Anti-Bullying and School Attendance report.

Bullying is:
Unwanted behaviour that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. The behaviour is repeated or had the potential to be repeated and can be Verbal, Social, Emotional or Physical. (Developed by Stand Against Bullying, Bridgend).

The purpose of this report is to detail the work undertaken and the evidence gathered by Young Wales, in relation to the current Welsh Government's Anti-bullying and school attendance guidance. The report covers the range of activities undertaken since 2015. The evidence gathered from the range of activities identified in the report will be used by Welsh Government to help inform policy development with regards to revising 'Respecting others' anti-bullying guidance and the All Wales School Attendance Framework.

Young Wales is a Welsh Government funded project within Children in Wales, which works to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard by decision makers and Ministers. Young Wales works with children and young people from across Wales, engaging and promoting their participation in activities and issues that interest or concern them.
The launch of Young Wales took place in March 2015, in Powys. As part of the launch day, young people representing all the Youth Forums in Wales worked to identify the key issues that they wanted Young Wales to support them to work on. The issues identified were: -
- Anti-bullying.
- Education.
- Future Generations.
- Mental Health.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

From the outset, Young Wales has worked closely with and has been well supported by Welsh Government, particularly Kate Murray and her colleagues in the Pupil Well-being Branch. The Welsh Government have commissioned Young Wales to do specific pieces of work to engage with young people in order to seek their views of children and young people on bullying in schools and school attendance policies.

Initially the work to enable young people to have their voice heard in relation to anti-bullying was led by Young Wales Development officer Sarah Thomas. Sarah developed a range of work such as the anti-bullying ideas workshop, which took place in Cardiff in September 2015. 18 young people from forums from across South Wales participated in the day. An official from the Welsh Government Pupil Well-being Branch attended the Cardiff workshop to share the work of the All-Wales Anti-Bullying Leadership Group and to inform young people of Welsh Government activities planned for Anti-bullying Week 2015.

During 2015, Young Wales carried out surveys with young people to help shape the theme for Anti-bullying week, which will be 'Bullying is Everyone's Business.' The activities are aimed at schools with children and young people up to the age of 16 years, but young people highlighted that Further and Higher Educational establishments also need to be included in anti-bullying work, as bullying doesn't stop at school and young people still need information and support.

Young Wales continued to work with young people throughout 2016. At a meeting held in June 2016, with 15 young people from across South Wales, many suggestions, ideas and observations were put forward, based on either the experiences of those in the meeting, or reflecting on the experiences of others. Common themes were identified, but in summary most of the issues raised were in relation to how well bullying incidents are dealt with early on and the effects on young people when incidents are not handled well.

Comments from the young people included:

- Incidents are not dealt with consistently and often with no positive outcome.
- Schools and settings need to adopt a bullying definition that everyone understands.
- Bullying can often lead to mental health issues, this results in the young person being labelled with a mental health condition rather than identifying and dealing with the bullying incident.
- Bullying needs to be 'Stopped at Source' and not side lined and ignored enabling mental health issues to develop.
- Teachers and other professionals working with children and young people need to have training made available to them.
- Young people want adults and peers to understand how a person affected by bullying feels and recognise the impact it has on their lives

In early 2017, Young Wales launched a questionnaire during Anti-bullying Week, via Thunderclap, with the message #BullyingMakethechange. There was a 115% sign up to the campaign that had a social reach of over 248,000. The responses to the survey was used to feed into Welsh Government consultation on the redesign of Respecting Others guidance. Sarah Thomas from Young Wales met with Kate Murray of Welsh Government to discuss how children, young people can be included in consultations on the guidance.

In January 2017 the Young Wales Anti-Bullying Group met in January to start planning their workshop for the Young Wales Conference, which would be held in March 2017 in Cardiff.

The conference, which was developed and led by the Young People's Project Board, was designed to focus on the work developed in relation key themes identified at the start of the project. In developing the workshop on bullying delivered at the Young Wales Conference, Young Wales worked with young people from Stand Against Bullying (SAB) Bridgend and Carmarthenshire Youth Council to develop a workshop focusing on the review of Respecting Others Guidance. A total of three meetings were held to prepare the workshop.

The workshop was delivered four times to a total of approximately 120 young people at the Conference.

The workshops used a model of a hot air balloon to enable young people to explore five key questions in relation to delivering an anti-bullying strategy in Wales.: -
1. **Who needs to be on board?** Identify the people or organizations who need to support the project in order for it to go anywhere. Participants identified a wide range of organisations and partners including: -
   - Welsh Government and Policy makers, Mental Health Organisations, Charities,
   - School Governors, Head teachers and Teachers, Anti-bullying Officers, School Councils, and pupils.
   - Youth Workers. Local Councils, Police, Social Workers,
   - Young people and friends.

2. **What needs to be in place for the guidelines to take off?** Identify the factors and issues which need to be sorted in order for the guidelines to be effective. The issues identified by young people included: -

- School needs to understand that bullying is an issue and need to be accountable.
- Schools need to provide access to a safe facility inside school for victims to have some space to recover.
- Recognition of the difference between bullying & "banter", to be able to recognise young people suffering from bullying.
- Training for teachers on the guidelines and on how to manage bullying, as teachers believe bullies and victims are equal.
- Information for young person in a "friendly" vision, and on an App

3. **What is holding it back?** What factors are preventing increased awareness of the guidelines?
- No identifiable lead, no-one taking responsibility.
- Schools not being accountable, and reports not being followed up.
- Consistent and appropriate punishment.
- Lack of understanding, bullied victims don't want to speak out,
- Limited access to anti-bullying or support.

4. **What will really make it fly?** What factors will help the guidelines grow?
- Target younger children to raise awareness, and slowly integrate information into every day school life.
- Making people interested, with accessible bullying guidelines.
- Teacher training and access to more teaching assistants.
- Serious punishments.
- Counselling – accepting bullying is a problem.

5. **What might blow the balloon off course?** Identify the factors which could be problematic for the implementation for the guidelines.
- Teachers not communicating problems and not enough training.
- Need an identified person as an Anti-Bullying lead in schools.
- Teachers not having time
- Bullies may also need support as they also may face issues.
- Young People feeling embarrassed about bullying, and feel it is their own fault.

All this work was fed back to Welsh Government and promoted in the Young Wales Conference report. For more detailed feedback from the conference workshop see Appendix 1.

In the summer of 2017, Young Wales was commissioned by Welsh Government to build on the conference work, by working with young people to seek their views on revising the Respecting others guidance, and the Attendance guidance published by Welsh Government in 2011. Young Wales worked with young people in Bridgend and Wrexham to develop and deliver a workshop to gather the views of young people. The work was built on the work from the Young Wales Conference in 2017.

Two workshop sessions were planned for October half term, one held in Swansea and the second planned for Conwy in North Wales. Unfortunately, there was little interest in the North Wales workshop, due in part to youth forum staffing challenges and in part to young people being already committed to activities during the half term holidays. Following discussions with Welsh Government it was agreed that the North Wales workshop would not go ahead.

The workshop in South Wales was developed and delivered by three young people from Stand Against Bullying group from Bridgend. 20 participants took part from Caerphilly, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot youth forums. All participants were aged between 12 and 17 years of age. All the young people have been involved in anti- bullying work in their local service or youth forum. The purpose of the workshop was to ensure that participants views on how to help tackle bullying, to make them feel safe and identify the concerns that young people want taken into consideration on attendance at school. The workshop in North Wales would have been delivered by Wrexham Youth Forum.

The programme for the day is attached in Appendix 2.

Both workshop plans were developed to ensure that all the young people who attended were able to participate. The opening activities were delivered using opinion lines and discussion in pairs, encouraging young people to speak to someone they did not know to discuss the questions. All participants and adults in attendance had made name badges on arrival.

The participants, and support staff were then sat at round tables to discuss the workshop questions, and make notes, which were shared at feedback sessions held after a period of group discussion.

The morning workshop focused on Anti-Bullying beginning with a discussion around how bullying is defined.

Participants were asked to identify a definition of bullying in groups, the feedback from the groups identified bullying as:-

- Hurting others physically, emotionally or mentally, whether the action is intentional or not.
- Calling names and 'mickey' taking
- Hurting someone mentally, physically, emotionally & sexually, over a period of time.

In later follow up work from a workshop delivered to Caerphilly Youth Forum by Stand Against Bullying, identified the following definitions.

What is Bullying?

- Bullying is one or more of the following
  - o Public humiliation
  - o Degrading acts
  - o Verbal Abuse
  - o Cyberbullying
  - o Physical Violence
  - o Rumours
- Bullying is picking on someone
- A repeated action that makes another feel hurt or threatened that can include, physical violence, humiliation and verbal threats and insults.
- Singling people out for things that don't matter, e.g. colour of shoes.
- Bullying is when someone repeats an action multiple times that the targeted person doesn't want or like.
- Repetitive and something that can't be stopped
- Bullying is discriminating against, harassing and or hurting another person. It is usually mental, physical or verbal.
- A consistent name calling.
- Physical, verbal and emotional abuse

The Swansea workshop then looked at how schools deal with bullying with participants were asked about the ways that their school dealt with bullying. Feedback from the groups included:

- THEY DON'T!
- The wellbeing team give Young People the anti-bullying policy and also use a restorative process.
- Reprimand bully and help target find new friends.
- Deliver Assemblies to talk about bullying, and offer peer mentoring as support.

- The bully is put in isolation, suspended or permanently removed.

Having gathered information on current practice, participants were then asked for their thoughts on how they would want their school to deal with bullying? Responses included:
- Use more young people friendly methods for teaching anti-bullying strategies.
- Focus more on helping to socialise the target and work on supporting positive socialisation.
- Fully accessible and safe time out place for target, may be referred to as a wellbeing room.
- An independent person appointed to investigate complaints of bullying in schools.
- Teachers must be aware of school anti-bullying policy and aware of support options available and held accountable for delivery.
- Statements made by target should be recorded on video, as a lasting accurate record, rather that statements being written up by school staff.
- A designated teacher to be held accountable for follow up actions.
- Teachers to be trained to deal with bullying and how to consider target's feelings.
- Pupils should be involved in nominating school anti-bullying coordinator.
- Adults in school to be named and shamed if they do not follow up on actions.
- All school made aware of anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- More workshops in school on how to deal with bullying.
- Drop in sessions to support victims.
- School to develop and publish a flow chart to address the issues, identifying all the individual steps. See appendix 3 for an example of example of the steps and the people involved developed by Caerphilly Youth Forum.
- Local Authorities to publish information on the number of complaints recorded during the academic year.

Stand Against Bullying delivered a further workshop, using the same format with Bridgend Police Youth Cadets, which identified the following feedback.
- There needs to be a strong lead from Government.
- Schools should do more work about bullying.
- Improved communication with students who are being bullied.
- Teachers need more training and resources.

- Young People need help to build confidence and support their peers.
- Sanction the Bully, not the bullied!! Have the alleged bully moved and reprimanded rather than the target moved or kept in at break times.
- Promote anti-bullying all year around and not just in anti-bullying week.
- Teachers need more training on how to deal with bullying.
- Ensure that complaints are taken seriously by the school with external scrutiny of the outcome of the complaint.
- If someone is reported for bullying they should keep their name on record.
- More training and external organisations coming in to talk about bullying.
- Anonymous boxes for targets and people who see bullying to be able to report it and name alleged target.
- More PSE lessons with bullying information included.

The afternoon workshop focused on gathering young people's views on the current Attendance Guidance. The workshop opened by asking the following questions

What is good and bad about school?
Young people identified good things as: -
- Facilities and opportunities such as a drum room, social spaces, trips visits.
- Social engagement with friends, having a laugh, after school activities and home time.
- Teachers and lecturers who are passionate about subjects.
- Learning and education.

While Bad things identified included:
- School timetable such as double welsh,
- Pressures on young people of achieving grades, GCSE's and home-work.
- Busy corridors, Bullies, Uniforms and some teachers.
- Long days, the discipline system and travel time.
- No Wi-Fi signal.
- Alarm breaks
- Lack of imagination

The workshop then explored the question:
Reasons why people don't go to school?
Responses from the group included:
- Pupils are young carers and have responsibilities at home, or there are family issues that prevent attendance, including bereavement.
- Pupils experiencing mental health issues, are concerned that peer pressure in school is too great.
- Pupils are bullied at school.
- Pupils are being home-schooled or excluded.
- Getting to school is a challenge, due to lack of motivation, (Can't be bothered), lack of transport, too tired (may be playing on computer games).
- Family on holiday.
- Young people or family have hospital appointments.
- Young people leave home and parents think they are in school but spend the day elsewhere (Mitching).

- Pupils see not point in going to school, for example if parents do not work or do not encourage attendance.

The workshop then discussed the attendance codes set out in the guidance, and then discussed the following questions.

What should affect attendance?
- Tardiness, being late with no valid reason.
- Mitching - Young people leave home and parents think they are in school but spend the day elsewhere, and do not tell parents they have not been to school.
- Anything that can easily be controlled or addressed.

What shouldn't affect attendance?
- Being a young carer and having responsibilities for caring at home.
- Mental health problems.
- Study leave.
- Being bullied. This issue should have own category in the guidance.
- Attending counselling.
- Some holidays depending on situation, for example military family or parent has to take fixed holiday dates.

In what circumstances should a letter of attendance needed for?
- All religions activities.
- Activities that could affects your future career should be considered an approved educational activity.
- If it is in the pupil's best interest it should be approved.

What can we do to prevent low attendance?
- Prioritise certain subjects.
- Avoid spending too much time on core subjects.
- Offer more and more varied support in school.
- All adults in schools treating people with respect.

Children and Young peoples' recommendations for the revised guidance

Respecting Others – Anti Bullying Guidance.

1. Schools should have a safe room for pupils to use following an incident of bullying, as a space to calm down and gather their composure. The safe room could also be used as a space to discuss issues with a teacher.
2. There should be independent adults who are able to look at reports of bullying, speak to young people and make recommendations for action.
3. Schools should be able to provide a listening service for pupils to access confidentially.
4. Policies must have minimum standards to be able to monitor delivery. Young people report that there is significant variations in how schools respond to and address incidents of bullying. From young people's perspective some schools do address bullying incidents well, while others do not. Standards would support a more consistent response for young people.
5. Teachers and other adults in the school need to be held accountable. There should be a process for teachers and support staff to follow, if bullying is reported, so that the victim is aware of the process to be followed and feedback to the victim is compulsory.
6. Young people reporting bullying should be given a named person as their link and a date by which they will receive some feedback. This should apply whether the school or an independent person is investigating the complaint.
7. Pupils need to be told about and have access to their schools anti-bullying policy. Many young people do not know they have the right to see the school's anti-bullying procedures. Pupils should be included in revising and updating policies.
8. Young people, who are asked to write down the details of the incident, want to know what will happen to their information, who will see it and where will it be held. Where bullying incidents are written up, these should be viewed and given the status of a victim statement or impact statement. In discussion with young people an example was shared, where a pupil reported an incident to a teacher, who made a note of the pupil's concern, but at the end of the interview the information was thrown in the waste paper bin.
9. Teachers should have training on how to manage incidents of bullying, in line with the schools' policy, to ensure effective implantation. Updated

training should be offered on a regular basis and when policies are revised.

10. Young people want bullying to be seen as a safeguarding issue, and included in the school's safeguarding policies.

11. Young People remain very concerned that bullying is not seen as a hate crime.

12. Schools and local communities should agree how to manage incidents that happen outside the school grounds. Young people shared examples of where an incident less than ten yards from the school gate is seen as a community incident, while other schools will work with local community services to jointly address the issue.

School attendance guidance.

1. Young people found the coding system very confusing, and would like to be able to understand the system, and have the process described in young person friendly language.
2. Young people felt that there are inequalities within the guidance, for example pupils participating in sporting activities are coded as authorised absence, while absence to take part in music or other activity is not authorised.
3. Young people identified an example that where young people were going to an event as representatives of the school they were coded as an authorised absence, while other pupils attending the same event but as a representative of a youth forum or youth group were not recorded as an authorised absence.
4. Young people were fully supportive of the need to allow pupils who have had a long illness to return to school on a graduated return to build up their capacity and resilience.
5. Young people had identified in their workshop a range of issues that would impact on attendance, and should be considered and noted in the guidance. The issues identified include:-
   a. Being a young carer and having responsibilities for caring at home.
   b. Experiencing mental health problems.
   c. Authorised study leave.
   d. Being the victim of bullying. This issue should have own category in the guidance.
   e. Attending counselling.
   f. Some holidays depending on situation, for example if parents are part of the military, or parent has fixed holiday dates.

Appendix 1

Information gathered at Young Wales Conference 2017.

Hot Air Balloon.

1. **Who needs to be on board?** On the basket or on the people, write the names of the people or organizations who need to support the project in order for it to go anywhere, e.g. teachers, school governors, young people, workers, Welsh Government.

- Governments.
- Mental Health Organization
- Social Media
- F.A.B
- Accountability
- School Governors
- Teachers
- Charities
- E-mail
- Welsh Government
- Anti-bullying Officer
- Policy Procedures
- Youth Workers
- Young people
- Disciplinary Officer
- School Councils
- Lack of Support
- Friends
- Difficult to enforce
- Head teachers
- Local Councils
- Police
- Social Workers
- Employers
- CAHMS
- Policy makers
- Psychologists

- Psychiatrists
- Supervisors
- The bullies
- Pupils
- Therapists
- Family
- Community members
- Doctors / nurses

2. **What needs to be in place for the guidelines to take off?** On the balloon itself, write factors and issues which need to be sorted in order for the guidelines to fly e.gg resources, school staff being held accountable, some to be answerable to:
- Young Person "friendly" vision
- E-mail or texts
- School needs to understand that bullying is an issue
- Schools need to be accountable
- Internet access (app)
- Recognition between bullying & "banter"
- Training for teachers on the guidelines
- Recognition of people suffering from bullying
- Bullying box – promotion within
- Access to facility in side of the school
- Confidence
- More info about bullying from PCSO & Y.P
- Supervision officer in contact with the school
- Training for teachers to handle bullying
- Equal treatment
- Funding
- Visual options like video clips
- Teachers should always listen to the pupils
- P.S.E lessons on bullying
- Can approach police if needed
- More awareness on what bullying is
- More user friendly books
- Accessibility online/ social media

- Social media
- Awareness programmes
- People care when it's too late
- Something that is down on paper doesn't mean that it would happen
- People who haven't been bullied need to take into consideration of other people who may be already bullied
- Schools saying no funding to stop bullying
- Teachers believe bullies and victims are equal
- Teachers could doubt project
- Lack of belief that it will work
- More willingness
- Not a lot of punishment that works
- Regarding the guidelines, make it easier to understand e.g. App, video, presentation
- Making people understand others situations
- Effects of bullying
- Education
- Awareness of the meaning of A word
- Awareness of the types of bullying
- The teachers & bullies held accountable
- Positivity

3. **What is holding back?** Nest to the tethering ropes write factors which are preventing the growth of the project, e.g no support, no-one taking responsibility, schools not being accountable, not being followed up
- 1 on 1 with bully – with teacher (intervention.) Show bully he's wrong/ reduce bullying.
- Social Media
- Newspapers
- Chat shows/ subjects
- Public transport (school bus)
- Conferences
- Assemblies
- Be more strict about it – schools – on going problem
- Mix people who like each other more – less bullying
- Separate support session – with teachers – ongoing

- Guidance teachers – speak to them, problem, not always there
- Teachers don't try hard enough
- More of a stricter punishment – no more take – more action
- Lack of understanding
- Uniform code
- Teacher encourage bullied children to come to clubs – build teamwork – build confidence
- Not equal
- Funding
- Bullied victims don't want to speak out
- Courses for parents
- Loyalty
- No communication between people
- Teachers not following up counselling
- Promote children rights
- Interviewing people who have been bullied
- Make sure people know someone is there
- Limited access to the project
- Limited anti-bullying support
- In college – mentoring scheme – welfare officers – do their job!
- Social Media – anti bullying awareness courses – workshops – verbal communication – adverts – newspapers
- Lack of interest
- Not educated enough
- Some people think banter and bullying are the same
- Teachers accept bullying as a problem
- Long time to get help
- Good planning
- Too busy to do job properly
- All talk no action
- More resources outside school
- Lack of diversity

4. **What will really make it fly?** Above the balloon write factors that will really help the guidelines grow, e.g. enthusiasm, commitment, good planning

- Target earlier ages
- Awareness
- Slowly integrating it into every day school life
- Making people interested – Y.P (everybody) friendly bullying guidelines
- More teaching assistants
- Notice your being bullied
- Teacher training
- Bring more awareness to the issues people are bullied for
- Funding
- Serious punishments
- Counselling – accepting bullying is a problem
- Staff to adhere to it better
- Policies
- Enthusiasm
- Commitment
- Strictness
- Intervening earlier to be made accountable
- Motivation
- Resilience
- Sensitivity
- Organisation
- Sympathy
- Know the difference between banter and bullying
- Staff to stick to guidelines – enforcing the guidelines
- Drive
- Make support available
- Anti-bullying campaigns
- Follow the rules in school
- Be proactive
- Vocal
- Friendship support
- Teamwork
- Good planning
- Positivity
- Holism
- Inclusiveness

- Inspiration

5. **What might blow the balloon off course?** Either side of the balloon – representing the winds that could blow the balloon about – write down factors which could be problematic for the project once it is off the ground. E.g. continued funding, key people leaving, lack of confidence in school staff to do anything

- Teachers not communicating problems
- Not enough training
- Teachers not being involved
- No communication
- People leaving
- Not right person
- Not enough support
- Not enough lessons in bullying
- Need a direct person for Anti-Bullying
- Teachers not having time
- Lack of confidence
- Bullies and support – own issues at home?
- Not enough punishment for bullying
- Peoples attitude
- Stigma against bullying
- Not taking incidents seriously
- Young People feeling embarrassed about bullying
- Not wanting to talk about issues – might make things worse
- Schools not getting involved
- Lack of engagement from YP
- Racism
- People not being treated equally
- Not having correct information
- No staff commitment
- Lack of confidentiality
- Lack of resources
- Lack of enforcement
- Not being bothered to sort the problem
- Bully not being told off properly
- Lack of support on curriculums

Appendix 2
Young Wales Workshop on Anti-bullying & school attendance guidance.
31st October 2017.

Programme:
10:30am – 11am: Refreshments
11am: Introductions/ ice breaker
11:10am - Overview – purpose of the Workshop
11:20am - Anti-bullying workshop

12:40pm - LUNCH
1:30pm – 2:45 – Attendance workshop
2:45pm – 3:00 – Round up

5

- Police
- Head Teacher
- Children's Commissioner
- Childline

Appendix 3
Caerphilly Youth Forum

5 steps to talking bulling

4

- Head Teacher
- Head of Year
- Governors x

3

- Teachers
- Senior Staff
- Head of Key Stage
- Youth Workers

- Parents
- Year Head
- Teacher
- Trusted Adult x
- Anti-bullying Co-ordinator

- Peers
- Friends
- Parents
- Family
- Pupils
- Peer mentors
- Anti-bullying Ambassador

2

1