



# EAST RIDING ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY 2024

An anti-bullying strategy designed to take positive action in tackling bullying within the East Riding of Yorkshire.

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## Introduction

Children and young people are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding so they can live their lives free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Taking steps towards tackling bullying within the East Riding of Yorkshire is a collaborative and essential task to ensure that we have a kinder and safer environment for young people to grow up in.

Community VISION, in partnership with the East Riding Safeguarding Children's Partnership, the Behavioral Support Service, Safeguarding in Education team, Education Psychology team, and members of the East Riding Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Academy, have engaged with young people based within schools, youth groups and those who are electively home educated, to develop a new Anti-bullying strategy to combat bullying within the East Riding of Yorkshire.

This strategy is for everyone in the East Riding, including children, young people, parents and carers and all professionals across the sectors (paid or unpaid) working with children and young people.

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## Why do we need this strategy and what do we hope to achieve?

The East Riding Anti-bullying strategy provides an opportunity for children and young people's voices to be heard, and to ensure that what they tell us is considered and not overlooked when making important decisions that affect them in regard to bullying in the East Riding.

This strategy and action plan aims to provide guidance, training, and resources for all those working<sup>1</sup> within East Riding youth settings and places of education, bringing the consistency that is needed to support children and young people who are victims of bullying, as well as those who display bullying behaviour, in order to keep them safe.

Summary of aims:

- For children and young people to be seen and listened to in regard to their personal experiences of bullying and recommendations for change
- To co-create a range of resources with children and young people to tackle bullying
- To standardize training to tackle bullying for all those working with children and young people in different settings
- To provide guidance for all those who work with children and young people to follow and be accountable to
- To ensure consistency throughout the East Riding and promote best practice across all youth and educational settings
- To establish a culture that's pro-learning and pro-social in regard to tackling bullying

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<sup>1</sup> This includes people who volunteer in an unpaid role with children and young people across all settings.

- To help prevent bullying as quickly as possible
- To help tackle bullying in a more productive way

### What is bullying?

Although there are many definitions of bullying most have three things in common, these are:

- Deliberately hurtful behavior
- Often repeated over a period of time
- Difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves from, due to an imbalance of power, perceived or otherwise

All children can be bullied, yet evidence shows that children who are perceived to be 'different' in any way are more at risk. There are several factors that might leave young people at greater risk of becoming the target of bullying. Often these are linked to an actual or a perceived 'difference' that affects a young persons' status in peer groups or makes them 'stand out'.

These may include:

- having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- having learning difficulties or long-term health conditions, including mental health problems
- social choices, such as belonging to different social groups or dress sense
- religion/belief and/or ethnicity
- sexual orientation and/or gender identity

Schools and all public bodies have several responsibilities and duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to equality and diversity. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination based on 'protected characteristics'.

The relevant characteristics for services and public functions are:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality
- age
- sex, and sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnerships

These are important to consider when tackling bullying because learning to understand, tolerate and accept these differences will promote equality and inclusivity within the education system and make for a healthier environment for children to grow up in. This can also help identify victims of bullying and help prevent bullying from taking place, as bullying can take many as well as being more overt or more subtle.

### **The Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA)<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> [Anti-Bullying Week 2014 | Archive \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/).

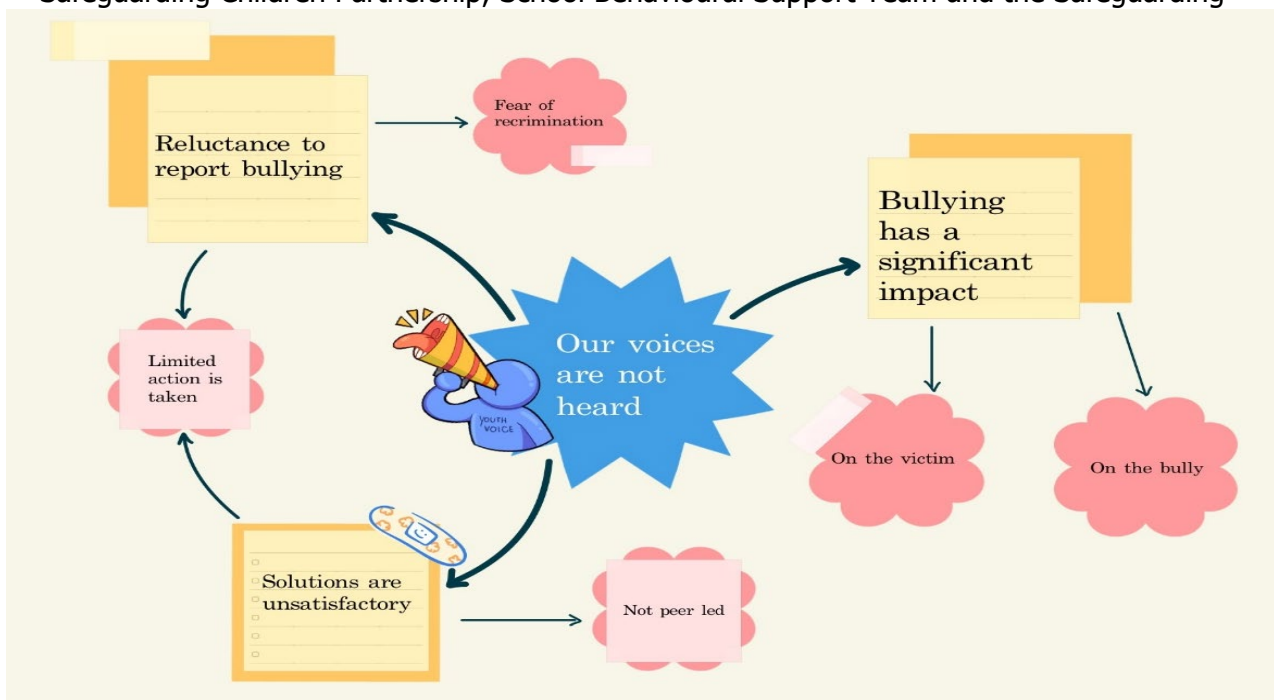
## What do different types of bullying look like?

- **Physical** – including hitting, kicking, taking, or destroying belongings
- **Verbal** – including name calling, insulting, mimicking, coercion, harassment, intimidation
- **Sexual** - including repeated, harmful, and humiliating actions that target a person sexually. Examples include sexual name calling, crude comments, vulgar gestures, unwanted touching, sexual propositioning
- **Emotional/indirect** – including spreading nasty stories about someone, shunning (excluding someone from a social groups), behaviour that might result in psychological harm/trauma
- **Cyber/online** – including mobile phone calls, text messages, pictures or video clips, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking websites, sharing private messages or communications
- **Prejudicial** – this type of bullying can encompass all the other types of bullying and is based on prejudices towards people of different races, religions, or sexual orientation, this type of bullying could escalate into hate crime, which is a crime, typically involving violence, that is motivated by prejudice based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or similar grounds

It is important to remember that bullying can happen anywhere and anytime, including at school, the park, at home, online, at work. It's often worse online because often you don't know who it is, and it can be more frequent. It also follows young people into their home and other potential 'safe' spaces.

## What have children and young people in East Riding told us about their experiences of bullying?

Over the last 12 months, Community VISION and partners, including the East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership, School Behavioural Support Team and the Safeguarding



[What is bullying? \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

in Education Team, facilitated several workshops with young people across East Riding, including working with local youth groups, secondary schools and young people who are electively home-educated, to find out more about their personal experiences of bullying and what they think works best to tackle it, as well as what they think doesn't work. This is what they told us.

Do you feel you are listened to when talking about or reporting bullying?

**“I was told off because I reported it to too many teachers”**

**“Sometimes you need to report it to several teachers before anything has been done”**

**“I have to get my parents to ring in and report it before anything has been done”**

**“Not always dealt with in a positive way”**

Do you feel listened to when you're talking about or reporting bullying?

**“I got angry and had to take matters into my own hands because it wasn't dealt with”**



**“Depends on which teacher”**

**“Not asked why I'm upset and was just told to ignore them”**

**“I feel it is not taken seriously enough and I get responses like ‘what do you want me to do about it’s.’”**

**“Not given enough time to calm down and process what happened, told to go to class when I'm still upset”**

What makes it difficult when telling a teacher?

**“Generally when people who bully often misbehave and get in trouble for fighting, but you also get the bully under the radar who keep a good reputation, so the teachers view them highly, which is why they get away with more bullying”**

**“People are asked about what happened and the most popular person is believed over you”**

**“If you tell teachers then they ring home and then you must deal with it twice”**

**What makes it difficult when talking to a teacher?**

**“Don’t always look at the bigger picture”**



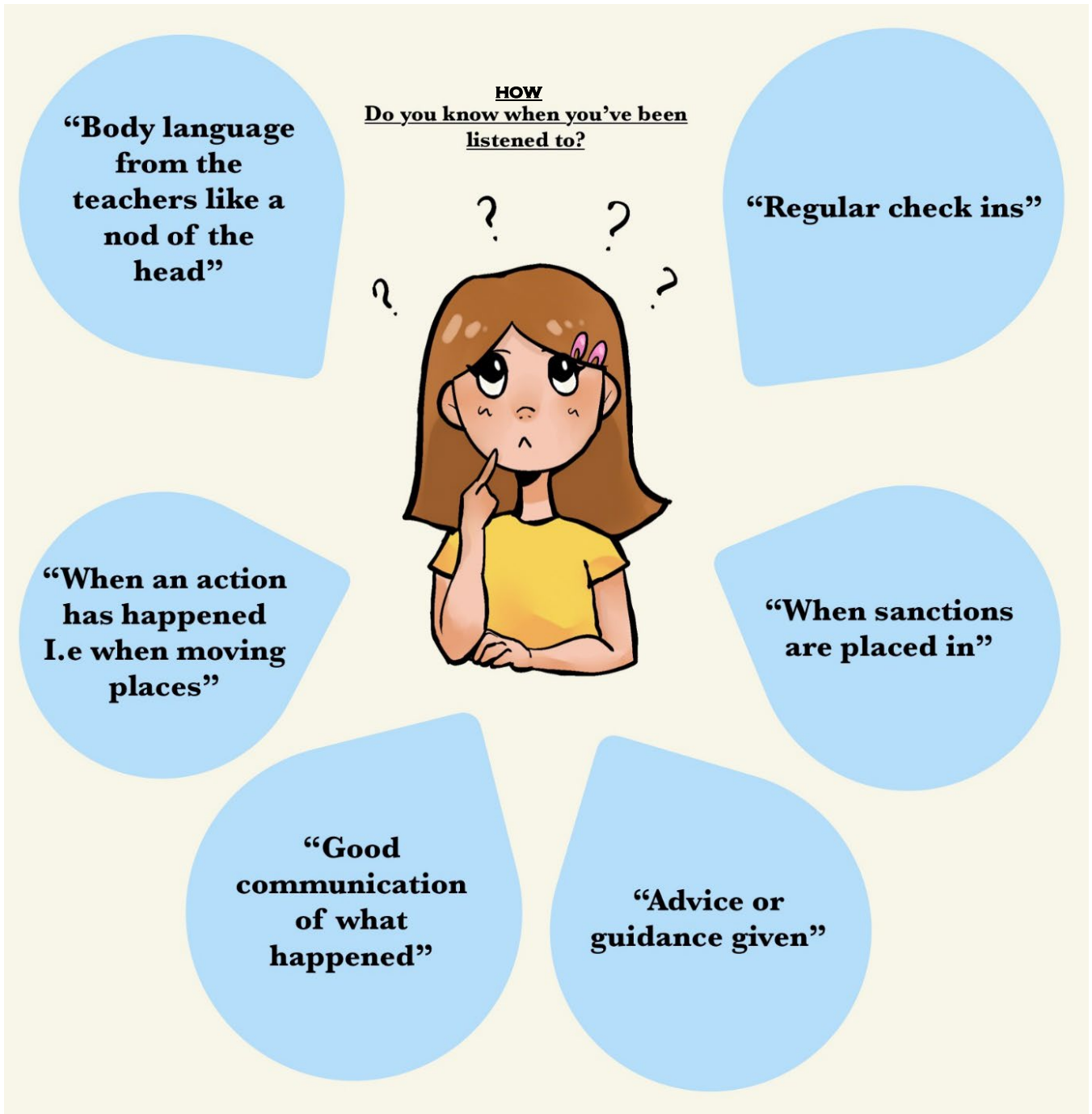
**“Backlash always makes it worse”**

**“Feels that it won’t get sorted, so what’s the point of reporting it”**

**“Story could get twisted to make me look like I did it”**



How do you know when you have been listened to?



## What works well when tackling bullying?

Young people in East Riding told us that they think the following ways help to tackle bullying best within settings such as schools, colleges and youth groups:

- When teachers talk with those who display bullying behaviour to see if there are any contributing factors, and to educate them on bullying and the effect it has on others
- To create more training and support for those who work with children and young people in regard to tackling bullying
- To provide more support for both the victim and those children and young people displaying bullying behaviour
- Don't always resort to calling parents when a bullying incident happens, as this can make the situation worse
- Consider safeguarding issues and risks as part of the general safeguarding children policies and procedures for that setting
- Provide opportunities for those who display bullying behaviour and those being bullied to talk to each other in a safe environment to try to work it out. This may not work in all situations; however this is a good way to get an understanding of the whole situation and also show children the hurt that bullying can do
- Train older young people to be available for younger children and young people to speak to about bullying, instead of teachers or youth leaders. These young people should receive appropriate training and be supported to report bullying where necessary in regard to wider safeguarding issues
- Promote local mental health and emotional wellbeing support and services for children and young people who display bullying behaviour, as well as victims of bullying; helping all children and young people to talk about things that are happening in their lives and identify additional support where needed such as anger management courses, counselling
- Have more awareness of bullying and how to tackle it in the youth setting and the wider community i.e. posters, leaflets, QR codes to helpful websites
- Have people who used to display bullying behaviour talk about their own experiences in assemblies and workshops
- Have more peer-to-peer youth support groups that would be less informal to help young people be comfortable.
- Have more youth support groups or therapy sessions focused on bullying specifically
- Have more school events and drop-down days that provide information on bullying and help available to young people
- There needs to be a way to help the victim, but it is also just as important to educate those who display bullying behaviour to make sure it doesn't happen again i.e. if there is racial bullying happening, there needs to be critical race theory/training for young people and for staff.

Young people also suggested other techniques that can be used:

- Chat and chill – it can provide a relaxed and safe space where young people can go when they are overwhelmed and need to talk to someone to get support
- Regular surveys with children and young people – this will help to keep account of how any bullying situations are being managed within the setting, providing regular feedback from young people, and open communication will allow for a safer space and constant improvements will benefit the whole school, young people have said they want these meetings to happen regularly and think it is the most important strategy
- Anti-bullying teacher – a teacher’s ability to positively influence educational environments and to prevent or respond to bullying, depends heavily on their preparation, in-service professional development, teaching standards, duties and workload. Having a teacher that is trained to deal with bullying can benefit the whole educational setting and the children, making tackling bullying much easier to manage
- A therapy room or sensory room – this is like the chat and chill room however the young person is not obligated to talk; it is a place to wind down and is a safe space to go when they are overwhelmed
- A wellbeing team – where they can check in on you and you can ask them questions. Better communication between health and education providers will reduce the negative impact of bullying on young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing/physical health
- SMASH (Social Mediation and Self Help) – which talks about a range of different topics but not in much detail
- Anti-bullying box/ email – young people can write on a piece of paper and put it in a box and a teacher will check the box regularly, or even email a designated anti-bullying teacher, who checks their emails regularly, and work with colleagues and partners to tackle issues. Some young people may not be confident or feel secure enough to address an issue in person and fear that the situation may become worse. This is an anonymous way for an issue to be dealt with or to be acknowledged that is safe and secure for the young person
- Have an Anti-bullying Board – this is a great way for young people’s voices to be heard. School tribunals are also an effective way to get students involved in creating a pro-social and anti-bullying culture within schools. This can also constantly send out messages about the impact of bullying and the effect it has on young people
- More awareness with informative posters/banners/surveys/assemblies etc. - holding anti-bullying assemblies and meetings/lessons about anti-bullying more often, not just one-off ‘tokenistic’ sessions. Also utilising social media to spread awareness
- Working with the Samaritans or a similar charity to provide drop-ins, information or be a guest speaker in assemblies or workshops
- To have a flow chart and or diagram that is a guideline to show whether or not it is bullying, miscommunication, banter, as peoples perceptions are different and in small cases sometimes the young person does not realise they are bullying.

What is not effective when tackling bullying?

**“Given advice rather than dealing with it”**

**“No sanctions so the situation escalates and gets worse”**

**“Things at home can make it worse and spiral out of control”**

**What young people have told us about what makes it more difficult tackling bullying:**

**“When they involve people at home and having to talk about it again”**



**“When multiple teachers get involved, it usually gets worse”**

**“There are arguments with the teacher about the situation “**

**“When people make out that it’s your fault”**

**“People asking what’s wrong when I am trying to forget about the situation”  
“Allow students to have more space as it can get overwhelming as everyone is asking over and over again so much they’ll want to forget it”**

## Direct sanctions and reactive strategies

Reactive strategies deal with bullying situations when they have occurred and range from more punishment type or sanction-based approaches.

Direct sanctions are not so much one strategy or method, but a collective term describing a range of disciplinary procedures used by schools ranging from verbal reprimands; meetings with parents; temporary removals from class; withdrawal of privileges; school community service; detentions and internal exclusion in a special room; short-term exclusion; and permanent exclusion.

Young people in East Riding have told us that they generally prefer non-sanction-based approaches such as taking a restorative approach. They are clear that they want to challenge the underlying behaviour behind the incident.

## Workforce development

For all of this to be achieved there is a need to ensure appropriate and adequate support for our children's workforce across all East Riding learning communities and youth related settings such as:

- Leaders to commit to tackling bullying within their setting and to train staff (paid or unpaid)
- Training needs to include using the list mentioning the types of bullying and developing resources to raise awareness of issues and show young people where they can go for help
- Training and resources should showcase real life stories and how bullying has affected young people
- There needs to be better sanctions put in place to prevent bullying as we need to not just concentrate on punishments for those who display bullying behaviour but to also find out why they are bullying. So, there must be a promotion of proactive strategies and restorative approaches to prevent bullying. Teaching anti-bullying from a young age to start and maintain a positive culture. This could include methods such as:
  - **Pikas Method/method of shared concern** – a series of meetings where children who display bullying behaviour are seen individually and encouraged to recognise the suffering of the bullied child or young person and a positive way forward is encouraged and agreed upon. They are not required to acknowledge that they themselves have taken part in the bullying. The bullied child or young person is also seen. If the young person is proved to be a provocative victim (one whose own behaviour contributes to the bullying), the bullied child is also encouraged to modify his/her behaviour, however that is not always the case and only happens 20% of the incidences. A group meeting of bullies and the bullied person is held, and a way of coping together is agreed. Follow-up meetings are held to see if the intervention has been effective.
  - **Restorative approaches** are a collective term for a range of flexible responses, ranging from informal conversations through to formal meetings.

Restorative approaches work to resolve conflict and repair harm, encouraging those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and make reparations ranging from problem-solving circles; restorative discussions; restorative reconnection meetings between staff and pupils; restorative thinking plans; mini conferences; classroom conferences and full restorative conferences.

Furthermore, sharing ideas between learning communities and other youth settings can positively impact the community, as it will make the environment a happier place for children and young people to grow up in.

Some examples of what young people in East Riding think works well are as follows:

- Driffield School 'Help Crew'
- Anti-bullying Ambassadors, or student and youth representatives.
- Develop a range of quality resources with young people such as posters, leaflets, videos, creative Gifs, websites etc.

### Who can support this strategy to be successful?

- Children and young people with lived experiences
- Parents and carers
- East Riding Youth Council and Members of Youth Parliament
- East Riding Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Academy and members
- Strategic leads for children, young people, and education
- East Riding Councillors
- Town and Parish Councillors
- Humberside Police
- Integrated Care Board
- MPs
- Head teachers and Principals of educational settings
- Statutory youth services
- Youth settings across all sectors i.e. voluntary and community groups
- All professionals working with children and young people

### Related strategies<sup>3</sup>

- East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership
- East Riding Safeguarding Adults Board
- East Riding Children and Young People's Plan (in development)
- Mental health strategies (to discuss with the Virtual Academy)
- East Riding Domestic Abuse strategy 2024 – 2027
- Violence Against Women and Girls strategies (to discuss with CSP/VAWG)

### Recommendations

- Young people to present the East Riding Anti-bullying strategy 2024 to the East Riding Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Academy for comments and agreement.

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<sup>3</sup> Please see Appendix A for a link to related strategies

- Develop an East Riding Anti-bullying steering group of young people and key partners to develop an effective action plan and monitor progress against each action.
- Develop an appropriate Terms of Reference for the East Riding Anti-bullying steering group.
- Update the East Riding Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Academy at each meeting on progress achieved, along with any barriers.
- Be accountable to the East Riding Children and Families Partnership Board and provide updates as and when required.

## Conclusion

Children and young people should know who to speak to, be confident they will be listened to and taken seriously and know that appropriate action will be taken. Youth voice will be at the forefront of this strategy.

Regular staff training needs to take place to raise awareness and ensure that all staff develop the skills to recognise, respond and act appropriately to bullying instances. Proactive approaches, for example Restorative Approaches, may be used to support and develop a culture which aims to prevent incidents of bullying.

Learning communities will take action to ensure all children and young people are fully aware of the East Riding Anti-bullying strategy and of their own school policy. This will lead to opportunities to support young people to develop effective relationships, including developing self-awareness and awareness of others, responsibility taking and problem solving.

There will be clear and effective communication about acceptable standards of behaviour for everyone and expected actions to be taken by professionals when instances of bullying occur, which will reinforce our values and aims to tackle bullying in East Riding.