

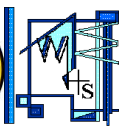
WOODFARM CLUSTER



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Policy Statement

Article 2: The right to protection against discrimination.

Article 12: The right to be listened to, and taken seriously.

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

“In order to thrive and achieve their full potential, children and young people need learning environments which are safe, nurturing, respectful and free from fear, abuse and discrimination.” (Scottish Government, 2017)

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including partners, visitors and students on placement), children and young people and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young people
- ERC Standard Circulars including (8a) Bullying and Anti-Bullying, (12) Inclusion, safe use of technology (69)

Background and Legislation

Scotland has seen legislative and policy change; such as the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Education (Scotland) Act 2016 as well as equality legislation put in place by the UK Government including the Equality Act 2010, that have put greater focus on our children and young people's health and wellbeing. Although the harassment provisions of the Equality Act (2010) do not protect pupils from harassment by other pupils, the Act creates a duty on public bodies to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. In practical terms this means that schools have an obligation to ensure bullying by pupils that is related to a protected characteristic is treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of bullying.

Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young people, ensures that all partners who work with children and young people are supported to promote and protect the rights of children and young people in Scotland. It provides a holistic framework for all adults working with children and young people to address all aspects of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.

Woodfarm High is committed to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). 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
- An 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 and young people also have a responsibility not to bully or harm each other.

Aims of Policy

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
- Ensure every child and young person develop respectful, responsible and confident relationships with others
- Work in partnership with parents to promote awareness, understanding and mutual respect amongst pupils and develop skills and resilience to prevent and/or respond to bullying appropriately.
- Ensure every child and young person who requires help will know who can help them and what support is available
- Ensure adults working with children and young people will follow a consistent and coherent approach in dealing with and preventing bullying from Early Learning and Childcare onwards.

What do we mean by bullying behaviour?

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally. While the behaviour may only happen once, the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions, looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these.

Bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice that relates to perceived or actual differences. This can manifest into racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia or prejudice and discrimination towards disability or faith.

Online bullying should be treated as seriously as face-to-face bullying. Online bullying, or 'cyberbullying' as it is often referred to, is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones.

Children with additional support needs may experience bullying differently and may be targeted because of their additional support need. Social emotional or behavioural needs which can arise from bullying may be considered additional support needs if the bullying is having an impact on the child or young person's learning, including those children and young people who are demonstrating bullying behaviour. Practitioners should fully take into account additional support needs and the principles of inclusion when addressing bullying. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and must be addressed quickly. Bullying should never be seen as a typical part of growing up.

Bullying behaviour can include:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened
- Being hit, tripped or kicked
- Having belongings stolen or damaged
- Trolling on social networks, media and games
- Voting against someone in an abusive poll
- Making or sharing embarrassing images or video
- Creating fake accounts or identity theft
- Sending or pressuring to send explicit messages
- 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

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. It is important that they have opportunities to discuss how they feel and to develop resilience and emotional literacy in managing their relationships. Early intervention and prevention including the embedding of whole school relational approaches are key elements of an approach focused on ensuring we get it right for all of our children and young people.

Approaches to dealing with 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:

- Rights-respecting approaches
- 'Buddying' or mentoring systems
- Peer mediation and restorative approaches
- A system which identifies vulnerable pupils and takes steps to remedy this, for example 'A Circle of Friends' and Nurture groups
- 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/ Woodfarm Parliament Committees
- Pupil help leaflets
- Lessons on internet safety and online bullying
- Information on school website and plasma screens
- Anti Bullying events to raise profile of school and cluster policy
- Ensure staff know about the anti-bullying policy and think about how to stop bullying before it happens.
- 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.

Children and young people value choice when responding to bullying. They need to explore a range of options that may suit them, as what works for one person may not work for another.

Adults dealing with bullying behaviours are expected to be able to distinguish between a person and their behaviour. Labelling an action as bullying is a more effective way of motivating a child to change their bullying behaviour.

Role of young people

Young people should always report unacceptable behaviour to staff or to their parent or carer. They should expect to be listened to and action to be taken by the Pastoral teacher or SMT to ensure that the situation is resolved. All pupils have a duty of care towards their peers to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect at all times. This includes raising concerns with staff on behalf of other pupils and supporting pupils who are experiencing unacceptable behaviour.

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, the National Improvement Framework and in the authority's own Parental Engagement and 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 partners.

Training and Staff Development

All members of Woodfarm cluster should have an awareness of SC8a 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 also provides training for trainers thus allowing organisations to develop a sustainable approach by having in-house CPD accredited expertise.

Dealing with Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

The approach we use to respond to bullying incidents clearly reflects our values of respect and equality. 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 child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour? If so, who?
- In what way did the child or 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? Any background to the incident?
- Who reported it and when?
- 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) child or 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. Children and young people who are exhibiting bullying behaviour need help and support to:

- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people
- Repair relationships

Recording and Monitoring of Bullying Behaviour

Staff should take into account the feelings of the child or 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.

Monitoring bullying incidents is essential and helps us to identify recurring patterns and earlier intervention. The investigation checklist should be used to help to record the incident.

The incident will be logged in the Bullying and Equalities screen on SEEMIS; the report will describe the incident and action/outcome. Incidents logged as “Being Addressed”, “Not Resolved” or “Resolved” will be confirmed incidents. Bullying incidents marked as “unfounded” will be unconfirmed. At the end of each term, ERC will collate incidents recorded for statistical information only – children are not named in this record.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

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

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

Standard Circular 8a: Bullying and Anti-bullying is monitored through annual reports from SEEMIS of confirmed incidents and those investigated but found to be unconfirmed. This information is shared through reports to the Education Committee. Progress towards anti-bullying 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. The policy will continue to be impact assessed and any priorities identified through the impact assessments addressed through the Cluster Improvement Plan.