Anti-bullying in NAS Schools & Children and Young People's Services Policy - SO-0193

Document Title	Anti-bullying in NAS Schools and Children and Young People's Services Policy
Reference Number	SO-0193
Version Number	V1.1
Date of Issue	01 January 2010
Latest Revision	September 2022
Amendments	31 May 2023
Distribution	All employees
Owner	Director of Education
Policy Lead(s)	Designated Safeguarding Leads
Department	Education
Date ratified by board	March 21

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1. Scope

This policy applies to all NAS services that provide for children and young people where NAS has a duty of care.

2. Policy Summary

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff and volunteers working with children and young people in NAS Schools and Children's Services with an understanding of their responsibilities in preventing, addressing and intervening, to incidents of (or alleged) bullying.

It is based on principles of fairness, equality and diversity within all NAS services that provide for children and young people with sensitivity to potential inequalities related to disability, ethnicity, race, gender, age, religious belief or sexual orientation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NAS Safeguarding Children policy (SO-0189), the PBS Policy | Position Statement the NAS Positive Behaviour Support Policy (SO-0029), the NAS Supporting Behaviour in Schools Policy (SO-0030) and the Use of Restrictive Practices in NAS Schools and Services (SO-0039).

3. Introduction

Thirty-four percent of autistic children and young people (CYPSs) say that the worst thing about being at school is being picked on (Reid, B. (2011). *Great Expectations*. London: The National Autistic Society). Autistic children have difficulty 'reading' social situations and knowing how to engage in ever-changing social contexts. They find it hard to predict other people's behaviour and to interpret and/or infer their body language and expressions to guess what they are thinking or feeling. This makes it difficult for autistic children to understand other people's intentions and inferences and makes them often an easy target for bullies.

The Government has made tackling bullying in schools a key priority and the Department for Education (DfE) has made clear that no form of bullying should be tolerated. DfE guidance is set out in *Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies,* July 2017.

Guidance in Scotland is covered in *Let's Stop Bullying* in which reference is made to two support packs called *Action Against Bullying* and *Supporting Schools Against Bullying* which have been sent to all Scottish school

3. Legal Context

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

There are a number of statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures ought to be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

3.1 The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2015 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that "*bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy*." (The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014)

3.2 The Equality Act 2010

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three main aims:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

All schools are required to comply with the Equality Act. In addition, Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales, the Act applies to all maintained and independent schools, including Academies and Free Schools, and maintained and non-maintained

Special schools. Also reference to Admissions, Remission and Exclusion Policy (SO-0230).

4. Definition of Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. However it is usually defined as:

"Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or a group either physically or emotionally. Bullying is intentional and it often involves an imbalance of power. Most often, it is repeated over time" (Olweus, 2015).

Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance is that schools will wish to involve the whole school community in agreeing a definition of bullying that will be used in their particular school.

By involving children and young people, parents and staff in agreeing the definition, the school/service will secure greater buy-in for its overall policy and its strategies to tackle bullying. It is important in NAS that the definition is appropriately worded and accessible.

4.1 Reasons for Bullying

Bullying needs to be understood in a way that it involves a 'perpetrator' and a 'victim', and that a person may engage in bullying as a learned behaviour due to past experiences. Thus a victim of bullying may be a perpetrator in the future, or in a different environment. Successful intervention needs to consider bullying within the context of both: the perpetrator and the victim.

Stopping bullying and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging. Each school will have to make their own judgement about each specific case of bullying.

There is evidence that a substantial amount of bullying is fuelled by prejudice - racial, religious, and homophobic - and against children with special educational needs or disabilities or young people who are perceived as different in some contexts.

5. Types of Bullying

Bullying can take place between children and young people, between children and staff, by individuals or groups, face-to-face or indirectly via one of several cyber bullying methods.

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Bullying can take many forms, including:

- 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 rumors
- controlling or manipulating someone
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls
- on-line or cyber-bullying NSPCC (2015)
- on-line safety (Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

5.1 The Impact of Bullying

A single student who bullies can have a wide-ranging impact on the students they bully, students who observe bullying, and the overall climate of the school and community.

5.2 Bullying of Autistic Children

All NAS schools/services need to differentiate between children and young people behaviours that result from, or are associated with autism, and those that can be described as bullying. In order to be classified as bullying the behaviour should have the characteristics of being directed, intentional, wilful and meant to cause harm or create stress in the targeted individual.

6. Signs that a Child is being Bullied

An individual who is being bullied may display some of the following common responses:

- increased anxiety (displayed through increasingly obsessive behaviours; hand movements, repetitive questioning and statements or short temper)
- withdrawal
- aggression
- seeming over-sensitive or over-reacting to minor occurrences (being 'on-edge')
- seeking revenge, retaliation
- repeatedly exposing him/herself to the same kind of bullying situation. (Although the pupil may know it as a negative interaction, they may still consider this better than no interaction at all)

6.1 Helping autistic children and young people develop an Awareness of Bullying

An autistic child can be helped to distinguish between bullying and one-off incident or misunderstandings by teaching the child social skills through role-play, or through solution-focused social scenarios. Older children may benefit from multiple-choice quizzes, in which they are taught to select appropriate responses to hypothetical situations.

Some children and young people with an ASD may need very explicit explanations of bullying, and perhaps a visual reference (e.g. a list or set of photographs, DVDs or pictures) that illustrates the difference between scenarios that constitute bullying and those, which are less serious peer conflicts or misunderstandings. Other pupils may prefer written or spoken explanations – account needs to be taken of individual learning styles and communication methods.

6.2 Development and Implementation of a Whole School/Service Anti-bullying Policy

The DfE recommends that schools/services use the principles in the *Bullying – A Charter for Action* document to develop their anti-bullying policy. The Charter provides for a framework of self-evaluation and is reproduced in Appendix 1.

NAS Schools/Services are advised to use the following steps to ensure a robust procedure is in place aimed at ensuring on-going compliance with the policy:

- Discuss, monitor and review
- Support everyone in the school/Service to identify and respond
- Ensure that children and young people are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively
- Ensure that parents/carers expressing bullying concerns have them taken seriously
- Learn from effective anti-bullying work elsewhere

Details setting out procedures that underpin each of the above steps are reproduced in Appendix 2.

7. Management of the School/Services Anti-bullying Policy

It is recommended that specific responsibility for anti-bullying work is allocated by the Principal/Area Manager to a member of staff within the schools/services

management structure. (This could be the Designated Lead for Safeguarding (DSL).

7.1 Preventative Strategies

Should be based on the following principles:

- Effective leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Adopting individual positive behaviour support management as preventative measures.
- Use of curriculum/learning opportunities (Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship Education) can be used to draw out anti-bullying messages.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school/service calendar and at certain times of the day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year; and school assemblies).
- Engaging children and young people, as well as parents/carers/guardians in the process of developing the anti-bullying policy and promoting open and honest reporting.
- Reviewing the school/service environment. In particular looking at staff supervision patterns.

7.2 Anti-bullying Strategies

The aims of school/service anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful intentional negative behaviour.
- To respond to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the child or young person who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support.
- To apply corrective and supportive strategies to the child or young person responsible for the bullying and ensure that they can resolve and be equipped at their level of functioning about potential causes.
- Schools will be pursuing strategies that draw on a range of preventative, proactive and educational practices such as:
  a) participating in anti-bullying week,
  b) making informative links between behaviour and safeguarding.

7.3 Reactive Strategies

The most obvious reactive strategy is the use of disciplinary actions and learning programmes to deal with those children and young people who are found to be bullying.

Supportive strategies have three main purposes, namely to:

- Enable the perpetrator to become aware of what he/she has done
- Enable him/her learning different responses and decrease the likelihood of this pattern of behaviour to be repeated and
- To highlight the supportive ethos and philosophy for both the perpetrator and victim (or alleged victim) that bullying is unacceptable

8. Reporting and Recording Incidents of Bullying

Schools/services are advised to encourage children and young people to report bullying in confidence using appropriate methods. There should also be clear and simple reporting arrangements for all school/service staff and volunteers as set out below:

- A member of staff or a volunteer concerned about actual or suspected bullying should, in the first instance, raise the matter with their line manager. If deemed appropriate, by taking account of the severity of the bullying, informal strategies for dealing with the bully should be implemented and the situation closely monitored.

- If the concerns about a given bullying situation are more serious, or strategies used to deal with a bullying incident have proven unsuccessful, the matter should be referred to the named 'lead' for anti-bullying or, in that individual's absence the school Principal or Area Manager and the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in order to discuss and agree appropriate action(s).

- Any instances of actual or suspected bullying by a member of staff must be immediately reported to the individual with specific responsibility for anti-bullying and the Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (see the section headed 'Management of the school/services anti-bullying policy' on page 4, section 7).

All suspected or actual bullying instances should be recorded via the Safeguarding System CPOMS. Local procedures ought to be followed for any additional forms/information, according to schools' Safeguarding Procedures. Records of bullying will enable the school/service to:

- manage individual cases effectively
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies

- celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school/service
- demonstrate defensible decision making in the event of complaints being made
- engage and inform multi-agency teams as necessary

Also refer to NAS Positive Behaviour Support Policies, (SO-0029; SO-0030) and Use of Restrictive Practices in NAS Schools and Service Policy (SO-0039)

9. Supporting the Victim and the Perpetrator of Bullying

It is essential that all individuals who have experienced bullying are provided with timely and appropriate support. This may include one or more of the following:

- active listening
- advice
- assertiveness training
- introducing a named child/ staff member to provide appropriate support

Furthermore, should support be provided, it is important to take into consideration the impact within the family/carers of the child and relevant and appropriate support be available.

9.1 Staff Professional Development

NAS Schools/services should routinely review general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development and identify how to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice. Where specific training needs have been identified for particular members of staff, the Principal must ensure that those members of staff have access to the advice, training and development opportunities appropriate to their needs.

9.2 Monitoring & Review

Evaluation and review of the policy ensures that it remains responsive to changing needs while continuing to protect the children and young people who use our services. This policy will be reviewed and revised in consultation with other NAS services and schools.

Resources

- Hazelden Publishing offers a variety of materials to enhance your knowledge about bullying and other safety concerns.

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Anti-Bullying Alliances- http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/schools-and-teachers

References:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE, September, 2021)
- DfE (2021) Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges – Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads.
- Department for Education (2017) – Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies / Charter for Action
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 – (Into force ISS, 2015)
- Let's Stop Bullying (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1999/10/StopBullying)
- Reid, B. (2011). *Great Expectations*. London: The National Autistic Society
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 2015
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children & Families Act 2014
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Accessed at: http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying.page, 2015)

Other relevant policies and guidance

- Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy – (SO-0189)
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy – (SO-0029)
- NAS Supporting Behaviour in Schools Policy (SO-0030)
- Anti-discrimination, Anti-harassment Policy – (SO-0231)
- Online Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy – (SC-0030)
- MCB Training and Implementation Framework - SO-0039-007-0918
- Use of Restrictive Practices (RPIs) in NAS Schools – SO-0039

Appendix 1

Bullying - a Charter for Action

Name of School _____

Name of Local Authority _____

We are working with staff, children and young people and parents to create a school/service community where bullying is not tolerated.

Our school/service community

- Discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis. Good practice suggests the policy should be reviewed, on average every two years.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- Ensures that children and young people are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that they feel safe; and that children and young people abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Reports back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school/service to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilizes the support of the LA and relevant organisations when appropriate.

_____ Chair of School Governance Group SGG)

_____ Principal/Area Manager

_____ Children's Representative

_____ Date

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Appendix 2

Ideas for schools/services to consider

To assist schools/services in drawing up their anti-bullying policy, the Department for Education has issued revised guidance to schools entitled **'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (2017)**, as well as advice and materials on prejudice-driven bullying and cyberbullying. In addition, we recommend schools/services use the following prompts when determining and evaluating their policy.

Discuss, monitor and review:

- Do we hold discussions on bullying and its definition, involving staff, children and young people, and parents?
- Do we keep a record of the incidence of bullying, according to our agreed definition, and analyse it for patterns – people, places, groups?
- Do we ask ourselves what makes an anti-bullying school/service?
- What is our school/service doing to ensure that our children and young people do not feel vulnerable and are safe?
- Do we celebrate our successes and draw these to the attention of parents/carers?
- *Support everyone in the school/service community to identify and respond*
- Do we work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying (including all those listed in the 'Safe to Learn' guidance), as well as different methods of bullying, such as cyber-bullying.
- Do we actively provide systematic opportunities for developing children and young people's social and emotional skills to reduce bullying?
- Have we considered all the opportunities where the different sorts of bullying can be addressed – through the curriculum/activities; through displays; through the School/service Council; through peer support; and through teaching about online safety?
- Do we create 'special safe spaces' targeted at vulnerable children and young people? Do we train lunchtime staff, learning mentors, LSU staff, volunteers and others to identify bullying and follow policy and procedures on anti-bullying?

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Ensure that children and young people (CYPs) are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively

- Do we regularly canvass children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying? Do we ensure that young people know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying?
- Do we involve children and young people in anti-bullying campaigns?
- Do we demonstrate that we are aware of the power of peer support? Have we created and publicised schemes of peer monitoring or counselling; buddying or mediation, for example?
- Do we include the phone numbers of helplines in the school's/services planners?
- Do we have an anti-bullying notice board?
- How else do we bring anti-bullying measures to children and young people's attention
- What role does our School/Student Council already play in our anti-bullying policy? How might that involvement be enhanced?
- Do we offer sufficient support to children and young people who have been bullied?
- Do we work with children and young people who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have?

Ensure that parents/carers expressing bullying concerns have them taken seriously

- Do parents know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying?
- Do parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively?
- Do we work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school/service gates that give rise to bullying?

Learn from effective anti-bullying work elsewhere

- Have we invited colleagues from other services or schools with effective anti-bullying policies to talk to our staff?
- Have we involved local experts or the voluntary sector in any way?

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