

United Against Bullying Plus School Case Study:

How Borden Grammar School adapted their pastoral curriculum to address issues of bullying and banter disguised as bullying at the school

Context of our anti-bullying work

Our school has a strong culture of positive behaviour and results for our students. However, there had previously been a staff view that bullying did not happen here which we needed to shift. There was not an emphasis on bullying within the pastoral curriculum, and the procedures for dealing with bullying required adjustments to ensure that it was being dealt with swiftly and seriously. There was a culture of "banter" and "the lads" when I arrived, and this needed to be countered with work around inclusivity, Banter vs Bullying, and healthy masculinity.

Student voice collected in July 2023 showed that there were clear issues around the Borden Values and protected characteristics.

What we hoped to achieve

- For students to be more understanding of the differences between groups of people.
- For students to be more in tune with healthy expression of emotions regardless of their gender.
- For students to understand that there is a fine line between banter and bullying, and to be able to identify the difference.
- To upskill and educate staff to ensure they understand that bullying can happen in any context, and to be aware of the different roles and presentations of this.

The action we took

As Assistant Head Pastoral, I created an action plan which covered a number of the areas above, including specific development of anti-bullying strategies. This was updated across the course of the year to show progress.

Staff have been provided with an extensive pastoral curriculum to teach to students during morning registration. This ensures that staff are being upskilled alongside the education of pupils around key issues. The pastoral curriculum focuses on 3 main areas; how we learn, healthy masculinity/wellbeing, and our school values. Throughout the year, students have received explicit teaching on topics including AEN awareness, anti-bullying, diversity, LGBT+, respect alongside others (see resources [here](#) and [here](#)).

Staff have also received CPD on protected characteristics to ensure that they were clear on our zero-tolerance policy for students making inappropriate comments about these.

Impact and outcomes of the work

We provided students with the opportunity to feed back about the pastoral curriculum. The results showed that students believed that the pastoral curriculum was having a positive impact on their knowledge of a number of different factors.

Longer term, this pastoral curriculum will continue to grow until we have different activities for each year group, which build their knowledge year-on-year. Whilst the themes will remain the same, it will ensure that by the time they finish Year 11 they will have a breadth of knowledge that will prepare them to be excellent citizens.

What we have learned

I was asked to speak at the UAB panel in November, to discuss the above and share our school's practice. My recording can be found [here](#), and my slides [here](#).