

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Increasing understanding of what bullying is and how it's dealt with

How [School] increased the whole-school community's understanding of bullying and its consequences

Context of our anti-bullying work

[School] is a mainstream secondary school. Prior to this year, students had not been engaged in any substantial way with our anti-bullying policy or anti-bullying week. Although the policy has always been available via our website, students were not clear on what is likely to be done if bullying is reported, or whether school staff will be involved if bullying happens off site.

What we hoped to achieve

Increase student understanding of what bullying is, what is likely to happen when bullying is reported, and that school staff are likely to be involved if bullying happens off site. Raise the profile of Anti-Bullying Week and increase our repertoire of activities to prevent bullying.

The action we took

The Anti-bullying Ambassadors read and annotated the current [School] policy and compared it with policies from other schools that we found online. They also looked at a variety of student-friendly policy documents from other schools that we could find online. They highlighted what information they felt students need to know: what is bullying; what are the protected characteristics; what happens if students report bullying; who to speak to if you want to report bullying. They decided on a layout that looks appealing and is practical for printing, then drafted the document and repeatedly reviewed and improved it. The final document was converted to a PDF and attached to a weekly briefing to all parents/carers, then emailed to all students and provided as paper copies to all form tutors, to have copies in form rooms. A form-time activity PowerPoint slideshow was produced, which form tutors used to explain the policy summary to students.

Impact and outcomes of the work

Students, parents/carers, and staff use the same definition of bullying more consistently. More students are aware of the Anti-bullying Ambassadors and who they are. More students and parents/carers are aware that school staff can become involved if bullying happens off-site. Students are aware that they can report bullying to any member of staff or the anti-bullying

ambassadors. There is more awareness of what might happen when bullying is reported. We have a simple summary to give to students if they are stating that they are being bullied but are unwilling to report details, as well as asking Anti-bullying Ambassadors to offer them support.

What we have learned

It took a long time for the Ambassadors team to agree on wording that was not condescending to secondary students but would be understandable by all students. Staff guidance was also needed. The final document has been well received, but we need to continue to raise its profile.