, racist bullying, homophobic bullying*
- *Consequences for pupils who bully others (including the law regarding bullying)*
- *How to combat bullying effectively*
- *How to protect ourselves when using mobile phones/the internet etc*

As a caring school we commit to the following ongoing strategies:

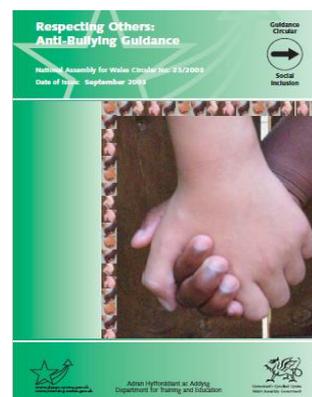
- *We will work with our pupils through the school council, to identify trends, tackle bullying and ensure that everyone feels safe and valued*
- *We will encourage pupils and parents to report instances of bullying so we can sort out the problem or get help for them*
- *We will celebrate Respecting Others Week (Anti Bullying Week) every year by running a week of activities in school*
- *We will record all instances of bullying and enforce appropriate sanctions for anyone involved in bullying*

- **Curriculum provision:**

The breadth and depth of a school's curriculum provision undoubtedly provides an ideal vehicle to support and promote high expectations and standards of behaviour, linked with 'attitudes towards learning' across the whole school community. School leaders are highly creative in their approaches and take advantage of many curriculum subject areas to underpin elements of behaviour and anti-bullying activities. One obvious and valuable resource is the content of the Personal and Social Education Framework (Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and Post-16) which makes specific references such as ...

- 'Manage different emotions and develop strategies to resolve conflict and deal with bullying'
- 'Understand situations which produce conflict and the nature of bullying'

To support teachers support their learners in a practical and engaging manner, numerous Behaviour Management resources are available. The link below will take you directly to detailed guidance within the Welsh Government publications 'Practical approaches to Behaviour Management in the Classroom' (2012) and 'Respecting Others – Anti-bullying Guidance' (2003)



<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/practicalapproaches/?lang=en>

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/respectcircular/?lang=en>

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/respectcircular/?skip=1&lang=cy>

- **Implementing 'Reward systems':**

Schools implement 'reward systems' in support of a variety of issues e.g. attendance, behaviour, homework etc. The content of these systems often emanate from discussions within 'School Councils' and are therefore much more effective and are 'owned' by learners. Rewarding positive behaviour and / or helping to resolve aspects of bullying are areas that are often highlighted and receive a constructive focus within reward systems. They have evolved within our schools over time, gaining a secure profile within the regular delivery of the school's well-being and Personal and Social Education (PSE) agenda.

A current example primary school practice might include the following elements:

1. *Give Me 5: Five agreed aspects of behaviour with children 'checking in' on them*
2. *The '1,2,3' Rap: 1 to stand, 2 to turn, 3 to start walking.*
3. *Staff Voice: All members of staff use a quiet classroom voice to instill calmness and model what they expect to receive back from children*
4. *Golden Time: Golden Time needs a consistent approach. Where pupils display good behavior golden time will be awarded, however golden time can be lost when pupils have misbehaved.*
5. *Pasta in the Jar: As children are praised they are rewarded by placing a pasta in the jar. Once the jar is full, 'Golden Time' will be awarded at end of the week. Once the whole school pasta jar is full then there will be a whole school treat. The School Council collect the 'treat' ideas so that the decision is pupil led and democratic.*

Rewards:

- *Stickers presented in class with progression to 'Head teacher stickers'*
 - *Pasta in the Jar awarded in class and during the Special Assembly (weekly)*
 - *Visit to Head teacher for a special sticker / letter home*
 - *Achievement Book: individual accomplishment recorded officially in this document*
 - *Seren yr Wythnos: nominated from each class for a place at the 'Special Table' (where they will receive a Headteacher certificate and additional appropriate reward)*
- **Listening to 'Learner Voice:'** Our schools have focused very effectively for many years on the crucial agenda of ensuring a clear and strategic voice for our children and young people. This area of work links directly with 'School Council' activities but also encompasses a broader range of both curriculum and well-being provision. This key aspect of school life can provide numerous stimuli for promoting positive behaviour and where necessary, supporting the school community in tackling

bullying or inappropriate behaviour. Links to examples of resources to support this work are noted below.

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/listening-to-learners/?lang=en>

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/listening-to-learners/?skip=1&lang=cy>

- **School Councils:**

The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005, require that all maintained primary (excluding infant and nursery), secondary and special schools in Wales must have a school council. This provides our schools with a most valuable and live resource for implementing its work in supporting positive behavior approaches and anti-bullying strategies via direct engagement with pupils. Much successful work has been undertaken within Carmarthenshire schools, for example, the link copied below to Estyn's 'Effective Practice' website section includes an article celebrating practice in Hendy Primary School and Llanmilo Primary School. The Hendy example focuses specifically on tackling bullying with its introduction stating – *'Staff and pupils at Hendy County Primary School overhauled their anti-bullying policies, achieving a zero-tolerance environment in which all pupils feel safe and heard.'*

Harnessing pupil voice to build effective anti-bullying strategies



<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/search?search=School%20Councils&order=desc>

https://www.estyn.llyw.cymru/arfer-effeithiol/chwilio?_ga=2.266360526.1533441370.1530184309-1884163442.1496816019

- **Restorative practice:**

'Restorative practice' is used effectively in many of our schools. Based on research and analyses of behaviour management, it sets out to provide schools with a clearly defined strategy and mechanism to support and encourage positive behaviour in the classroom and whole school community.

'Unlike punitive approaches, in which a third party acts as judge, jury and executioner, restorative practice predicates upon ownership of behaviour and conflict resting with those directly involved, who also retain responsibility for resolution of the problem'
(*'Restorative Practice in schools'* – Paul Howard, 2009)

Primary school website comment:

We are using the 'restorative practice' approach, to ensure every child has the best chance to further their learning in the school.

Part of the 'restorative practice' approach is to hold daily and weekly 'check-in' and 'check-out' times in each class. Pupils are given opportunities to tell their peers how they are feeling when they arrive in school, and issues can be dealt with early in the day.

The aim of the approach is to help and equip the children in our school, with the skills and strategies they need, to manage their behaviour in school. In addition, staff are also using 'restorative practice' to ensure a consistent approach to managing behaviour in school.

Although still in its infancy, we are delighted with the positive impact it has already had amongst pupils and staff.



[http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/121129restorativepractice
en.pdf](http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/121129restorativepractice/en.pdf)

- **Inclusion, Youth and Education and Child Psychology Services:**

Our team of skilled and experienced officers with these services are readily on hand to support schools and provide specialist guidance where appropriate. Advice can be given across a wide range of issues, often including first-hand experience of implementing programmes and strategies which have demonstrated successful impact on managing behaviour and promoting an anti-bullying ethos across schools.

Supporting consistency:

There could not be a better climate for schools to benefit from a supportive agenda of 'sharing best practice and ensuring consistency' within their work. Such terminology is regularly on tongues and for very good reason. We therefore take full advantage of this aspect during our ERW Core Support Visits to schools. Challenge Advisers, senior school leaders and governors are regularly engaged in analysis and discussion on this topic as an integral part of gauging a school's well-being progress and priorities. Understandably, much of this work focuses on 'listening to learners' and 'leaders' which provides the opportunity for our services to gather key elements of information, best practice and areas for improvement across our schools. This information can then be disseminated to all schools via Headteacher workshops, ALNCo (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator) Fora etc.

Carmarthenshire is wholly focused on supporting every learner to achieve and develop as

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

(Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales)

We are certain that these key purposes are founded on a bedrock of positive social behaviours and actions.

Next steps:

We adhere whole-heartedly to the national direction for improved outcomes and well-being for all children and young people. We will therefore continue to review and revise our practice, guidance and support within this area, basing any future actions on clear evidence of needs from the classroom floor. We firmly believe that ongoing success within this area can be achieved through a collaborative, partnership approach between us all as Local Members, officers, school leaders, governors, parents and of course ... our children and young people.

In conclusion, the following quote from the Welsh Government strategic document 'Education in Wales – Our National Mission' captures the tone and purpose of our work in a few, but very relevant sentences ...

'All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at school, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners.' (Education in Wales – Our National Mission, Welsh Government, 2017)

