

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Developing a new anti-bullying policy with the help of a school's Anti-Bullying Student Leaders

How Millais School developed their new anti-bullying policy with the help of the school's newly formed Anti-Bullying Student Leaders group

Context of our anti-bullying work

We began our journey with the Anti Bullying Alliance on the back of the return to school following the pandemic. Stakeholder surveys gave us an insight into how we were viewed as a school and our reputation for dealing with bullying was cited as a concern by our parents. The Anti Bullying Policy was due to be updated and so we undertook research into making the policy as robust and useful as possible. By using the Anti Bullying Alliance resources as part of the research we came across the United Against Bullying Programme and signed up straight away. This was in February 2022, and we made the most of the remainder of the year to review and modify the policy we wanted to put in place, however we also made the decision to commit to the UAB Programme with a view to getting recognition for the work we were about to embark on. By July 2022 we had the bones of the new policy and had thoroughly completed the initial action plan baseline – this was time consuming and, at times, hard to reflect upon areas that we did not have a positive experience of. But it was an invaluable process that meant that we hit the ground running for this academic year and got to work at the start of September.

What we hoped to achieve

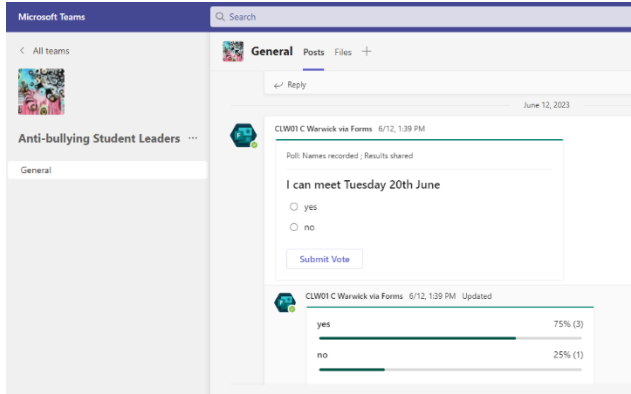
For this aspect of the project the desired outcome was not simply to update the existing Anti Bullying Policy but to ensure that it was a live and working document. We needed all members of our community to be able to engage with it and therefore we needed to hear the voice of the students and parents who may need it to inform the re-writing of the policy.

The action we took

To address the need for a small student group to help me with writing the new policy, I used a series of whole school assemblies to draw attention to our Anti Bullying project and invite anyone who wanted to join me to complete a quick application form. To ensure that we would be able to invite a range of students who represented key characteristics within the community as well as look for a mixture of year groups and experiences, students were asked to briefly explain why they wanted to take part.

As a result, we formed the Anti Bullying Student Leader group of 7 students who are still actively engaged and looking forward to the next part of the project in the new academic year.

Here is a screenshot of our Team specifically for us to communicate through to keep us organised:



Similarly, parents were also invited to take part and give their feedback. Information and updates about our work with the Anti-Bullying Alliance have been shared throughout the process so far and we have invited parents into school to attend sessions regarding issues we know to be areas of concern, in particular, online bullying.

In response to an event we hosted about cyberbullying and online safety and in order to gather the voice of our parents but take into account their busy lives we developed an online form that was emailed out to a cross section of the parent body inviting them to respond remotely about aspects of the event which was then used to inform our policy.

Here is a link to the form (which also had branching for students and staff):

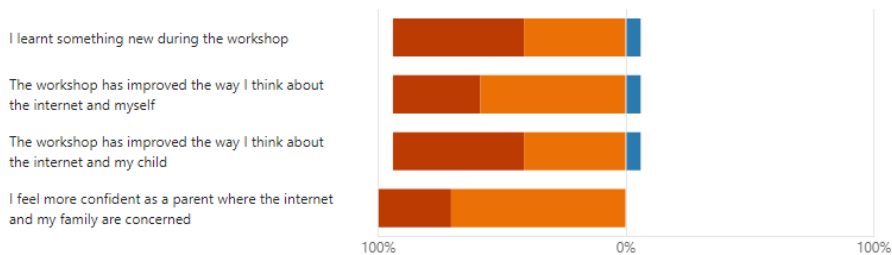
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=F8ora-u3WkWBk94xFwVnfvBDTIK6sdBuE6YW9NbzgdUNlpTN01QQUZSWkdHR0hXOTRXRzRVTFpWRc4u>

An illustration of some of the feedback is here:

8. As a parent of the school please let us know how you feel about the following statements

[More Details](#)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



Very importantly we listened to feedback we received face to face from parents that we had invited in as part of an anti-bullying investigation. These conversations were incredibly useful as it was a real-life example of applying the policy and having to review and modify it at times to ensure we were doing our best for all parties involved.

School staff and the governing body have also received training and updates and each time we have investigated a bullying situation we have tested the policy to ensure that it works to provide a framework to use throughout the scenario.

Impact and outcomes of the work

We have a new Anti-Bullying Policy that is available in a format that can be used with the immersive reader technology and translated into any language the reader needs.

The Student Leaders proof-read the document and made changes to the types of words and descriptions used so that, rather than having a child copy and an adult copy, we have a single document that has a clear and powerfully clear message about how we define bullying, what we do to stop it, how we investigate it and what happens to those that are involved in a bullying situation.

The fact that the Student Leaders had the opportunity to feed into the document, make changes and suggestions, has given them some ownership of the policy and this has made their role more significant within our Anti-Bullying Programme.

Now that we have a policy in place that is live and active, we have already started looking to the new academic year to plan activities for the student body and the school as a whole to reinforce our anti bullying message as well as raise it's profile to all students, not just those that unfortunately have had experience of being involved in a bullying situation. The message is very much about standing up to bullying, calling it out and making our school the best it can be.

The intention is to see less incidents happening over the next year or so, ensuring that students feel safe and happy to report anything that makes them feel unsafe, knowing that it will get dealt with. Ideally if we can get students to report the smaller concerns they will not grow into the bigger concerns.

What we have learned

The biggest thing I think we have learnt is that writing and embedding a new policy is time consuming and whereas you want to get the new policy up and running quickly it has been so worth taking the time to work with the Student Leaders and hear parental views too. During the interim period of having the draft policy and picking up some key investigations in school the policy feels like it is well informed and meets the criteria of being a live and useful framework.

Although we carried out a lot of research of other Gold Standard school AB Policies, it was really important to make sure ours was tailored to the school itself and reflected the needs of the students and parents.

Making useful links to the Behaviour Policy and SEND Policy has been important too. One aspect that, on reflection, has been a really powerful tool is explaining to parents and students that the reason we are working to become an United Against Bullying school is because we are responding to concerns we were made aware of and that it was felt that as a school; we were not as good as we wanted to be in dealing with bullying. This has opened up a discussion, especially with parents that have been invited into the school because their child has been involved in a bullying situation, to explain how we view a bullying situation and how we deal with it. There is a new level of openness about why we put in place the actions and sanctions and a better understanding and great support from parents. The development and use of an Investigation Document has been a very handy way of setting this out too.