

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Responding to results of questionnaire

How Bassingbourn Village College responded to results of their questionnaire

Context of our anti-bullying work

In October 2021 we completed a whole school survey which 475 of our 672 students completed. It indicated that almost 36% of our students felt there was bullying happening within our school and 34% felt that as a school we were not very good at dealing with bullying. This was obviously very disappointing and we acknowledged that we needed to address this.

We wanted to better understand the outcome of this questionnaire so through Mentor time sessions started to explore students understanding of the term 'bullying', we used Anti-Bullying week as an opportunity to explore this and all our Mentor groups discussed their understanding of the term bullying and worked collaboratively to create key words that explained the difference between 'bullying' and one off incidents of unkindness. It was through these sessions and feedback from students that we identified a real variation in students understanding of what bullying actually is and it was this that encouraged us to initially prioritise ensuring the whole school community had a clearer and agreed understanding of the term bullying, could identify incidence of bullying and understood how to respond to bullying.

What we hoped to achieve

For the whole school community to have an agreed definition of bullying and greater confidence that action would be taken if allegations of bullying were made.

The action we took

- During AB week all mentor groups discussed – 'what is bullying', and Mentors feedback responses in a pastoral meeting. (Example PPT for Year 9 attached to action plan review).
- During AB week we led a session reviewing age appropriate scenarios discussing whether these incidents were bullying or not and considering responses to these.

- SLT and Governors reviewed the student survey, student feedback from Mentor sessions and staff feedback and agreed that our current Antibullying policy which was held within our 'expectations for learning policy', needed greater clarity so that everyone had a clear definition of bullying but also a clearer understanding of the actions that need to be taken in response to an allegation of bullying.
- It was agreed that we should start the UAB programme to focus our thoughts and help us consider what steps needed to be taken to ensure that students and the entire school community felt that incidents of bullying were lower and felt confident that school would deal with incidents appropriately.
- We recruited a team of AB Ambassadors who completed the Diana Trust Award training in Feb 2022 to ensure we had continued student voice driving change. Their first task was to review our draft policy and feedback to SLT any amendments or thoughts/additions they had. They then developed their own strategy.
- We emailed parents our initial draft policy and asked key questions requesting contributions – we welcomed responses and found real value to this process. We have included an example of a parental response.
- We created an entirely new 'Preventing Bullying Policy', that incorporated the key contributions our school community made and utilised the expert advice of the Anti-bullying alliance. This policy was ratified by Governors and then shared with students (through an assembly and posters across the College) and parents (through the school website, specific parent mailing and accessible video).
- We delivered a staff training session in April to update staff on the aspects of this policy to ensure everyone had clarity around the definition and actions that would need to be taken to ensure a clear and consistent approach to any allegation of bullying.
- We supported this work with a 'curriculum day' for Years 7, 9 and our AB Ambassadors, on April 21st and 22nd. During this day Years 7 and 9 were off timetable all day supported by the Year 10 AB ambassadors and used our new policy to create a schools 'anti-bullying charter'. They also all watched a fantastic anti-bullying theatre in education piece delivered by HyperFusion called 'boy'. We selected a theatre production based on homophobia in direct response to the student survey feedback which indicated that this was a specific area of concern for bullying within our school.

Impact and outcomes of the work

- The work as detailed above provided us with an opportunity to ensure that the importance of this topic was bought to the forefront of everyone's minds. We haven't yet completed our own whole school survey – this is not due until the first week of July so this is slightly disappointing as we have prioritised this over the AB one as we started with this but we are hopeful that students will feel more confident in the

schools responses to any allegations of bullying and await the data on this to inform any next steps.

- All staff are now confident in their responses to managing allegations of bullying – refer to google form.
- Students have all experienced a variety of opportunities to understand what is meant by bullying and how to respond hopefully leading to students feeling more confident that issues will be dealt with but also better able to identify these.
- Students in year 7-10 shared with the AB governor that they felt confident that the school had 'clear procedures', in place to deal with bullying.
- 100% of Year 7 and 9 students shared that they knew where to go if they were being/witnessed bullied or how to report to someone through a survey completed at the end of the curriculum day.
- We hope that we will be able to continue to build on this work and understand that this is just the start.

What we have learned

In June 2022 our Anti-bullying governor met with a group of students to explore and review the work we have done to date and the outcome of these discussions indicated that there is still much work to do in ensuring that students feel confident that we are acting on student feedback.

Whilst we feel that we have taken onboard their thoughts and acted on these we need to now consider how we are making this visible to the masses so that all of our students feel confident that appropriate actions are taken in any incident of alleged / bullying.