

SCHOOL CIRCULAR

BULLYING AND ANTI-BULLYING

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In Barrhead High School we strive to create an ethos of a healthy learning environment where the care and welfare of all our students is paramount. The effectiveness with which the school tackles the problem of bullying behaviour is crucial to creating this ethos. This circular outlines how the issue is raised within the curriculum and sets out the pro-active and re-active strategies employed by all staff throughout the school.

At the heart of this circular is the recognition of the need for open communication and the involvement of the whole school community - students, parents, teachers, support staff and partner agencies - in dealing with the issue of bullying behaviour.

This circular should be read in conjunction with Standard Circular 8(a), revised in November 2014, which staff may access on the *Staff Only Section* of the Education Department's Intranet.

2. DEFINITION

It is important that those who have to deal with alleged or suspected cases of bullying behaviour have clear terms of reference, supported by a strong consensus as to what constitutes bullying behaviour.

East Renfrewshire Council Education Department's Standard Circular 8(a) - Bullying and Anti-Bullying defines bullying behaviour as physical, emotional, verbal or intimidatory behaviour or behaviour that leads to marginalisation. Bullying behaviour may include:

- being called names, teased, put down or threatened;
- being hit, tripped or kicked;
- having belongings stolen or damaged;
- being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you;
- receiving abusive text messages, e-mails or through social networking sites;
- being forced to do things against your will; and
- being targeted for who you are or who you are perceived to be.

Although a single episode could be defined as bullying behaviour, care should be taken not to confuse with bullying behaviour those incidents which are sparked by a sudden disagreement between pupils, e.g. in the heat of the moment in the playground. These incidents will be dealt with through the normal school procedures for dealing with indiscipline.

At all times the aim will be to treat incidents seriously and sensitively and to offer re-assurance to parents and students whether the case is confirmed as one of bullying behaviour or may be more accurately described as an episode of conflict. It is recognised that parents can be very distressed by the thought or fear that their child could have been involved in bullying behaviour.

The following are offered to staff investigating a possible case of bullying:

- Bullying behaviour is the conscious and systematic persecution or harassment of an individual causing distress by undermining a sense of security and self-esteem.

- All bullying behaviour is a demonstration of aggression, and psychological and verbal bullying behaviour can be as damaging and dangerous as physical violence.
- Bullying behaviour in schools can take many different forms and varies in degree of seriousness from seemingly harmless 'carry on' to assault or harassment at the other extreme.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to create a safe and secure learning environment for all students, the following anti-bullying code will be adopted by parents, students and staff:

- Students have the right to be educated in an atmosphere of care and respect where each individual is valued.
- The headteacher and staff have a duty to do all in their power to protect pupils from intimidation, assault or harassment.
- Bullying behaviour of any kind will be challenged.

4. PRO-ACTIVE STRATEGIES

This school has a commitment to the care and welfare of students and to a caring ethos in which every individual is valued and respected. In this environment the level of bullying behaviour is reduced and positive relationships are encouraged.

Practical steps we take that contribute to this ethos and so to the prevention of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The issues of bullying behaviour are tackled directly in certain areas of the curriculum e.g. in PSHE and Pastoral. In these subjects students are given the opportunity to openly discuss the topic and the problems surrounding it.
- In physical education, PSHE, Excel and in many other subjects, students are encouraged to work together and learn the benefits of teamwork.
- Student involvement in any of our extra-curricular activities builds on their relationships with each other and staff.
- Students are aware of the support structures available to them and make regular and confident use of them. In particular, students benefit from regular interaction with pupil support staff in class, during intervals, in social areas and in extra-curricular activities. This also serves to detect problems at an early stage.
- Senior students work with younger pupils as peer educators and mentors.
- Pupil Councils provide opportunities to discuss and consult on a range of issues that effect school life.
- Assemblies communicate clearly to pupils that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

- Transfer of information from primary schools provides a complete profile of students, including information on those at risk of displaying and/or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Staff from East Renfrewshire's Youth Counselling Service (ERYCS) are available in school to work with students at risk of displaying and/or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- An openness of communication is encouraged between students and all staff, from class teacher to headteacher. Notice boards, plasma screens and websites are used to convey relevant information.
- Staff are vigilant in their supervision of pupils in and out of class.
- Information is provided for parents through leaflets, newsletters, the school handbook, the school website and parent workshops.
- Partnership between parents and school provides the most effective support to students. Strong links with the home allow for early identification of concerns and involves parents in working towards solutions.

Research has shown that the following strategies reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour:

- Tackling ethos and ensuring it is positive.
- Having in place a comprehensive anti-bullying policy.
- Good links with parents.

Research also shows that, whilst anti-bullying programmes can significantly reduce the incidences of bullying behaviour, it cannot be totally eradicated and so there is a need for the school to keep this area under constant review.

5. REACTIVE STRATEGIES

The manner in which bullying behaviour is dealt with contributes to the ethos of the school and can, therefore, make it more or less likely to happen. Ignoring the problem or, alternatively, being too heavy-handed, can be equally damaging.

All cases of alleged or suspected bullying behaviour should be reported immediately to the appropriate PT Pastoral/ DHT who will work closely with the pupil support team in the investigation and ensure that the following action is taken:

- Reported incidents of alleged or suspected bullying behaviour will be dealt with as a matter of priority and appropriate action taken as quickly as possible thereafter. All reported incidents should be recorded on Pastoral Notes and the '*Recording of Bullying Incidents Proforma*' (see [Appendix 1](#)) and an investigation will be carried out within three working days.
- The concerns of students will be taken seriously and each incident will be examined on its own merits. A positive approach will prevail throughout.
- Appropriate senior management and pupil support staff will investigate incidents sensitively and carefully.

- All students involved in cases of bullying behaviour will be offered support. This will apply to the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and to the student displaying bullying behaviour.
- Parents of those students involved will be contacted and kept informed throughout.
- Pupil support staff will support those who experience bullying behaviour. The pupil support teacher will offer counselling and work with the student to rebuild self-confidence and self-esteem and strategies for the future. In certain cases, the student may be referred to the Joint Support Team for support from partner agencies, e.g. school social worker, ERYCS or psychological services.
- Appropriate sanctions will be taken against a student found to be displaying bullying behaviour. In order to deter a re-occurrence, pupil support staff will support the student, as the reason for this behaviour needs to be addressed. Again, in certain cases, the student may be referred to the Joint Support Team for support from partner agencies, e.g. school social worker, ERYCS, psychological services, campus police officer.
- A record of any investigation will be kept in Pastoral notes under significant events for both the student experiencing and those displaying bullying behaviour which will be held in pupils' files.
- If and when it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, the appropriate deputy headteacher will complete the *Proforma for the Recording of Bullying Incidents* kept in the DHTs office (see Appendix 1) and make this available to the school's equality co-ordinator (Lindsey Potter, Deputy Headteacher).
- Monitoring and, where necessary, support will be provided in the longer-term by pupil support staff or other designated individuals.

6. CYBERBULLYING

It is important to highlight this growing form of bullying behaviour. Cyberbullying is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile telephone or over the internet through e-mails, instant messaging and social networking websites. Texts, messages or images are sent or posted on sites, which hurt, intimidate or embarrass another person. The identity of the person carrying out the cyberbullying can be hidden from the person targeted. Cyberbullying is no different from any other forms of bullying behaviour; the behaviour is the same and the impact is no less devastating.

Research commissioned by the Anti-Bullying Alliance from Goldsmiths College, University of London, identifies seven categories of cyber bullying:

- text message bullying behaviour;
- picture/video-clip bullying behaviour via mobile telephone cameras;
- telephone call bullying behaviour via mobile telephones;
- e-mail bullying behaviour;
- chat room bullying behaviour;
- bullying behaviour through instant messaging; and
- bullying behaviour via websites, including social networking websites.

The issues around cyberbullying will be addressed through the school's PSHE programme and assemblies. All pupils will sign a *Responsible User Agreement*. In addition, staff should:

- ensure that mobile telephones are switched off in class, unless the teacher has given permission for their use;
- ensure that mobile telephones are not being misused in and around the school at breaks or lunchtime or between classes;
- be vigilant when students have access to the internet in class, in order to ensure that only appropriate use is made of this resource; and
- report inappropriate use of ICT to the school's ICT co-ordinator (Emma Gordon, Depute Headteacher).

Students involved in incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with using the same range of strategies outlined elsewhere within this circular.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The senior management team will review and evaluate the implementation of the anti-bullying policy. As part of an on-going process, the opinions of students, parents and staff will be sought at regular intervals. An annual return on incidents of bullying behaviour is made to the Head of Education Services (Children and Young People). SC 8a Appendix C

The school's equality co-ordinator (Lindsey Potter, Depute Headteacher) will monitor and record all incidents of bullying behaviour that have been investigated.

Additional advice for staff is attached in the Appendix 2. All matters arising from this circular should be raised with the member of the senior management team with the responsibility for liaison with the department.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documents;

Behaviour Management
Classroom Charter

Andy Sinclair
Headteacher
January 2015

Section 1

Date Incident Occurred:	Date Reported:
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Section 2 Details of Those Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Pupil Name	Class	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability (y/n)	ASN (y/n)

Section 3 Details of Those Experiencing Bullying Behaviour

Pupil Name	Class	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability (y/n)	ASN (y/n)

Section 4 Type/Nature of incident

Tick

Written	e.g. graffiti, notes, letters, writing on jotters, written threats, ridicule through drawings	
Physical	e.g. pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping-up etc.	
Verbal	e.g. name-calling, slagging, threatening, sarcasm, discriminatory comments during lessons, etc.	
Property Damage	e.g. theft of bags, clothes, money, tearing clothes, ripping books etc.	
Incitement	e.g. encouraging others to bully, behave in a racist, sexist or discriminatory manner, wear discriminatory insignia such as racist badges, distribute racist or other discriminatory literature	
Isolation	e.g. "sent to Coventry", shunned, rejected, left out of activities/groups, etc.	
Cyber-Bullying	e.g. malicious use of text messages, emails, internet chat rooms, use of picture/video clips on a mobile phone	
Other	Please specify:	

Section 5 Investigation, Parental feedback, Recording

Tick

Bullying allegation is investigated	confirmed/unconfirmed (circle)	
Parents contacted/interviewed		
Details of investigation/action taken recorded in pastoral notes See Sections 6-12 as a guideline		

**Please return to:
Lindsey Potter, DHT**

Signature of Pastoral	
Signature of SMT	
Date	

Please consider sections 6-12 when investigating, recording and supporting pupils:

Section 6

Is there any suspicion that the incident may have been influenced by any of the following:			
Race		Class/Socio-economic Status	
Gender		Disability	
Sexual Orientation		Age	

Section 7 When did the incident occur?

Before School		Morning Interval	
After School		Lunch Break	
During Class		Various	
Between Classes			

Section 8 Where did the incident occur?

In School Building		Outwith School Premises	
In School Grounds		On School Bus	
Various		Community/Unknown	

Section 9 Investigative procedures carried out

Interviewed pupils involved	
Interviewed parents of those experiencing bullying behaviour	
Interviewed parents of those displaying bullying behaviour	
Other	

Section 10

Please indicate what action taken for those displaying bullying behaviour (sanctions and support)

Section 11

Please indicate what action was taken to support those experiencing bullying behaviour (e.g. support from staff, peer support, buddying, external agency involvement.) Please include perceptions of students and parents of the way the issue has been handled.

Section 12 restorative/preventative work was carried out

Whole School		Individual	
Whole Class		Other	
Group Work			

Notes to Accompany Pro Forma

Procedures

- A “first offence” of e.g. name-calling or abusive language should be challenged, the nature of the unacceptable behaviour explained and the school policy on such matters outlined. The student should then be told that any further occurrences will be logged against them.
- Any incident, including those which involve actual or threatened physical abuse, must always be taken VERY seriously and should be recorded accordingly
- Complete sections 2 – 12 of the proforma for all incidents of confirmed bullying behaviour. Once completed the form should be returned to the promoted member of staff with responsibility, usually the Equality Co-ordinator (Lindsey Potter DHT). In addition incidents must be recorded on Pastoral notes under significant events.
- In order that consistency with this strategy be maintained, it is important that the relevant staff responsible for the student are informed of the incident, so that appropriate action is taken if the behaviour is repeated.

Notes for Members of Senior Leadership Team

- It is the responsibility of the SLT to follow up on incidents where appropriate and ensure incidents have been successfully and appropriately dealt with and are not continuing. A record of the follow up will be recorded in Pastoral notes by the relevant DHT.
- Where your school has a more detailed system of recording or uses pupil files to keep such information, you should continue to do so. However, a standard statistical record is required for all incidents of bullying behaviour on the Council’s proformas and it would be appreciated if you could ensure that all members of staff are aware of the procedures and have access to proformas to complete when necessary.
- All reported cases of name calling should be fully investigated and the students spoken to, pointing out the unacceptable nature of this sort of behaviour and informing students that any repeat of such name-calling will be treated very seriously and recorded. The person to whom such name-calling is directed should be assured that the staff take such behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate such behaviour in the school without it being challenged.
- Proformas should be kept in a central file within the school. (DHT office) Schools should maintain their own systems for filing the range of concerns reported by students, parents or staff but be able to demonstrate where allegations of bullying behaviour have been investigated and deemed unconfirmed. Records should contain the perceptions of parents and students of the incident.

1- Forms of Bullying

It is generally accepted that bullying behaviour, which may be carried out by an individual or by a group, may take one or more of the following forms:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened
- Being hit, tripped or kicked
- Having belongings stolen or damaged
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you
- Receiving abusive text messages or e-mails
- Being forced to do things against your will
- Being targeted for who you are or who you are perceived to be

2-Signs of Bullying

The signs that a pupil is being bullied are many and vary from case to case. They may include:

- Physical injury
- Change of mood
- Sickness (real or feigned)
- Deterioration in personal appearance
- Withdrawal from extra-curricular activity
- Refusal to join (curricular groups/activities)
- Refusal to change /take part in PE
- Isolation in/around school
- Crying
- Not eating
- Not sleeping
- Underachieving

- Aggression
- Loss/theft of belongings
- Latecoming
- Absences
- Reluctance to attend school

NB These may also be signs or symptoms of something other than bullying behaviour e.g. child abuse. **Any suspicions should be passed on to the head teacher or child protection coordinator immediately in accordance with Child Protection Guidelines.**

3-Locations

Bullying behaviour can occur in any area of the school and, in its most subtle form, can be carried out even when staff are present. Locations include:

- Playground
- Stairways/Corridors
- Social areas
- Toilets
- Cafeteria
- Classrooms
- Library
- To/from school
- Through the use of mobile telephones and the internet

4-Students

There is general agreement that some types of students are either more likely to be involved in bullying behaviour. These boys and girls may be found at all stages in the school. The experience of teachers, supported by research evidence, is that the following categories of pupils are more likely to become involved in bullying behaviour:

- Students who have themselves been subject to physical/verbal abuse, whether at home or in school
- Students who feel superior – intellectually, physically or socially
- Students who are unsure of themselves and wish to impress others
- Students who are jealous or resentful of the perceived success or superiority of others

Students thought to be most vulnerable to bullying behaviour are those whose appearance or behaviour is different from what is perceived normal:

- Students with an unusual accent
- Students of different race/colour/background
- Students of different sexual orientation
- Students with learning difficulties or physical disability
- Students with problems of personal hygiene
- Students who are shy or find it difficult to relate to others
- Students who enrol in mid-session
- Students with more money than others
- Students who study conscientiously