

Anti - Bullying Policy 2018 reviewed 2021

Background and Objectives

This policy was established in 2018 and is being reviewed in 2021 as part of the three year cycle of policy review. In reviewing the policy, we have made reference to:

- Fife Council's Anti-Bullying Policy 2018
- Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service: <https://respectme.org.uk/>
- Pupil Voice (as expressed through a wellbeing survey of October 2021)
- Recording and Monitoring of Bullying in Fife Schools 2015

This policy should be read alongside the Relationships and Behaviour Policy (2021). Our aim is to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place and our Relationships and Behaviour Policy is a key part of achieving that aim. Our reflective and restorative approaches support children to reflect on actions and incidents and how they and others felt. Our 'Stand up - Get Help' system supports all children to tell an adult when they need help. This Anti-Bullying policy is in place to support us when allegations of bullying occur.

A draft of this policy was shared with parents for comment and finalised with the agreement of those who responded.

At Balmerino Primary School, we seek to embed the rights of the child as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into all our work. Article 3 asserts that all decisions made must consider children's best interests and Article 19 asserts that all children must be kept safe from harm. These principles are at the heart of our anti-bullying policy. We all work together (as a school community – staff, parents and pupils) to prevent all forms of bullying, including online bullying and prejudiced- based bullying. We firmly believe that working with pupils and families to prevent all forms of bullying, harassment and violence is absolutely paramount.

Bullying can cause great distress and both adults and children must know what to do when this occurs. Parents and children should know that they can share their worries with the keyworker, class teacher, Headteacher or other trusted adult in the school. Bullying will not be tolerated at Balmerino Primary school and allegations of bullying are taken very seriously and managed effectively.

All members of staff and parents have a duty to act on any reports or suspicion of bullying. Mrs Jess, Headteacher, is the single point of contact for anti-bullying. Any staff member suspecting bullying or receiving an allegation of bullying (from pupil or parent) must report it to her immediately. We recognise the importance of a timely and thorough investigation into any bullying allegation.

What is Bullying?

At Balmerino Primary School, we take our lead on anti-bullying from Respect Me (Scotland's anti-bullying service). They advise:

“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. This behaviour can include:

- *Being called names, teased, put down or threatened face to face and/or online*
- *Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked*
- *Having belongings taken or damaged*
- *Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you (face to face and/or online)*
- *Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or phone*
- *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 (face to face and/or online)”*

We adopt this definition of bullying. We recognise that a single incident can impact on a person’s sense of agency and can therefore be a bullying incident. And we recognise there is not always an intent to bully on the part of the child displaying bullying behaviour. They may be modelling behaviour they have experienced. Every child involved in bullying needs our support and we do this within our culture of high nurture and high expectations.

Responsibilities

There is a collective responsibility to addressing bullying:

Parents have a responsibility to monitor their child’s online world and to speak to them about their friendships. They have a responsibility to report any concerns to the school as soon as they occur and to work in partnership with the school to resolve them. Where incidents occur online or outside of school, there might not be a role for school staff to be directly involved in dealing with the incidents but if the children involved attend our school, it is important that

we know this is happening so that we can offer support and advice to all involved.

Staff have a responsibility to monitor relationships and report any concerns or changes to a child's behaviour as soon as it is noticed – to the headteacher.

Pupils have a responsibility to report any concerns about their peers to a trusted adult (age and stage appropriate). Our 'Getting Help' system is in place to support this.

We recognise our responsibility to respond to any form of prejudice based bullying, and the importance of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Although only 7 of these characteristics may apply in schools; age, marriage and civil partnerships are also considered to be relevant as children may be subject to bullying as a result of these characteristics applying to their parents, carers, or other family members.

We recognise the importance of building our learners' understanding of diversity both through planned experiences and through careful choice of resources. All staff members have a responsibility to model respect at all times, demonstrating to learners the attitudes and behaviours we want them to adopt.

School systems for recording and monitoring bullying

When it is reported that a child is being bullied (either by themselves or someone else) then action will be taken promptly and firmly. The allegation will be thoroughly investigated – this will usually be by the headteacher but it might be that the initial investigation is carried out by the staff member to whom it was reported who would then feedback to the headteacher, who is the single-point of contact. The starting point is always a conversation with the child who we are concerned is being bullied. The child will be involved in planning a strategy moving forward, in line with our Relationships and Behaviour Policy. We recognise that, once investigated, issues may be found to be due to conflict rather than bullying but it is still essential that all involved feel supported, the matter is resolved and relationships are restored.

Partnership working and good communication with parents is key to this being successful and it is important that parental views are noted as part of the recording process.

Where the investigation indicates that there has been a bullying incident, this will be recorded as such on SEEMIS in the Bullying and Equalities module. All parents involved will be informed that the incident has been recorded as a bullying incident. Where the investigation indicates that this has been a conflict rather than bullying, it will be recorded on SEEMIS in Latest Pastoral Notes or the Wellbeing App (depending on the nature of the conflict). All parents involved will be informed that the incident has been recorded. Any parental views will be recorded. In either event, the relationship between the children in question will be monitored moving forward to ensure the matter has been fully resolved. Supports will be put in place as described below.

Support for children involved

As bullying happens within relationships, the most desirable outcome (where possible) is to restore the relationship and move forward positively. This is particularly important as we are a small school and community.

These supports are used for a child experiencing bullying behaviour:

- A named member of staff is identified to check in with the child regularly
- Helped to develop positive strategies and appropriate assertive skills (e.g. Stand Up - Get Help)
- Monitored by teacher and/or PSA
- Involved in restorative conversations
- Encouraged to share feelings and discuss emotions – e.g. through kitbag sessions
- Offered a 'Circle of Friends'. This involves us speaking to the pupil's friends and telling them (with the pupil's consent) that he/she needs some support and we encourage these pupils to play and work together and support them to do so.

These supports are used for a child displaying bullying behaviour:

- Made aware of the seriousness of their actions and possible consequences
- Monitored by teacher and/or PSA
- Where deemed necessary referred to an external agency for targeted support
- Sometimes a 'Circle of Friends' may be appropriate for the child displaying bullying behaviour
- Supported through an individual behaviour chart and monitoring system appropriate to their age and stage

Where there is clear evidence that a pupil is targeting another unkindly or is unable to regulate their behaviour or emotions in a specific context, it might be the case that the pupil in question will be kept out of that context (depending on where/when the incidents are taking place) for a short period of time to allow things to settle but this approach is unlikely to be a long term solution. While the child is out of the context, they will work with a member of staff to discuss issues and to make a plan for change. In applying this strategy, we recognise that all children involved have a right to education (article 28 of UNCRC) and to play and leisure (article 31 of UNCRC) and we do not compromise that for any child in our school.

In dealing with bullying, it is our policy to keep parents informed at all times, to allow their views to feed into the process, to believe a child who tells us they are being bullied and to ensure all parties involved are treated fairly, listened to and included.

Where bullying has taken place (or indeed where there has been any conflict between pupils) it is important that all staff working with the pupils are aware of this so that they can monitor it moving forward. The Headteacher has the responsibility to make sure all staff are aware – this includes informing new staff of historic incidents. Our in-school tracking system has a column for Anti-Bullying where a note is made of incidents at the time of recording on SEEMIS to support this (in place from Oct 2021).

Using the curriculum to talk about bullying

The curriculum can be used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and the anti- bullying policy
- Increase understanding and help build an anti- bullying ethos
- Teach pupils how to constructively manage their relationships with others
- Teach about and celebrate diversity

Further information is available from Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service:
<https://respectme.org.uk/>

Date of next review: August 2024