

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Involving governor and parents in updating anti-bullying policy

How Our Lady's Catholic College involved the governor and parents in updating their anti-bullying policy

Context of our anti-bullying work

At the outset we had no school governor for leading on the school's response to anti bullying, however realising how important this was on ensuring accountability and strategic direction we approached the school governing body and explained our work with the anti-bullying alliance UAB programme as well as it being a clear school priority. One of our parent governors who was interested in this area volunteered.

What we hoped to achieve

We wanted our governor to take the lead on anti-bullying on the governing body reporting to the governor's community committee. We specifically wanted this governor to take the lead on the parent/carer views as a crucial part of reviewing and re-writing the school's antibullying policy.

The action we took

- The governor and I had a number of planning conversations where we designed an electronic form to gather key advance information together with sending an explanatory letter to all parents to explain we were holding a parental forum to ascertain their views on the current policy and what needed to change.
- The governor chaired the meeting with a variety of parents and carers and we were able to discuss the existing policy in detail and we had a healthy and positive discussion which enabled us to adjust some sections and increase the detail on others as well as make sure that it fully met the needs of the targets of bullying in terms of support together with a strong consideration of their feelings in how the situation is dealt with and the need to keep them informed as the situation progresses.
- It also raised the question where the perpetrator of the bullying whilst may only be carrying out single incidents against a student they are also carrying out multiple single incidents of the same nature against different targets. We have subsequently been able to include cases like this within our policy.
- As well as this we included among other things sections on staff training, sanctions and review dates. It was made clear at the outset of the parental forum that personal experiences where a child of the parental forum member may have experienced bullying that individual cases would be dealt with on a 1:1 basis in private where time

allowed and if longer discussions were necessary then we would make appointments in school time.

Impact and outcomes of the work

We have been able to fully reflect the views of the parents and carers in the new policy. Parents and carers have much more ownership of the policy and as such have increased confidence in the school's ability to deal with bullying effectively. As a school leader it was beneficial to listen to the objective views of the parents and carers first hand. This information was relayed to the rest of the leadership team.

We are now better informed on parental views and will be able to hold similar forums at the interim reviews of the anti-bullying policy as we move forward hence making us more effective in highlighting any differences between policy and practice. Having a lead governor will also give us a clear strategic direction as well as monitoring our effectiveness on antibullying activity across the school. Anti-bullying response will now be a key agenda item at the governor's community committee which will feed back into the full governing body meetings.

What we have learned

Having a clear objective and brief for the governor allowed the time to be used to greatest effect. Having advance notification of parental views from the form allowed us to have already given thought to some of the issues raised in the forum.