

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Developing a reporting and recording system

How Lincoln Minster Prep School developed a reporting and recording system

Context of our anti-bullying work

When we looked at our ways of preventing and reducing possibilities of bullying, one area we felt could be improved was how we identify patterns with pupil behaviour before they have chance to escalate. Whilst the pupils in Reception – Year 2 have the same class teacher, they do have specialist teachers for PE, music and Spanish, as well as some science. In Year 3, they have an increased number of specialist teachers. By the time they get to Years 4 – 6, most of their lessons are with subject specialists and they move to different lessons around the school. For all year groups, there are lunchtime supervisors, play supervisors, crèche staff. Whilst certain behaviour patterns identified, discussed and necessary action taken, we wanted to make sure that all instances were recorded and monitored. With having so many staff involved with the classes, we needed to ensure that nothing got missed and we could look for patterns to ensure we could deal with and support pupils' behaviour before it escalated further. This also includes incidents that the pupils report to staff. It is often the case something happens at playtime or in a lesson led by a specialist teacher where it is reported to the staff there. Whilst staff are efficient at passing the information onto the form or class teacher and dealing effectively with the incident - it is not always recorded.

What we hoped to achieve

Is a centralised reporting system that logs concerns on individuals or groups of children that is reported by staff, pupils or parents. The child concern forms can then be used to efficiently and effectively to look for patterns of behaviour amongst the pupils that can be actioned and targeted if needed. The project aims at preventing behaviour that could result in bullying if not identified early and targeted sessions for individuals or groups - often with parent involvement too.

The action we took

Once the child concern form was devised and accessible for the staff, staff received training on what to include on the form and how to access it. Alongside staff training there are clear guidelines on the importance of completing the form, looking for patterns and action to take.

We have also spent time as a team looking at the forms and discussing patterns, intervention and action to take with certain cases.

Pupils have always had a robust assembly and PSHE programme, whereby they are fully aware of the school ethos, expectations, values etc. They also understand the importance of voicing their concerns and how to do this. We have recently set up a listening ear programme to assist our anti-bullying procedures and support the mental health and well-being of our pupils. Pupils have been made aware that their concerns will be listened to, logged and necessary action will be taken.

Impact and outcomes of the work

There have been many positive outcomes. It has centralised all of the information we have and enabled us to look for patterns of behaviour amongst individuals, groups, classes and year groups. Staff have benefited hugely from having access to the forms as they know any concerns will be monitored and action taken to identify additional learning that may need to take place with certain children or groups. These forms are monitored by class and form tutors and overseen by the anti-bullying leads – the head and deputy head teacher. It has allowed us to target specific work with certain pupils and even identify areas of learning that need developing further across the school that have been built into assemblies and PSHE sessions.

For one particular pupil, we identified a trend with the comments he was making and the children they were made to. As they were recorded on the form by different members of staff, it builds up a picture of this child's behaviour that may have taken longer to identify. Children for concern (either behaviourally or academically) are always discussed at staff meetings, but a lot of the incidents recorded on their own would not have triggered this pupil being raised necessarily. The result was that the child was involved in some restorative work – alongside some of the other pupils in the form. Parents were invited in to discuss their behaviour patterns and have been working closely with the school to help the child with social skills and emotional regulation. All staff are aware of the process and can support the child. Other pupils within the form have also been given additional sessions as we identified certain behaviours they were displaying as triggers for this child's behaviour. This approach has helped to reduce any behaviour that could have escalated further and may have resulted in a reportable bullying incident. This is just one example, there are more that have followed a similar pattern and we are delighted with the outcomes.

Over the next year, as the forms continue to be used, we expect to identify further areas of PSHE that require more focus, to see a reduction in behaviour patterns that could lead to bullying claims and a continued more robust system that supports prevention of bullying across the school.

What we have learned

This is a system we would have benefited from having in place before this year! It really is a simple system that allows us to proactively identify patterns of behaviour amongst individuals and year groups. It will be used effectively moving forward to monitor any signs of behaviour that could escalate. It has helped us to review our entire reporting and recording system and look for areas aside from reporting incidents that may need re-developing and modifying. A very positive outcome and learning journey.