Cyngor sir ddinbych denbighshire County Council

Children & Young People's **Anti-Bullying Strategy 2024 - 2027**

Rights, respect, equality

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this strategy

This strategy is effective from January 2021 to January 2024 and provides a framework setting out how Denbighshire County Council will tackle bullying and harassment involving Denbighshire's children and young people in our school communities.

Denbighshire continues to be committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential, including the right to learn in a safe and protective environment. This strategy confirms the Council's commitment to positively address the issue of bullying behaviour across our school communities and is produced alongside the Welsh Government Challenging bullying – Rights, respect and equality: statutory guidance https://gov.wales/school-bullying and The Equality Act 2010 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents in understanding the importance of identifying and protecting those individuals who share a protected characteristic as much as those who do not. Denbighshire supports the view of Welsh Government in recognising that challenging bullying is a key priority and should happen holistically through:

- addressing the root cause of unacceptable behaviour;
- creating an inclusive and engaging environment;
- placing priority on well-being;
- teaching children and young people about bullying and maintaining respectful relationships.

Denbighshire recognises that bullying does happen and that challenging it can be a huge task that is the responsibility of everyone. This is why the authority promotes the need to work together to be proactive and create school communities that take bullying very seriously and act to challenge it through both preventative and intervention measures. This document intends to outline the responsibilities of the local authority and school communities in challenging bullying and as set out in Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2017-2022, be a place where young people can and want to flourish and feel supported to reach their potential.

This document has been informed by a number of key documents which it is recommended are read in conjunction and when undertaking any anti-bullying policy development work. Appendix 1 provides more detail of key documents.

1.2 What do we hope to achieve from this strategy?

The main objectives of this strategy are;

- **Communication**: to bring to the attention of all local authority staff who work with schools or work on what matters to schools, an awareness of what bullying behaviour is, the impact of bullying on lives and the responsibilities of all to challenge it.
- **Commitment**: to highlight the commitment of Denbighshire to, wherever possible, reduce bullying behaviour across our school communities and ensure learners feel safe, secure and supported to achieve their full potential.
- **Consistency**: to provide information and understanding to allow consistency across our school communities in approaches to addressing bullying behaviour. To be aiming for all

school communities to be promoting a strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity successfully.
- **Co-operation**: to promote that it is everyone's responsibility to support and address bullying behaviour by working together and towards the same goals.
- **Effectiveness**: to establish and maintain consistent reporting measures of bullying incidents across our school communities to allow patterns/trends to be identified, supported and addressed.

2. Challenging bullying in Denbighshire

2.1 What is bullying behaviour? A definition

Wales has no legal definition of bullying, however it recognises the need for school communities to agree a definition that allows consistency across policies and procedures in order to challenge bullying behaviours. When considering the widely used definitions and recognised behaviours of bullying there are three common principles:

- Behaviour that can be displayed by an individual or group.
- Behaviour that is intended to cause harm to others (physically or emotionally).
- Behaviour that is usually repeated over time (rather than a one off incident).

Based on this, the Welsh Government document, Rights, respect, equality, define bullying as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated overtime, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally." https://gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-local-authorities - pg. 14.

To reflect the Welsh Government guidance the terms 'target' and 'perpetrator' should now be used to describe the roles played by those involved in the bullying act and the term 'bystander' for those who witness bullying.

While it is recognised that one-off incidents of negative behaviour, such as arguments or a friendship fall out, can cause distress for those involved and leave a risk of reprisals or future recurrence, it is recommended that such behaviour is addressed within the school's behaviour policy, with the aim of it being resolved and not escalating to become bullying.

Bullying is not defined as a crime, however it is the right of all children and young people and parents/carers to report such incidents to the police. When a bullying incident does occur and if is reported to the police, the police will reframe the incident in a definition of a 'crime' as exists and is defined by statute. Many behaviours, which in the school context are called bullying, may therefore be defined differently in law. (e.g. threatening behaviour, criminal damage, theft, assault, prejudice-related incidents). Some cases of bullying may also raise concern for the suffering of a child or young person and require school to report this to the local authority Children's Service in relation to safeguarding procedures. Further clarification of this area can be found within Welsh Government documentation https://gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools – Section 5, the law relating to bullying.

Bullying may not be restricted to incidents between children and young people. Accusations of bullying between and towards adults may also be made. Acknowledgement of such potential

incidents should be made in school policies. Teachers and other adults who work with children and young people may be vulnerable to being targets of bullying. They need to take steps to protect themselves, for example by carefully limiting access to their personal information and equipment.

2.2 Who is involved in bullying?

The Perpetrator	The Target
Refers to children and young people who exhibit bullying behaviours towards others	Refers to children and young people who are bullied

The Bystander
A person who is present, whether online or offline, at an event or incident of bullying but does not take part

2.3 Types of bullying behaviours

Bullying can involve a range of behaviours and at times a combination of behaviours. Common examples include:

Physical bullying: this may include physical acts against the target, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging someone else's property.

Verbal bullying: this may include spreading rumours, name calling, teasing, talking about people to others with the aim of deliberately embarrassing them or to make them feel bad.

Online bullying: The digital age that children and young people are living in can provide both positive and negative experiences that can be a challenge to manage both in and out of a school community. While online bullying, often termed cyberbullying, has been highlighted and recognised as a significant shift in the area of bullying, research highlights that offline bullying remains more common and when carried out online it often mirrors the behaviours of offline bullying (e.g. name calling, rumour-spreading). However the level of distress caused by online bullying has been highlighted as more significant for the target(s). Reasons being:

- The audience can be unlimited.
- It can occur anywhere and at any time, there is no respite from it.
- It can involve unknown people, although most cases involve known peers.
- Technology facilitates the storage of images and messages for repeat viewing.

It is also recognised that through the ability to act anonymously the perpetrator(s) may act with more intent and severity than if they were acting face to face.

When online bullying impacts on the well-being of students there is an expectation that school communities take steps to address it and part of this will be the need for adults to keep up with the fast-changing digital world children and young people are accessing. Further clarification of this area can be found within Welsh Government documentation https://gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools - Section 4, online bullying and aggression.
Prejudice-related bullying: Bullying frequently focuses on individual differences or anything that is implied to be different from the majority and/or the perpetrator of the bullying. This may include acts of bullying towards people who have protected characteristics (e.g. disability, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, appearance, religious heritage) and would be termed prejudice-related bullying. Prejudice-related behaviour could also be directed towards those individuals without protected characteristics (e.g. Additional Learning Needs). Other related terms would include 'identity-based bullying', 'discriminatory bullying', 'hate-related bullying', or 'inequality-based bullying.' This form of bullying is likely to undermine any work a school community is doing to promote respect, equal opportunities and the teaching of social and commonly accepted moral principles. Further clarification of this area can be found within the Welsh Government documentation https://gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools - Section 3, prejudice-related bullying.

2.4 Impact of bullying
Bullying has the potential to negatively affect everyone involved and understanding and highlighting this is needed in order to prevent and challenge it. Considerable research highlights both the short and long term impact bullying can have and understandably it is likely to increase the longer it goes on for and be specific to each individual. There can be many factors which influence the impact of the bullying, particularly the individual's personal resources to manage it and the support systems they have around them. Without support the impact of bullying can be far reaching, impacting upon personal development, social development, educational achievement, mental health and wellbeing.

Possible impact on the PERPETRATOR may include:
- Feelings and expressions of anger.
- Loss of friendships/peer relationships.
- Risk of disengagement from education.
- Negative impact on academic achievement.
- Risk of engaging in future antisocial behaviours.
- Increased risk of gaining a criminal conviction.
- Reducing feelings of empathy – blaming the target for the bullying.

Possible impact on the TARGET may include:
- Feelings of anxiety and fear.
- Increased health complaints.
- Reduction in attendance at school.
- Difficulties in concentration.
- Low self-esteem and self-worth.
- Increase in social isolation and feelings of loneliness.
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.
- Depression and withdrawal.
- Consideration of suicide. - Low levels of resilience.
- Develops 'self-blame', a coping behaviour where a person blames themselves for the situation they are in, leading to feelings of helplessness.

Possible impact on the BYSTANDER may include:

- Feelings of guilt or helplessness.
- Feelings of distress, anxiety or fear from what they have seen or from saying something about the bullying.
- Feelings of heightened peer pressure.
- Loss of friendships/social status.
- Fear of becoming a victim themselves or their own safety. - Reduction in school attendance.

A bystander's decision of whether they should intervene in the bullying or not can be one of great challenge and be influenced by a number of factors. For example consideration of their relationship with the perpetrator and/or target, their view of whether someone else should or could intervene, their opinion of the target, concern for their own safety.

2.5 National Context

Childline Annual Review 2018/19 reports that they:

- Delivered 15,851 counselling sessions for the area of bullying.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/childline-annual-review

Ditch the Label's 2019 Annual Bullying Survey found that of 7,347 12 to 20 year olds asked about their experiences of bullying:

- 22% felt they had been bullied in the past 12 months.
- 27% felt they had witnessed bullying happening.
- 2% felt they had bullied somebody.
- Of those who felt they had been bullied 31% had been bullied at least once a day and 45% at least once a month, with effects on them including feelings of depression, anxiety, engaging in self-harm behaviours and experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- Of those who felt they had been bullied the majority (59%) felt it was due to attitudes towards their appearance.
- 11% of those who felt they had been bullied had attempted suicide.
- 72% of these individuals who had experienced bullying had felt able to talk to someone about what was happening, while 28% had not. The most likely person they would talk to was a teacher or family member.

https://www.ditchthelabel.org/research-papers/the-annual-bullying-survey-2019/

2.6 Local Context

Denbighshire maintains eight secondary schools, 47 primary schools, two special schools and a pupil referral unit. When comparing the local population against the national population it can be noted that:

- 17.9% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the Wales national average of 19.9%.
- 6.6% of pupils are from ethnic minorities, lower than the Wales average of 10.6%
- 21.9% of pupils have Special Educational Needs (SEN), slightly higher than the Wales average of 20.8%

An Estyn Inspection in February 2018 judged the authority's overall outcomes for learners and quality of education services to be 'Good' and leadership and management to be 'Excellent.' It was noted that:

'The authority has a strong moral purpose that underpins its education services, focusing on an ambition to maximise the life chances of every learner.'

Information from Denbighshire's Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) cluster survey for Sept 19 to Dec 19 shows that students across all three key stages reported scores of high satisfaction with their school experience in relation to their feelings about school. This incorporates a student's sense of wellbeing, safety and comfort in school.

Information from the School Health Research Network for Denbighshire Student's Health and Well Being in 2019/20, shows that across 4537 students in the authority's eight secondary schools:

- 13% felt they had taken part in bullying another student in the past couple of months. Slightly below the national average of 15%.
- 31% felt they had been bullied in the past couple of months. Slightly below the national average of 33%.
- 16% felt they had been cyberbullied in the past couple of months. Slightly below the national average of 18%.
- The most common reasons that students think people have been bullied in their year group are:
    - Because of their weight (52%). ○ Because they are gay, lesbian or bisexual (37%).
    - I don't know (23%).

3. Promoting partnership with the local authority

A key strand of any successful anti-bullying strategy is a mechanism that allows for school communities and those individuals with a responsibility for anti-bullying, to work effectively and in partnership with the local authority.

A number of support agencies/services are provided by Denbighshire County Council to support the health, emotional and social needs of children and young people across all school communities and will directly and indirectly feed into the area of challenging bullying behaviour. These include:

- Behaviour Support Service (BSS). - Educational Psychology Service (EPS) - Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- School Based Counselling Service.
- Social Services.
- Youth Service.

Denbighshire Health and Well-being Group for school settings was established in July 2016 and continues to meet termly. The overall purpose being to promote the working together of partners, local authority services and school practitioners to develop a mutual understanding of the health and wellbeing agenda for education in Wales and to make strategic recommendations which have an operational impact in Denbighshire schools.

3.1 The role of the local authority

The contents of this strategy aims to provide advice and support to all local authority school settings to prevent and challenge bullying and to mitigate its effects when it occurs in their communities. To support this, it can be expected that the local authority will:

- Actively encourage schools to use an established approach and implement programmes accurately and effectively.
- Support the transition of students between primary and secondary schools and support vulnerable children and young people joining new schools.
- Promote the sharing of anti-bullying approaches between feeder schools and secondary schools.
- Provide advice and information for schools, children, young people and parents/carers about bullying - https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/strategies-plans-and-policies/education-and-schools/information-for-schools/anti-bullying/anti-bullying.aspx
- Maintain ongoing liaison with relevant services and professionals to promote and challenge bullying across the community.
- Continue to monitor both the authority's and school's equality objectives and progress towards achieving these.
- Promote the voice of the learner and allow them to participate in decisions about challenging bullying.
- Train appropriate staff who take calls in the single point of access service to respond appropriately.
- Provide an independent counselling service in respect of health, emotional and social needs for children and young people in Denbighshire.

This will all be supported by the authority working closely with a number of relevant services and professionals. The overall aim of any joint working will be to obtain a resolution to a bullying situation that enables those involved to learn and mature within their school. It is acknowledged that in some situations this may take time and patience as interventions are put into place and supported.

The authority expects all schools to have appropriate complaints procedures in place and are aware that parents/carers have the right to refer their complaint to the authority if they believe the school and school governing body have not adhered fully to the process. The local authority would then handle the complaint within the Welsh Government complaints process.

3.2 The role of the school community

Schools are ideally placed to play a key role in tackling issues associated with bullying. By effectively challenging bullying, schools can create a safe environment for children and young people, helping them to realise their potential and improve their emotional health and well-being. It also demonstrates that the school cares and makes clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will be challenged.

Overarching the school community should be an effective governing body who at all times acts in the best interests of their learners and ensures effective policies are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

All Denbighshire schools are expected to have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying with an effective school being proactive in its approach. This includes not only responding to mitigate the effects of bullying behaviour when it occurs but also teaching children and young people and training staff about:

- respect;
- positive behaviour;
- stereotypes;
- addressing prejudice;
- building confidence to recognise and challenge bullying behaviour; - effective relationships;
- resilience;
- problem solving.

All approaches should be in place to not only respond to the needs of the targets of bullying but also the perpetrator and bystanders, focusing on respect, responsibility, resolution and support through proactive approaches such as Restorative Approaches and Solution Focussed Approaches. Information from within the school's own community can also be used to guide strategies – for example, PASS (Pupil Attitudes to Self and School) Survey Data. It would be likely that schools are well placed to individually identify the most appropriate programmes and approaches for their own community.

It is also important that students are empowered to engage in anti-bullying practices and where possible generate their own ideas and take ownership of this area of work. Student-led practices are likely to lead to higher engagement and motivation of children and young people.

Engaging parents/carers

It would be expected that schools who successfully engage with and involve parents and carers in this area of work will have increased success in preventing and tackling incidents of bullying. Powerfully this would allow for students to receive consistent message about the area of bullying not being tolerated and consistency in how it is managed and addressed.

However, it is recognised that schools face a number of challenges in this area and despite their best efforts can find some parents hard to reach and engage. Despite this it is important for schools to maintain ongoing programmes of promoting engagement and encourage parents to speak to school at any time. This is often referred to as an 'open door policy.' Other examples of engagement may include:

- Class assemblies covering the area of bullying and highlighting students and parents/carers roles in anti-bullying work.
- Areas of the school website dedicated to the area of anti-bullying.
- Regular parent and carer forums/events where bullying can be raised and discussed.
- Information sessions/resources to raise awareness of bullying, types of bullying, impact of bullying, etc.

Many schools have now included events within parents evening, school open days, etc. where it is seen parents are already engaging.

It may also be considered whether schools within the same locality/cluster can work together to engage the community and share consistent messages.

Bullying outside school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises 'to such an extent as is reasonable'. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted upon. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be seen to be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.
In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Where appropriate it would also be expected that schools will share information with outside agencies to work jointly for the benefit of all children and young people.

3.3 Monitoring of bullying data and equality data

e Equality Act 2010 requires that all schools have a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP), the purpose of which is to fulfil their duties to promote equality for people with 'protected characteristics', and embed fairness and equality at the heart of their school community in all aspects of school plans and polices. As part of this it is expected that schools record incidents of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue.

All schools in Denbighshire are responsible for recording their own data of bullying incidents amongst their population. It would be expected that each incident has been investigated by an appropriate member of school staff to determine if it constitutes a bullying behaviour and appropriate action has been put in place based on the school's policy and guidance. Schools must ensure all information they record, maintain and monitor, complies with data protection laws, such as the EU GDPR and UK DPA 2018. Further clarification of this area can be found within the Welsh Government document: https://gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools – Section 11, evaluation and accountability.

Best practice would be for each incident to be recorded as it occurs and the SIMS recording system allows for this. Schools should also be regularly auditing and quality assuring their data so it can be used to guide practice regarding bullying behaviour within their population. The reporting of bullying incidents is considered a positive sign that children and young people have felt able to come forward and have a voice. Schools who regularly monitor this area are able to modify their bullying policies and practices to respond to trends and issues and take proactive steps.

Biannually (October and April) the authority will request bullying incident data from schools via the SIMS recording sheet. This data will then be collated by the authority. The categories under which the bullying incidents are recorded allow information to be collated in relation to prejudice-related incidents and protective characteristic under The Equality Act 2010. Categories also allow for the type and method of bullying to be recorded and when looked at as a whole, aims for schools and the local authority to be able to monitor patterns and prevent

discrimination. Data is not collated in a way that allows individuals to be identified by the local authority.

Schools who report no bullying incidents within their community may in fact have learners who do not feel safe to report or do not have or understand the reporting measures. As an authority it may be appropriate to challenge nil returns of incidents to ensure learners well- being and to request a report from the school of how they propose to take forward anti-bullying work within their community. Schools are also expected to include anti-bullying work and data within their annual report to their Governing Body, whose role it is to act in the best interests of their learners.

Recording of bullying incidents also allows monitoring of possible hate incidents in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. It would be expected that where schools believe a hate incident has been identified they seek advice from statutory services and/or North Wales Police to establish if the incident meets threshold for referral under the term hate crime and then act accordingly.

4. Effective anti-bullying strategies in schools

All schools, by law, must have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying within its community. This should be a separate anti-bullying policy but one which directly links to the school's behaviour policy and links to other relevant policies such as safeguarding, attendance, acceptable use of ICT, online safety, travel behaviour and exclusions. Head teachers and governing bodies will need to satisfy themselves that their policies comply with a number of key pieces of legislation, including:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991).
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 – which requires schools to draw up a race equality policy and ensure that policies do not discriminate against racial groups. It also places a duty on schools to 'promote race equality and good race relations'.
- Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) - This requires the responsible body of a school to make reasonable adjustments to policies, procedures and practices that place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled peers.
- The Equality Act 2010 - making particular reference to bullying on the grounds of pupil's protected characteristics within the policy.
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Act 2014.
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

While launching and successfully implementing a strategy requires the whole school community it would be recommended that each school appoints an Anti-Bullying Lead who is able to take on and designate roles and responsibilities for a policy to be sustained successfully over time through development, implementation, review, monitoring of effectiveness and ongoing development.

4.1 Anti-Bullying policy development

An anti-bullying policy should be drawn up in consultation with the whole school community; learners, staff, governors, parents/carers and partners in the community. An agreed policy should be short, succinct and written in language that everyone understands. It is goodpractice to produce a children and young person friendly version of the policy.

Welsh Government advice sets out key areas that would be outlined in an effective policy, most likely divided into clear sections that support the reader to fully understand the following:

- the vision and the values of the school;
- the school's definition of what is meant by bullying;
- why it is important to prevent and challenge bullying;
- how awareness of bullying will be raised;
- how anti-bullying work will be embedded in the curriculum rather than an isolated annual event;
- involvement of staff, learners, parents/carers and school governors in development and implementation of the policy;
- signs a child or young person might be experiencing bullying;
- how bullying will be prevented, including on journeys to and from school;
- how the school will respond to incidents;
- how to report bullying;
- what learners can expect;
- what parents/carers can expect;
- how incidents will be recorded and monitored;
- how learners and/or parents/carers can appropriately escalate the matter if they do not feel that their concerns are being taken seriously;
- how the school will evaluate and review their policy and strategy.

It should also be noted that policies such as anti-bullying should clearly set out expectations of learner's behaviour on and off the school site. Further clarification of this area can be found within the Welsh Government document: https://gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools – Section 6, behaviour and conduct outside of school and dealing with incidents of misconduct on and off school premises.

When a policy is implemented it is crucial that school staff feel prepared and confident to handle any bullying incidents reported to them – noting that it is often expected that reports increase when a new policy is launched. It is also important that staff receive ongoing training in relation to the policy and its procedures and it is included in new staff inductions. While general training of the area of bullying is important consideration should be made to implementing training that relates to protective characteristics and relevant legislation that feeds into anti-bullying work. With the overall aim being for staff to feel confident in taking a more pro-active role in the area of work.

Schools must also ensure a copy of the policy is available in a range of formats, according to the needs of pupils/parents/stakeholders, in order for it to be actively available and accessible to all, including those identified as difficult to engage.

4.2 Policy review

There is an expectation from Welsh Government that all policies should be reviewed at least every three years or sooner in light of new initiative or wider relevant policy change. This is likely to be overseen by the school's Anti-Bullying Lead but must involve wider consultation and engagement.

Steps to consider when reviewing a policy:

Step 1 – Working Group – including school's Anti-Bullying Lead.

Step 2 – Consultation – how effective is the current policy? Should include school staff, learners, parents/carers and relevant outside agencies.

Step 3 – Identification of strengths and weaknesses of current policy through information gathered in Step 2.

Step 4 – Making appropriate changes to the policy.

Step 5 – Pulling it all together and further consultation if needed.

Step 6 – Final draft and beyond

See Appendix 2 and 3 for further guidance on developing and reviewing a policy.

4.3 Learners voice

Since 2002 the Education Act requires all schools to consult with learners and Welsh Government supports this in stating it to be an essential step in all stages of anti-bullying work. Schools who encourage participation of their learners provide an opportunity for them to contribute to decision making over matters that affect them and provides them with a sense of belonging and ownership for matters within their school community.

Denbighshire's Estyn inspection in 2018 found:

'The authority places great importance on learner voice, ensuring that many children and young people take part in purposeful opportunities to share their opinions, concerns and ideas for improvement. This is enabling learners to have clear channels of communication in which to improve the authority's services and provision.'

4.4 Managing bullying behaviour

While effective policies and practice aim to prevent and reduce bullying behaviours as far as possible, it is recognised that bullying behaviour does take place and when this is the case the school's anti-bullying policy should clearly set out how they will be responded to. This is likely to include a number of steps:

1) All within the school community understanding and being able to access the routes to reporting concerns and feeling confident to do so.
2) Those who are informed of concerns feeling confident to respond and manage the situation. This may include seeking support from colleagues, providing reassurance to those who have reported their concerns and consideration of whether it is appropriate to involve parents.
   There is also a need for adults to keep up to date with trends and language of children and young people to allow an open dialogue, for example, if a student is reporting online bullying they are likely to refer to certain sites or apps used.
3) A quick response that prompts appropriate investigation by the most appropriate adults. It is important that those involved are allowed and supported to have a voice in this process and feel listened to.
4) Providing feedback to relevant parties and ensuring they understand the steps that have been taken to make decisions and what these decisions are.

5) Completion of relevant incident forms and recording and consideration of ongoing recurring patterns in relation to students, behaviours, etc.
6) Where appropriate implementation of clear sanctions.
7) Where appropriate implementation of interventions to support all those involved and to minimise ongoing behaviours.
8) Possible future reviews of the resolution and situation.

It is extremely important that staff members feel confident resolution has been reached and bullying behaviour(s) has stopped as this minimises the impact for all involved and makes positive changes for the future. It should also be acknowledged that resolution may take time for some parties and may require restorative interventions such as:

- Peer mediation.
- Small group work/teaching.
- Whole group work/teaching.
- Team building activities.

If felt appropriate school should seek guidance and support from outside agencies and are likely best placed to determine appropriate programmes themselves based on their knowledge of their own community.
It is also important to consider if the behaviours involved highlight a lack of understanding by those involved and therefore opportunities to teach and develop skills and knowledge are needed to prevent incidents occurring again. For example:

- A student learning how to set privacy settings on their devices or profiles to reduce the risk of personal information being shared or accessed.
- Development of an individual's understanding of appropriate use of language and appropriate terminology.
- A sharing of information for the community to better understand the differences of others e.g medical conditions, cultures, additional learning needs.

Managing any bullying behaviour effectively is extremely important to reinforce the school's commitment to promoting a safe environment for all.

5. Conclusion

This strategy provides a framework to promote Denbighshire's view that all children and young people matter and should have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential. Anti-bullying work will remain a focus of the authority and its key partners both in relation to its statutory duties and responsibilities and its overall view that school environments and communities should challenge and address any form of bullying, discrimination or prejudice.

5.1 Consultation of the strategy

To support the initial development of this draft strategy, consultation was carried out with representatives of Denbighshire Education and Children's Services.

On completion of a final draft of the strategy, an open consultation was held to gain the views of a wider audience and people who may be affected by its contents. The consultation was accessible through the County Conversation Portal. Two child friendly versions were also developed (primary and secondary) to gain the views of children and young people in Denbighshire schools.

100% of respondents felt the strategy:

- Gives enough information for schools to tackle bullying and embed a whole school approach to bullying behaviour.
- Communicates and promotes the importance of equality for people with ‘protected characteristics’ (e.g. disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity)
- Gives information and relevant examples to ensure all areas of bullying are explained clearly
- Gives enough information for schools and the local authority to work together to tackle the area of bullying
- Makes it clear that anti bullying work is an important area

100% of respondents agreed with the main objectives outlined on page 3 of this strategy and additional comments indicated that the strategy supports schools in ensuring everything is included within the school policy.

There is an expectation that schools will carry out their own consultation of any policies that they develop/adapt as a result of this strategy.

A Well-being Impact Assessment was started during the development stage of the strategy and revisited in March, 2021 prior to the above consultation. This will be revisited, if required, before the final version is published.

5.2 Monitoring of the strategy

The final strategy will be reviewed three years after the date it is published, or sooner if felt appropriate given updates in legislation or practice. The review will include the content of the strategy and liaison with schools to determine its helpfulness and impact on practice.

Appendix 1 – Key documents

- The Education Act 2002 – Section 175 (duties of local authorities and governing bodies in relation to the welfare of children). https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents
- The Equality Act 2010. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
- Welsh Government Guidance – Challenging bullying 2019 ○ Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for local authorities. ○ Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintain schools.
    - Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for parents and carers. ○ Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for schools. ○ Rights, respect, equality: Guide for young people.
    - Rights, respect, equality: Guide for children.

  https://gov.wales/school-bullying
- Inclusion and pupil support (2016). https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-05/guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf
- Keeping learners safe (2015). https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe
- Thinking positively: Emotional health and well-being in schools and Early Years settings (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/thinking-positively-emotional-health-and-well-being-in-schools-and-early-years-settings.pdf
- School Based Counselling Operating Toolkit (Welsh Assembly Government, Revised 2020). https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-06/school-and-community-based-counselling-operating-toolkit.pdf
- Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008: All-Wales Travel Behaviour Code Statutory Guidance (2017). https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/contents

Appendix 2 – Steps to consider when developing a policy:

Step 1 – Working Group

Form a group to move forward this piece of work and who can in the first instance agree the schools commitment to challenge all types of bullying. As far as possible the group should include a range of members from both the school and community.

It is important that conversation is started to ensure those involved understand the experiences of bullying. This may also include reviewing the schools PASS data to consider how safe students feel in school and speaking to those involved in incidents of bullying.

Step 2 – Agree a definition of bullying

This needs to be easy to understand and should set out clearly the behaviour that the policy covers.

Step 3 – Link to relevant documentation

It is important to consider what policies are currently in place within the school, the authority and nationally and how they will link. Consideration also needs to be made of relevantlegislation that must underpin the policy.

Step 4 – Prevention

Consider and agree the steps that will be taken to prevent bullying within the school community. It is important that the school adopts a range of pro-active and preventative strategies that not

only raise awareness of bullying but also keep it as an ongoing area of workand where possible strategies should build on current good practice. For example:

- The overall school ethos to ensure it is safe and successful for all and which celebrates difference and promotes inclusion.
- Ongoing development and teaching through anti-bullying being embedded within the curriculum.
- Support from outside agencies/professionals as appropriate.
- Agreed targeted approaches to be used when acts of bullying have been identified.
- A clear position on appropriate and inappropriate language used within the school community. For example challenging 'banter' and racist language and working towards an understanding of harm that can be caused to others if language is used in the wrong way.
- A commitment to ongoing staff training and development. - An annual anti-bullying awareness day.

Step 5 – Reporting

It is important that the whole community are aware they have a role to play in the reporting of bullying behaviour and understand how they can do this. Therefore the policy must clearly set out areas such as:

- Encouraging the reporting of bullying and promoting it as a positive step.
- Communicate to all a clear reporting structure.
- Promoting a transparent complaints procedure (it should be considered how this links to the school's complaints policy).
- Reporting methods that are accessible to all.

Step 6 – Response

Policy should communicate that it is the responsibility of all to respond to and manage acts of bullying and it is important that the policy communicates how this can be achieved and the support in place. Good practice already in place should be celebrated and any initiatives being used explained and highlighted.

It should be clearly set out what action can be expected if bullying is reported and situations when school may need to seek involvement from agencies such as Children's Services and the Police. This should also include an explanation of when and how information will be shared with parents and carers.

It would be seen as good practice to consider the response for the target, perpetrator and bystanders and wherever possible promote a proactive response that aims to make positive changes to the future of all.

Step 7 – Recording and monitoring

It is important that it is clearly set out how bullying data will be recorded and monitored to support the school's anti-bullying work. Reference should also be made to Local Authority expectation of a bullying data report being shared with them biannually and how information is shared with the school's governing body.

Consideration must also be made of how information recorded, maintained and monitored, complies with data protection laws, such as the EU GDPR and UK DPA 2018.

Step 8 – Evaluation and review
It is recommended that policies are reviewed at least every three years and are likely to be factored into the School Development Plan (SDP). The policy should set out how this will be carried out and who will be involved– See Appendix 3 for guidance.

Step 9 – Consultation of final draft
The working group should now be in a position to write a draft policy based on the steps above and should now carry out a consultation to be able to move it forward to a final draft.Consultation should include the school community and those affected by the policy. It is likely some changes may be made following consultation to then be able to move forward to the finalversion.

The school's governing body will need to consider and approve the final policy.

Step 10 – Sharing
When the final policy is agreed it is then important to consider how it will be communicated and shared with the school community and relevant parties. Particular attention should be paid to those who are recognised as hard to reach and also the style of communication to ensure it is accessible to all. It is seen as good practice to develop a child friendly version.

A launch of the policy may be appropriate and used as a celebration of the hard work of the steps above. It can also be used as a way of reinforcing its messages.

The working party may wish to continue with this area of work or consider its size and/or membership for future review work.
Appendix 3 – Steps to consider when reviewing a policy:

Step 1 – Working Group.
Form a group to look at the current policy. As far as possible this should include:

- Receivers of the policy – a young person and parent/carer if possible.
- Policy implementers – representatives from across the school staff.
- School's Anti-Bullying Lead.
- A member of Senior Leadership Team.
- A member of the community.
- The nominated school governor.

This approach could be done on a cluster basis if a number of schools are reviewing their policies at the same time.

Step 2 – Consultation – how effective is the current policy?
It is recommended that you consult with people who are implementing or receiving the current policy, to find out how effective it has been. Has it impacted upon on preventing bullying and dealing with incidents?
Key questions you need to answer –

- Does everybody in the school community know how to access the policy and are aware of its content?
- Do children and parents know who to contact if an incident occurs?
- How is the policy disseminated to different audiences?
- Is there a mechanism for students and parents/carers to give feedback about their experiences of the application of the policy?

Step 3 – Strengths and weaknesses of current policy through information gathered in Step 2.

Policy into practice:

- What has worked well and what needs amending?
- Is further consultation needed?
- Has there been effective data collection which can evidence reduction or changes in bullying incidents.
- Are staff implementing the policy consistently?

Step 4 – Making appropriate changes to the policy.

Having followed the previous three steps the school should now be able to evidence what changes need to be made to the current policy. Since the original policy was launched new legislative and managerial changes that have occurred should be considered and feed into the policy as appropriate.

The working group should review the current practices for:

- Reporting and monitoring bullying allegations.
- Informing parents/carers and police, if necessary.
- Short and long-term support for those being bullied.
- Management and support for those found to be carrying out bullying behaviour.

Other areas may include: Is there a need for staff members to be trained on new strategies or to update or extend training on existing strategies? Has the cost implications been addressed with regard to training sessions that will be required to enhance the effectiveness of the authorities anti-bullying strategy.

Step 5 – Pulling it all together and further consultation if needed.

At this stage a draft policy should be pulled together and published for the working group. It would be good practice to share the draft with both those who will be directly affected by it and also other agencies upon whose support the school would liaise with following reportedincidents of bullying.

Step 6 – Final draft and beyond.

Any input from the consultation period should be discussed and changes made as appropriate. The school's governing body will need to consider and approve the policy. A decision should be taken on when the next review of the policy should be made. The working group may want to recommend including dates for staff and governor training etc.

At this stage, the school needs to plan for awareness raising of the policy, its existence and its implementation. The working group may choose to disband or reduce in size at this point.