

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Upskilling all school staff

How Allendale Primary School upskilled all staff and ensure they had more confidence in dealing with pupil behaviour and incidents

Context of our anti-bullying work

Allendale Primary school is a small rural school with a high proportion of pupils with SEND, primarily, ASD / ADHD / Emotional / Anxiety related. Issues with behaviour at social times and forming appropriate friendships were prevalent after lockdown and some cohorts have missed out on developmental stages especially apparent in social situations where pupils would frequently fall out and not be tolerant or understanding of each other.

Staff were frustrated at having to spend so much time mediating pupil disputes and investigating incidents. We felt we needed a fresh approach to improving the behaviour culture at school and in 2022 we registered for the UAB programme and the Behaviour Hubs Programme.

What we hoped to achieve

- We wanted to upskill all staff and ensure they had more confidence in dealing with pupil behaviour and incidents.
- We also wanted staff to be confident that senior leaders will support all staff in dealing with behaviour and bullying issues.
- We needed all staff to be involved in responding to behaviour incidents in ways that were consistent across the school so pupils would gain an understanding that all adults would listen, treat everyone fairly and take appropriate follow up action.
- We wanted all staff to be aware of the definition of bullying and how some pupils would be more vulnerable and why.
- We wanted to upskill staff and increase confidence in recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns.

The action we took

At the start of 2021-22, we consulted with staff to find out their views about pupil behaviour and how we develop our approach. We shared the report from the EWBS Service and agreed that the starting point should be breaking down the school rules and discussing with pupil what these looked like in general school life. This was tackled over a half term in a series of assemblies, reinforced in PSHE and general work in class. This reinforced the rules in pupils and staff.

When we registered for the UAB programme, the definition of bullying was shared with all staff so they would have an understanding. Every member of staff registered with the ABA

and undertook the online training to develop their knowledge of all aspects of bullying. All new staff undertake this training as part of their induction. Our named governor also registered and undertook the online training and recommended the units to the other governors. Our lead Teacher met with Lunchtime Supervisory Assistants to develop recording and reporting systems so that teaching staff would know if anything had occurred over lunchtime.

We arranged whole school safeguarding training for September 2022 with our local authority safeguarding team. After delivering this, they set up a survey for staff to complete anonymously, to identify further areas for training and support.

We ran another whole school training session in May 2023 focusing on general safeguarding issues, the expectations of KCSiE, including child on child abuse and neglect. We invited the local independent pre school staff and leaders from youth club so there was a joined up approach to safeguarding for our local children.

Impact and outcomes of the work

There is now a consistent shared approach to behaviour and bullying incidents. We have developed our reporting procedures so that all staff know what and where to report incidents. All pupil reports are dealt with promptly so there is no residual feeling of anger or frustration in pupils which continues into lessons. Staff know the definition of bullying and can discuss incidents with pupils with increased confidence. In any incidents of bullying they will immediately report to the HT, (or DHT) who will investigate and take appropriate action. As all incidents are now recorded, we can monitor the data collection and identify any areas / times/ individual or groups of pupils involved and the category of bullying which is perpetrated.

It had made senior leaders more open in using the term bullying or anti bullying. It is not a weakness or indication that there is a bullying / behaviour problem in school, rather an acknowledgement that bullying can happen anywhere and it is the response and prevention measures which have high importance.

When we first embarked on the UAB programme and developed our approach, the reports of bullying significantly increased and staff were dealing with multiple incidents on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. Not all the incidents were bullying and gradually, as we did more work with the children and training with the AB Ambassadors, they began to lessen. The children are now much more active in developing approaches to bullying and being proactive in preventing bullying by putting on lunchtime clubs, friendship stop and planning and delivering assemblies.

We have seen a significant decrease in incidents of bullying in our second year of the UAB programme. The staff and children are now more aware of the definition. Staff record keeping has improved and is much more consistent.

It is important that the sharing of information and training is ongoing and it is inclusive of all staff, especially lunchtime supervisors and after school club staff.

What we have learned

We have worked as whole staff and pupils have been very involved.

The staff have commented that the training units have raised awareness of various bullying issues and vulnerable groups and the use of inappropriate language, such as homophobic, disablist, which before may have gone unreported and been challenged by an individual member of staff. This has meant that senior leaders have a more comprehensive overview of incidents and who is involved, which means parents can be involved at an earlier stage if required.

We still need to communicate more effectively with parents about the use of the word bullying – we have a parent report that their child is being bullied only for the child to say to them, "it isn't bullying, we fell out once." Our focus now is on developing parental understanding of bullying and ensuring that all parents are aware of our methods of reporting.