

This policy has been written by the school, building on national best practice, East Renfrewshire Council, Education Scotland, Unicef and Scottish Government guidelines.



### ***Convention on the Rights of the Child***

Your child has the right to a safe, nurturing school environment that respects their dignity. All children have the right to an education, and protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse. Bullying is no exception. (Unicef, 2024)

**Article 14:** Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.

**Article 19:** Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

**Article 29:** Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others' human rights and their own and other cultures.

*“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on the other person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this 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 and it can happen face to face and online.*

*Bullying behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour might not be repeated, the threat that it might can be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these.”*

(respectme, 2024)

### **Rationale**

Bullying is a clear breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a Rights Respecting School, we at St. Mark's are committed to challenging all types of prejudiced based bullying behaviours and language in line with the Equality Act (2010).

The school aims to deliver East Renfrewshire Education Department's vision of 'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences'. At St. Mark's we are committed to eliminating all forms of bullying and to provide a safe, supportive environment for all, without fear of experiencing bullying behaviour. The policy outlined here reflects a clear commitment to promoting a respectful, equitable and inclusive culture and ethos.

**Our aims are:**

- ✓ to consistently and continuously convey the message that bullying is **NEVER** acceptable
- ✓ to embed an ethos of **anti-bullying** in day to day practices
- ✓ to ensure we **get it right for every child (GIRFEC)** and that all young people in our school are **Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included**
- ✓ to promote positive relationships and behaviours amongst all children and young people and adults around them (Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy)
- ✓ to respect the **rights of children** as paramount
- ✓ to address all aspects of **prejudice** in order to make sure all types of prejudice based bullying are treated with equal importance (including bullying based on the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010)
- ✓ to promote an ethos which celebrates **diversity**
- ✓ to promote an ethos of **inclusion** where positive behaviour and **respect** for others is promoted
- ✓ to promote a culture where **equality** and **fairness** are at the forefront of interactions between members of the school community
- ✓ to create an **open culture** where children are confident in reporting incidents of bullying behaviour
- ✓ to develop **resilience**, enabling children to have effective strategies in place to prevent and respond appropriately to bullying behaviour or harassment
- ✓ to ensure that adults and children understand what constitutes bullying behaviour
- ✓ to ensure that children who have been victims of bullying are appropriately supported and that their attainment and achievement is not impacted
- ✓ to ensure that children who demonstrate bullying type behaviours are supported in order to determine underlying reasons for behaviour and improve outcomes for all

**What is bullying behaviour?**

Bullying can be expressed through **physical, emotional, verbal or intimidating behaviour** or in the form of marginalisation. People can be on the receiving end of bullying behaviour for a number of reasons including: **age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, nationality or religion**. Bullying behaviour can include:

- Being called names, being teased, being put down or threatened face to face and/or online
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, being left out or having rumours spread about you (face to face and/or online)
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images via online platforms
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives
- Being targeted because of who you are, or who you are perceived to be

### When is it not bullying behaviour?

Children and young people falling out or having disagreements is a normal part of growing up and building relationships. Accidental bumps and knocks, not liking someone or expressing unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others can be painful or discomforting however this is a normal part of maturing and most children and young people have the ability to bounce back from these types of relationship conflicts. In St. Mark's, children will have opportunities to discuss how they feel and to develop confidence, resilience and emotional literacy in managing their relationships through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum.

### Social media

The popularity of mobile, internet and wireless technologies have provided increasing opportunities for 'cyberbullying'. In partnership with parents, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of how to use their mobiles and the internet appropriately and safely. These skills will be taught explicitly through Digital Technology lessons and the Health and Wellbeing curriculum.

### Roles and responsibilities

#### The role of duty bearers:

- to provide an environment where all children feel safe, welcome and included
- to celebrate diversity
- to promote an ethos of inclusion, respect, fairness and equality
- to actively involve children in promoting positive behaviour
- ensure that cyber resilience and internet safety is central to all digital technology use (Digital Learning and Teaching Policy)
- to discuss and explore the effects of bullying behaviour through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum
- to be vigilant and look out for unusual behavioural trends
- to observe and monitor children who give cause for concern
- to provide support and guidance for those involved in bullying behaviour
- to encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying behaviour against themselves or others
- to engage in restorative approaches to ensure that all children are treated fairly and equally
- to keep abreast of research and national agenda surrounding bullying
- to engage with effective learning and teaching resources in line with Respect for all (Scottish Government <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00527674.pdf>)

#### The role of pupils:

- to encourage one another to create an environment where bullying behaviour is **never tolerated**
- to ensure everyone feels **valued, respected** and **included**
- to promote **respect** in relation to the **rights** of others
- to **contribute** their views and through the Pupil Council and other pupil groups/committees
- to offer **peer support** and guidance through buddying or mentoring
- to participate in Anti-Bullying campaigns, posters and assemblies to raise awareness

#### The role of parents:

- to support the school values of **tolerance, care, concern** and **respect** for self and others
- to foster an open pathway of **communication** between the school and home
- to raise awareness of the importance of encouraging a **positive** and **inclusive** ethos within the school and beyond; help your child to be a positive role model
- to feel **supported** to contact the school if they have any concerns

### **Responding to allegations of bullying behaviour**

The member of staff to whom the incident is first reported, or who has witnessed the incident, should take the incident seriously. They must use their professional judgement in deciding upon appropriate action. Action will depend on the following factors:

- Age of those involved
- Knowledge of individuals
- Level of distress caused
- Context of the incident

The school will investigate all allegations of bullying behaviour, whether confirmed or not. Where the investigation may take longer, a phone call will be made, explaining that the parent/carer will be contacted upon completion of the enquiry.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will monitor incidents recorded regularly to ensure patterns of behaviour are recognised and measures are put in place to respond appropriately.

If the investigation confirms bullying behaviour the following steps should be followed:

- ✓ Explain to those involved that the incident will be recorded
- ✓ Make it clear that the type of behaviour exhibited is totally unacceptable
- ✓ Involve appropriate members of staff to work with the young person experiencing bullying behaviour
- ✓ Work with the person exhibiting bullying behaviour to make them aware of the impact of their actions on others, and using restorative practice, support them to improve their behaviour and prevent a recurrence
- ✓ Inform parents/carers of the incident and any action taken, seeking to work in effective partnership
- ✓ Support any child who has experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviours through appropriate means including wellbeing assessments and wellbeing plan if necessary
- ✓ In extreme cases such as physical attacks or ongoing harassment, a young person showing bullying behaviour may be excluded from school
- ✓ In extreme cases, advice of the link Quality Improvement Officer may be sought and police notified

### **Whole school approaches to dealing with bullying behaviour**

St. Mark's addresses issues of relationships through our ethos of tolerance, respect and care of others. This is supported by:

- An understanding that children with additional support needs may experience bullying differently and support should be targeted appropriately
- Access to relevant training to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and that strategies to deal with bullying behaviour are understood.

- Ongoing curricular focus on anti-bullying education
- Support from external agencies such as Educational Psychologist, Campus Police Officer, etc.
- Pupils and staff awareness of their roles and responsibilities
- Participation in the Rights Respecting Schools initiative

**Appendices:**

[East Renfrewshire Standard Circular 8a \(anti-Bullying\)](#)

[Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

[Respect For All: National Approach to Ant-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young people](#)

[Respect Me](#)

[The Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#)

[Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

[Unicef - Children and Bullying.](#)