

## WOODFARM CLUSTER AND GIFFNOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (2012)

***UNCRC Article 2: Every young person has the right to protection against discrimination.***

### **Introduction**

Pupils, parents and professionals have a shared responsibility and a proactive role to play in ensuring that bullying behaviour is not tolerated in each of our cluster establishments. It is through this partnership approach that a successful anti-bullying culture can be promoted across Woodfarm Cluster.

### **Rationale**

*“Every child and young person in Scotland will grow up free from bullying and will develop respectful, responsible and confident relationships with other children, young people and adults. Children and young people, and their parents or carers, will have the skills and resilience to prevent or respond to bullying. All children will expect help and know who can help them; while those adults working with them will follow a consistent and effective approach in dealing with and preventing bullying from early years onwards.”*

**(Scottish Government, 2010)**

The Scottish Government is committed to taking due regard of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** in any policy or legislation concerning children and young people. Pertaining to incidents of bullying behaviour, there are many relevant rights of the child under the UNCRC, including the right to:

- Have their best interests held as a primary concern
- Have their rights respected, protected, fulfilled and taught
- Express their views in any decision making processes about them
- Develop the responsibility to respect the rights, freedoms and reputation of others
- Information that is important to their health and well-being
- A safe environment and protection from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect, including physical or mental mistreatment or hurt
- Education in an environment where their dignity is respected, where disciplinary measures are free from physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect, and where their personality, talents and abilities are developed to their full potential.

It is every child’s right to be protected from conflict, cruelty, exploitation and neglect, however, children also have a responsibility not to bully or harm each other.

### **Aims**

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) sets out how agencies and professionals should work together to promote the welfare and rights of children and young people, and ensure that they are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

It is within this context that Woodfarm Cluster aims to:

- Ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied
- Recognise that bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

- Be aware that only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools
- Work in partnership with parents to promote awareness, understanding and mutual respect amongst pupils and to construct strategies for preventing and responding appropriately to bullying and harassment.

### **Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour can 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 or e-mails
- Being forced to do things against your will
- Being targeted for who you are or who you are perceived to be.

Possible signs of bullying behaviour can include:

- Torn or damaged clothing
- Scratches and bruises that can't really be explained
- The child or young person doesn't want to go to school or is having trouble with school work
- Changes in the route that is taken to school
- The child or young person doesn't want to go out and play with friends
- Unexplained head/stomach aches and other pains
- Easily upset, unexplained tears or ill-tempered behaviour.

Impacts of bullying behaviour on children and young people can include:

- Anticipation/ fear/ anxiety
- Poor school Attendance
- Eating disorders
- Violence towards others
- No aspirations
- Self-harm
- Depression
- Bullying behaviours towards others.

In some extreme cases, young people have considered suicide and gone on to carry out this act.

### **Dealing with Incidents of Bullying Behaviour**

Woodfarm Cluster works to create a positive and supportive ethos. There should be a whole school approach in which children and adults are proactive in creating an environment where bullying is not tolerated. This may include particular approaches such as:

- 'buddying' or mentoring systems
- peer mediation
- a system which identifies vulnerable pupils and takes steps to remedy this, for example 'A Circle of Friends'
- assertiveness training
- anti-bullying campaigns, posters, assemblies
- PSHE lessons which focus on positive self-esteem, resilience, positive interactions etc.

- Worry or bother boxes for pupils to post their concern
- Pupil Council awareness training
- Pupil help leaflets
- Information on school website and plasma screens
- Anti Bullying events to raise profile of school and cluster policy
- A Care Team with key members of staff clearly identified for children to approach, for example Equality Co-ordinator, Campus Police Officer, Social Justice and Community Manager, Pastoral Support teacher, Class Teachers, Support Staff, visiting specialists etc.

Where, despite these pre-emptive measures, incidents of bullying behaviour are witnessed or reported, school staff have the responsibility to investigate fully and promptly. Establishments must clearly identify to pupils and parents the promoted member of staff who has responsibility for overseeing investigations and information must be provided to all about how to contact this member of staff. This may be done through posters and notices on display around the school, plasma screens if available, school websites and school handbooks.

The following checklist may be helpful when investigating incidents:

- Who was involved? Is there a young person experiencing bullying behaviour? If so, who?
- In what way did the young person experiencing bullying behaviour suffer?
- How did the incident start? Was it premeditated?
- What is alleged to have happened, from the perspectives of all involved?
- Listen to the individual perspective of all involved.
- When and where did the incident take place?
- Who witnessed the incident?
- Who reported it and when?
- Any background to the incident
- Any reason for considering this to be bullying behaviour
- To what extent did the incident affect others?
- What was the response of the young person(s) experiencing bullying behaviour?
- What does (do) the young person(s) experiencing bullying behaviour wish to see resulting from the investigation?

The findings of any investigation should be reported back to the child/ young person and their parent/ carer and, where appropriate, strategies towards a positive resolution for all stakeholders should be agreed upon.

### **Recording and Monitoring of Bullying Behaviour**

The proforma for the recording of bullying behaviour (Appendix 1) should be retained within the school and should be maintained by the promoted member of staff responsible.

Staff should take into account the feelings of the young person(s) experiencing bullying behaviour when exercising judgement. If they feel that bullying behaviour has taken place, this must be taken seriously. What might seem trivial to an adult can have serious psychological damage to a child or young person. Their feelings of safety and self-esteem can be affected.

If, on initial investigation, the accusation of bullying behaviour appears to be confirmed, the behaviour must be formally recorded.

A record should also be kept of unconfirmed allegations, the action taken and how this was communicated.

Where appropriate, significant events may initiate or be added to a chronology. The member of staff responsible must report all confirmed bullying and the number of investigated and unconfirmed incidences of bullying to the Head of Service (Inclusion, Schools and Quality Improvement) at the end of each school session.

Should a cluster establishment be fortunate in having no incidence of bullying behaviour, nil returns are required. Upon an establishment submitting a nil return, the head teacher must provide an explanation and evidence of good practice to the Head of Service so that best practice in tackling bullying behaviour can be shared across all establishments in the authority.

Establishments should regularly seek the views of pupils about bullying behaviour and how it is responded to through questionnaires or focus groups.

### **Proforma for Recording Alleged/Confirmed Bullying Behaviour (Appendix 1)**

This should be completed by a senior member of staff:

Pre-5 establishment: Head Teacher

Primary: LS Coordinator or Equality Coordinator

Secondary: Principal Teacher Support.

### **East Renfrewshire Anti-Bullying Annual Monitoring Report (Appendix 2)**

In line with guidance from the authority a designated member of the Senior Management Team should have responsibility for completing this audit.

### **Parental Involvement**

Woodfarm cluster should work with their Parent Councils to prepare their own advice leaflet to parents detailing the school's procedures for dealing with bullying incidents and the school's positive behaviour programme. The emphasis should be on parents working with the school to resolve problems.

Close links with parents and carers, as set out in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 and in the authority's own Parental Involvement Strategy, are crucial in assisting Woodfarm cluster deal with bullying behaviour and harassment.

Regular awareness raising and training should be available for parents, organised by Parent Councils and supported by the cluster and education authority staff.

### **Training and Staff Development**

All members of Woodfarm cluster should have an awareness of SC 8a and the cluster anti-bullying policy and have access to relevant training. Training related to anti-bullying on the authority CPD catalogue should be accessed. Respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service, [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk) also provides training for trainers thus allowing organisations to develop a sustainable approach by having in-house CPD accredited expertise.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy by Woodfarm cluster**

The cluster policy should be reviewed by the Cluster Management Group on an annual basis. All stakeholders should be part of the consultation process.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy by East Renfrewshire Council**

Standard Circular 8a: Bullying and Anti-bullying is monitored through annual reports from all establishments of confirmed incidents and those investigated but found to be unconfirmed. This information is shared through reports to the Education Committee. Progress towards three year anti-bullying targets is monitored and reported on through the authority's Outcome Delivery Plan. Woodfarm cluster policies and procedures are reviewed as part of Support and Protection reviews. A formal evaluation of the policy will take place 3 years after its introduction.

#### **Further Advice and Guidance**

Standard Circular 8a: Bullying and Anti-bullying should be referred to for guidance on cyberbullying and prejudice based bullying. Guidance is also available on safe use of technology in Standard Circular 69. Mobile, Internet and wireless technologies have increased the pace of communication and brought benefits to users worldwide. However, their popularity provides increasing opportunities for misuse through 'cyberbullying'. It is crucial that children and young people, who are particularly skilful at adapting to new technology, use their mobiles and the Internet safely.

