

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Improving response to reported bullying

How Southchurch High School improved their response strategies to reported bullying

Context of our anti-bullying work

In the Ofsted inspection, March 2022, the following comments were made regarding behaviour:

- 'Some pupils have serious concerns about bullying, harassment and discrimination and feel that it happens on a regular basis. Some do not feel confident to speak out as they feel it will just keep happening, so are quietly accepting of it. Leaders need to establish a culture where pupils understand why this is wrong, feel confident to speak out and treat each other with respect.'
- Behaviour is dealt with inconsistently across the school. Pupils feel that the behaviour of some makes it hard for them to learn. Others feel that they react badly because some teachers shout at them. Leaders need to secure a climate of good behaviour and mutual respect across the school, where disruption to learning is not tolerated.'
- In June 2022 a QR Code was launched to ensure that students had a safe and effective means of communicating concerns.
- In June 2023, it was noted that, 'many more pupils use the anonymous reporting systems to let staff know if they have a worry or concern.' The QR code was still in force and despite its promotion in the planner, assemblies and during tutor time, reports have reduced somewhat. Students appeared far more comfortable reporting concerns in person, supported the report which noted, 'most pupils trust you and your team to sort out any issues of prejudicial language or bullying.'
- In November 2023, the Ofsted report noted, 'Pupils have a growing trust that adults will sort out any of their issues or concerns for reasons bullying or if others use hurtful language. As a result, pupils feel much safer in school. There are a range of adults that will help pupils should they need it.'

What we hoped to achieve

We hoped to allow students an easy and effective means of reporting bullying. In addition, we wanted students to believe that they were listened to, and bullying was dealt with effectively.

The action we took

We aimed to respond to all concerns within 24 hours. On 23rd February 2023 a concern was raised. The incident was in fact reported by a concerned student, who was worried about his

friend. CW reported that bullying would occur under the guise of 'tackling' in football games which happened during break times. In this incident, CW had witnessed RM retaliate violently following a decent tackle, 'flawing' the other player, and then insulting him and humiliating him in front of the other Year 8 students. CW was tired of what he felt was bullying behaviours shown by RM; he had seen this on numerous occasions. He was also very concerned about the mental wellbeing of his friend GF.

CW felt that the most effective way to communicate this was the QR code and this was viewed by the Deputy Head who then forwarded the concern to the Head of Year and Pastoral Support with a directive that CCTV was obtained.

It was felt that the student accused of aggressively tackling was unnecessarily violent. Statements were sought from all parties and RM was sanctioned for the assault on another student and banned from the field for a period of time. CW, who had initially reported the incident, was informed that his concern had been picked up and was commended for being a good friend.

All parents were informed. RM has since been part of a Champions League Intervention Initiative where he can put his football skills towards a positive outcome in the form of points. It is made clear that violent conduct reduces the chance of individual reward and team reward at the end of the competition.

CW is now part of the Student Council.

Incidents on the field have lessened dramatically and more staff are deployed there at break times, as a duty point.

Impact and outcomes of the work

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What we have learned

Systems naturally evolve – we have noted that now, the QR code is used more generally to report wellbeing concerns rather than just bullying or concerns about bullying.