

# Auchencairn Primary School



## Anti-bullying Policy

May2023

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## **Introduction**

This Anti-bullying policy has been developed through guidance and training from “Respect for All”, the Scottish Government anti-bullying guidelines. They outline the importance of developing respectful relationships within school communities, emphasising the importance of creating environments where everyone feels safe and respected in order to support attainment and achievement.

Central to the development of this policy are:

### **1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

- the promotion and upholding of the rights of children and young people
- that all education should develop each child’s personality and talents to the full
- children’s voices should be heard, and their wishes respected without discrimination of any kind

### **2. The Equality Act 2010, which places a duty on schools to:**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 legislates to prevent direct or indirect discrimination against persons. The seven characteristics which apply across education are:

- Disability
- Sex (Gender)
- Gender reassignment (Transgender)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

## **BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

Children will tease, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and have disagreements. This is a normal part of growing up and should be distinguished from bullying.

However, in an environment where this behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying, making those being bullied feel afraid, uncomfortable and unsafe in their environment.

### **Auchencairn Primary's Definition of Bullying**

The definition of bullying we use aligns with the Scottish Government definition:

**“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of ‘agency’. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online.”**

Bullying is a complex behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated. It should be defined by the impact it is having on the person or people affected.

It is therefore, not always easy to narrow down behaviours into a definitive statement that will cover all actions and situations. However, it is important to recognise and acknowledge bullying behaviours in order to identify them when they are happening.

Bullying can be verbal, physical, and/or emotional or involve online conduct which is unwanted and uninvited.

The **behaviour may be intentional or unintentional**, can cause physical or emotional harm, may be repeated over time or be a one-off incident.

Bullying is a combination of behaviours and the impact they have. It can be a range of behaviours including:

- Physical: this may include hitting, kicking, pushing, or taking or damaging someone else’s property.
- Verbal: this may include spreading rumours, name calling, teasing or talking about people.
- Emotional: this may include excluding someone from the group, embarrassing someone or making them feel bad for being different.
- Online: online bullying does not take place face to face but occurs when technology is used to send messages, texts or images which hurt, humiliate, intimidate or embarrass others. Online bullying often involves the same type of behaviour as other bullying, for example, name calling, spreading rumours or leaving people out, but it takes place online on social networking sites, in chatrooms, during gaming or instant messaging platforms.

The impact of online bullying is as hurtful and damaging as other forms of bullying behaviour. Some online behaviour is illegal. If an individual sends posts or forwards indecent, racist, sectarian, threatening or inflammatory comments or photographs, they may be committing an offence and may be subject to prosecution. Online bullying will be treated as seriously as any other form of bullying.

- Unlawful Prejudice-based bullying towards those with protected characteristics: Unlawful Prejudice towards those with “protected characteristics” such as: disability, sex (gender), gender reassignment (transgender), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.
- Other Prejudice-based bullying e.g. socio-economic, body image, care experienced children and young carers

### **Spotting the Signs of Bullying**

Many children who experience bullying do not tell anyone. A young person who is being bullied may feel:

- Pain or hurt
- Weak and powerless to make things better
- That it may be their fault
- Fear
- Isolation
- Less confident
- Anxious about making it worse if they tell someone

Often children are reluctant to report bullying therefore the signs staff in school look for and encourage parent to alert us to are:

- Doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- Asks to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or to run away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or book damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
  - Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay person bullying them)
  - Has dinner or other monies continually “lost”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when an online-message is received

When staff notice these behaviours they will speak with the child and investigate the possibility of bullying. Where a parent raises a concern, it will always be investigated.

## **Responding to Bullying**

- **We will never call a child a “bully” or “victim”.** Labels can stick for life and can isolate a child, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour.
- **We will talk about bullying behaviour.** All children and young people need help to understand why bullying behaviour is wrong in order that they can change it.
- **Every bullying incident will be looked at individually.** In some cases, children or young people may not be aware that their behaviour is bullying. They are perhaps modelling behaviours of other adults or children and young people, not understanding that their behaviour is wrong because they have never been taught otherwise. In these circumstances, the intent to bully may not be present, but the impact and effect on the person being bullied will be no less severe because of this.
- In these cases we will explain to the person bullying that their behaviour is unacceptable and why and support them to change the behaviour.
- Bullying takes place in the context of relationships and can happen anywhere. **The critical issue is the impact bullying behaviour has on the school environment and/or on a child or young person’s learning or health and wellbeing.**
- We will provide advice and guidance to the individuals involved and listen to their wishes regarding how they would like the matter handled.
- We may undertake restorative conversations to help repair and build relationships between individuals.
- Relevant staff will be informed and the situation will be monitored
- We will speak to the parents of all parties. This will be handled carefully and sensitively whilst considering the opinion of the child in line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is important to ensure the child or young person’s privacy is respected unless they disclose potential harm to themselves or someone else.
- We will record all incidents and correspondence with parents.
- We will seek support from partner services as appropriate.

## **Prevention Strategies:**

As a school, we proactively work to prevent bullying through:

- Our curriculum programmes such as health and wellbeing and RME promote diversity, acceptance, resilience, positive and healthy relationships
- Promoting and encouraging positive behaviour and respectful relationships
- Teaching about UNCRC
- Anti-bullying awareness assemblies
- Promoting values at assembly such as kindness, respect, tolerance etc
- Pupil involvement and engagement
- Circle time, buddies and playground supervision
- Restorative approaches
- Nurturing approaches and principles
- Personal support and additional support

- Supporting and enabling parents
- Acting on patterns of bullying incidents through monitoring
- ChildLine Schools Programme
- Circle of friends
- Assertiveness training
- Involvement of pupil and parent councils

## **REPORTING AND RECORDING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

Children are encouraged to always report bullying behaviour to a member of school staff. Staff regularly reminded children that they have a choice of how to act if they witness bullying behaviour:

- watching
- joining in
- trying to remain uninvolved
- trying to help those being bullied
- walking away from the incident and reporting it to a member of staff.

We encourage our pupils not to give the person showing bullying behaviour an audience and that as a bystander they can play an active role in helping to stop/prevent the behaviour.

More support for bullying behaviour and promoting anti-bullying behaviour can be found at [respectme | Scotland's anti-bullying service](https://www.respectme.scot.nhs.uk/)