

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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**Category: Pupils - *Relationships and Learning***

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## Risk Management and Legal Implications

Failure to manage risk may impact on the delivery of Service objectives and the outcomes achieved by Service users. The Education Service aims to mitigate the implications by ongoing management and review of risk in all elements of work activity.

The production of this document is one way in which we aim to reduce our exposure to risk. By providing staff with information on good practice, making reference to other guidance that is available across the Council and providing clarity on how we should do things, we can ensure that the management of risk is intrinsic to what we do

Getting It Right in Fife Schools  
Directorate anti-bullying policy

2018 Review

***“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as 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. This behaviour happens face to face and online.”***

***Respectme, 2015***

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is designed to apply to children and young people aged 3 to 18 in all Fife Council educational establishments. The policy reflects the Scottish Government guidance; “*Respect For All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People.*” (2017), and the national guidance relating to the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents.
- 1.2 Fife Council Education and Children’s Services Directorate is committed to the personal and social wellbeing of all children and young people growing up in Fife. Through our schools and services we aim to provide community, social and learning environments free from any threat or fear, as a matter of right and as a prerequisite to effective learning and development.
- 1.3 In this context the Directorate, through all staff who work within it, is unequivocally opposed to bullying. We fully recognise the damage which bullying can do to young people’s lives – both those who bully and those who are bullied – in the short and long term. We are therefore committed to reducing and preventing bullying across all our services and establishments, and providing appropriate support when bullying does occur. This policy sets clear expectations regarding how these goals will be achieved.

***For the purposes of this policy we define bullying as behaviour, which may or may not be deliberate, by one person or a group, which upsets, hurts, harms or injures another, impacting directly on their quality of life. Bullying may take many forms, including verbal, physical and social behaviour, and increasingly it may involve the use of technology, such as mobile phones or computers. It is likely to be associated with a power difference between those who bully and those who are bullied, to lead to hurt, fear and anxiety, and is often the result of a difference, perceived or real.***

- 1.4 In addressing the issue of bullying we recognise that children and young people will naturally fall in and out of friendships in the course of growing up. Such difficulties, disagreements or conflicts might be relatively minor and short-lived, but at other times may lead to serious conflict requiring direct intervention to ensure resolution. At whatever level such conflict occurs it is important to distinguish it from bullying, and to ensure that children and their parents and carers understand this distinction. It should also be recognised of course that unresolved conflict might, in time, lead to bullying.
- 1.5 We believe it is important to make a distinction between conflict and bullying as describing all relationship difficulties as ‘bullying’ is likely to devalue the term and obscure the very real risks which we know are associated with children and young people being bullied. It can also create confusion around the nature of response or intervention which is required to get best outcomes for children. Bullying is a mixture of behaviours and impacts, and adult intervention should be guided by the impact on a child or young person.

- 1.6 Schools must ensure that the anti-bullying policy developed by the school reflects the needs of the children, young people and families within their communities. The approach of staff when addressing instances of bullying should at all times take account of the child or young person's past experiences, additional support needs the child or young person may have and the behaviours exhibited by those experiencing bullying behaviour or those displaying bullying behaviour. Schools should ensure that the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators are considered when planning the support provided for children who experience instances of bullying or children who exhibit bullying behaviours.
- 1.7 The Directorate acknowledges the harm and distress caused to children and families by bullying behaviours. Bullying behaviour carried out on-line, through text, social-media and email is a more recent development. On-line bullying behaviour is often similar in nature to the traditional view of bullying but has a far greater reach due to our interconnected technological society. The training of the school single point of contact (SPoC) includes best practice advice on tackling on-line bullying behaviours. Schools should ensure that all aspects of on-line bullying behaviours are considered within their policies and clear processes are in place to address such issues.
- 1.8 Schools should consider how best to incorporate the anti-bullying approach in both the Directorate and school policy within the school health and wellbeing curriculum.
- 1.9 The Directorate is fully committed to equality and diversity and to ensuring that all establishments and services are fully inclusive. In the context of this policy we fully recognise the need and responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of children who may be vulnerable to bullying as a result of a real or perceived difference affecting them or any member of their family. Through policy and practice we will develop the capacity to respond to any form of prejudice based bullying, recognising 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. This strategic policy also recognises the rights

of those whose sexual orientation includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. The operational anti-bullying policy created at school level must take account of these protected characteristic groups and should build upon the work, already established in Fife schools, to support LGBTI (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersexed) young people.

Further details of prejudice based bullying are included in Appendix 4, reproduced here with the kind permission of Respectme. All schools should consider the impact of prejudice based bullying and ensure that these aspects of potential bullying are included in the school anti-bullying policy.

Details can be obtained from the Respectme website at: <https://respectme.org.uk/bullying/prejudice-based-bullying>

We also recognise the potential vulnerability of children in relation to the following:

- Asylum seeker or refugee status
- Body Image
- Looked after status
- Social or economic status
- Young carer responsibilities
- Imprisonment of parents, siblings, or other family members

1.10 Our approach to anti-bullying is set within our wider relationships and behaviour strategy, and recognises that bullying behaviour can only be fully understood within the social context within which it occurs. In that respect attributing bullying or being bullied to the personalities of the children involved is ultimately of little value. Our relationships and behaviour strategy aims to:

- develop a positive ethos and an effective approach to relationships and behaviour in all establishments, groups and services;
- encourage the personal and social development of all children;
- protect children and ensure their care and welfare.

Central to our overall approach to supporting the development of positive relationships and behaviour are the principles of raising children's awareness and understanding, supporting the development of essential skills and knowledge, and enabling children to make the right choices in all aspects of their social behaviour.

Furthermore we are committed to working in partnership with parents, identifying shared responsibilities in preventing the occurrence of bullying, ensuring the welfare of children who have been bullied, and supporting and challenging those who have bullied. Schools should consult widely with children, young people, parents, community and partners when developing their anti-bullying policy

1.11 Our aim therefore is to ensure that children do not bully others because they understand the harm, which it causes, and make the choice not to cause such harm. It follows therefore that where children do not make this choice we need to engage with them educationally, supportively and restoratively rather than

punitively. Such an approach may, understandably, be challenged by those who believe that children who bully should experience only negative consequences as a result of their behaviour. It is our firm belief that such an approach is ultimately counterproductive and important therefore that all staff, children and parents play an active role in the development and maintenance of a school's anti-bullying policy based on this principle; involvement and ownership contribute significantly to effectiveness.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Anti-bullying policies have been in place in Fife schools since 1993. Since that time the Education Service has made a commitment to the concept of safe schools and to an active anti-bullying strategy being developed within each school, with appropriate in-service training and support.
- 2.2 In 1998 the Human Rights Act (1998) made it a requirement that public authorities take steps to prevent bullying. Also since that time there have been major developments relating to social inclusion and an understanding of the factors which impact on educational attainment and achievement. This has implied a need, amongst other things, to look more closely at all obstacles to learning.
- 2.3 This policy sits within the policy framework for 'Care and Welfare' of the Education and Children's Services Directorate and reflects the main principles and features of the Human Rights Act (1998), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014), the Equality Act (2010), the national initiative, Getting It Right for Every Child and the national guidance 'Respect For All'. This policy recognises that bullying can be a child protection issue and therefore complements and reflects both the operational and the legal requirements of Fife Council's Child Protection Strategy.

## **3.0 Policy Statement**

- 3.1 Fife Council Education and Children's Services Directorate aims to:
  - reduce, prevent and respond effectively to bullying;
  - improve social behaviour through an effective strategy which actively involves children, parents/carers and staff in positive approaches;
  - ensure, through training and participation, that the underlying values of the Directorate of Compassion, Ambition, Respect and Equity (CARE) are understood and implemented by all those involved;
  - ensure that there are effective methods for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of this policy, including any effects on minority or protected characteristic groups.

## **4.0 Policy in Practice**

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy there will be action at three levels.

- Directorate
- Establishment
- Individual Staff

### **4.1 Directorate Responsibilities**

The Education and Children's Services Directorate will ensure that:

- A member of Directorate management is identified as the lead officer of the anti-bullying policy. This person will have responsibility for ensuring that the intentions of the policy are realised and for providing relevant information as required to the Directorate and Fife Council.
- The effectiveness of this policy is monitored and reviewed at individual Service level, using high quality information derived from incident recording.
- Action to shape future policy and to provide support and challenge to all establishments and services is evidence based and informed by effective monitoring.
- Support is provided across the Directorate by co-ordinating training opportunities, liaising with relevant partner agencies, and promoting and sharing successful practice.
- The training of the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) in each school (which is mandatory) will be carried out on a biennial basis.
- In schools, through the quality improvement process, the school's Education Officer, in collaboration with the school, will annually review the school's anti-bullying policy, its implementation and the information derived from the incident recording system.

To ensure the delivery of effective anti-bullying policies across all establishments and services there will be a commitment to annually reviewing practice in this area, using good quality information concerning the occurrence of bullying, the measures put in place to deal with it, and the outcomes achieved. This process will include the specific gathering of information and feedback concerning responses to incidents of bullying from children who have been bullied and their parents or carers.

## 4.2 Establishment and service responsibilities

Each establishment and service will ensure that:

- An anti-bullying Single Point of Contact (SPoC) is appointed. The SPoC will be responsible for ensuring that the school anti-bullying policy is up-to-date and ensure that anti-bullying training provided by the Directorate is undertaken by school staff.
- An anti-bullying policy is developed, implemented and communicated effectively.
- Access to advice and guidance regarding anti-bullying policy development will be provided centrally, including the sharing of best practice examples;
- Out of school clubs will develop policies which articulate effectively with school policies, and ensure the effective exchange of relevant information;
- In all establishments and services an identified member of the management team is responsible for coordinating the anti-bullying policy and for monitoring its implementation and impact;
- In schools, the policy is embedded and reviewed in School Improvement Plans, linked with targets for school ethos, and articulates with the curriculum through the school's Personal and Social Development/Health & Wellbeing programme;
- In all establishments and services, the development and regular review of the policy is the result of genuine partnership between staff, children and parents. Critically this process will include the consideration of child and parent feedback, both planned and unsolicited and consultation with the wider community and partners;
- Bullying incidents are recorded and monitored using the Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS, in line with the guidance issued by the Directorate and the Scottish Government;
- Appropriate training/awareness raising of the latest practice in anti-bullying approach is made available to staff, children, parents and carers. Where necessary support will be sought from the Directorate to ensure that this requirement is met;
- On an annual basis, at least one professional development session is allocated to anti-bullying policy and practice. Information related to current issues and best practice will be provided by the Directorate.

## 4.3 Individual Staff Responsibilities

Individual Fife Council staff should ensure that they:

- are fully conversant with the establishment or service's anti-bullying policy, and contribute to its review and development as required;
- fully understand and follow procedures for recording, managing and monitoring bullying incidents, and supporting and managing children who have bullied or been bullied;
- share relevant information concerning individual children and incidents of bullying with the child's Named Person or other professionals as required, to ensure children's safety at all times;
- include self-evaluation of this aspect of their practice, as part of the wider care and welfare agenda, within their regular review of continuing professional development.



## 5.0 Recording bullying incidents

- 5.1 The school's anti-bullying policy should provide clear guidance to staff on the requirement of recording incidents of bullying/bullying behaviour.
- 5.2 Incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded using the Bullying and Equalities module within the school's SEEMiS system.
- 5.3 Appropriate training regarding the recording of bullying incidents will be provided to the school's Single Point of Contact (SPoC). Directorate guidance on the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents is available on FISH.

***Schools are reminded that an appropriate record of bullying incidents must be maintained using the SEEMiS system and that the information recorded by the school may be the subject of freedom of information requests by parents, carers, members of the public and journalists.***

- 5.4 Information recorded in the council systems will be used to respond to freedom of information (FOI) requests under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Information recorded in the school SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities module, when used by the Directorate to respond to FOI, should not provide details of the individuals involved in any bullying incident. The Directorate will redact any personal data that could be used to identify the children and young people concerned.
- 5.5 Further information regarding freedom of information requests can be found at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/what-is-the-foi-act/>
- 5.6 Fife Council will also use the information recorded in the council systems to compile reports for council officers and schools, to inform service improvement.
- 5.7 Schools should provide an analysis, where appropriate, of incidents of bullying in their annual Standards and Quality Report for Fife Council Area Committees.

## 6.0 Staff training

- 6.1 On an annual basis, all establishments and services will participate in at least one training event, organised or led by the anti-bullying Single Point of Contact.
- 6.2 Presentation materials will be provided by the Directorate to enable all establishments and services to update all adults who have indirect or direct contact with children and young people. It is recommended that this activity coincide with child protection updating.
- 6.3 Consideration should be given to reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy at this time.
- 6.4 Schools are asked to consult with their link educational psychologist to review their anti-bullying policy.

6.5 Training opportunities for the school Single Point of Contact will be available during each term throughout the school session.

6.6 The training sessions will be posted on the council CLMS system.

## **7.0 Practice Guidance**

7.1 Extensive high quality resources and literature concerning anti-bullying approaches are available online. The council website provides appropriate links and these will be updated on a regular basis. The key areas which these resources address are policy development and managing bullying. It is important to recognise that approaches to both of these areas articulate with and benefit from the extensive work which has been undertaken and developed as part of the wider relationships and behaviour agenda. It will therefore be the case that schools which have developed good practice generally in terms of relationships and behaviour will experience fewer incidents of bullying, and will have a set of values and approaches which support their effective resolution.

7.2 Central to the development of good practice is the capacity to self-evaluate existing practice, recognise effective interventions and supports, and identify areas for improvement. To support this process, the Directorate has developed a self-evaluation tool. This simple tool allows schools to independently review their practice in this area and can be incorporated within the annual school improvement cycle.

## **8.0 Anti-bullying policy framework**

8.1 The Education & Children's Services Directorate works closely with Respectme, Scotland's national anti-bullying service, regarding policy and training of school staff.

8.2 Schools are asked to consider the advice and framework given in the Respectme publication, 'Policy through to practice – Getting it Right' – Respectme.  
<https://respectme.org.uk/resources/publications/>

8.3 Schools may wish to use this publication, which contains a number of reflective/challenge questions, to reflect upon current school policy and the development of revised policy with respect to this guidance.

8.4 Appendix 1 of this publication provides a useful framework for schools developing their anti-bullying policy.

## **Appendix 1 – *What should the school anti-bullying policy contain?***

- The school anti-bullying policy should begin with a reference to the Education and Children’s Services anti-bullying policy. This policy should be seen as a framework for the creation of the school policy.
- The Directorate advises against the use of generic policies or those for a cluster of schools. The anti-bullying policy should be designed for the particular community in which the school is located, having been created through appropriate engagement of children, young people, parents, staff and partners.
- There should be a paragraph or paragraphs, which outline the school’s values and respect for dignity, inclusion and the rights of children and young people.
- The definition of bullying as described in this Directorate policy, s.1.3 must be included in the school policy document.
- The policy must make it clear that bullying includes face-to-face bullying and online. Schools should not to treat online bullying as something, which happens out with school, and therefore out of their jurisdiction. Schools have an important part to play in addressing online bullying by promoting appropriate use of mobile technology. The Directorate policy; ‘The Use of Mobile Technology in Fife Schools’ will be helpful in forming school policy and procedures in this case.
- There should be a clear statement of expectations of children and young people’s behaviour and the responsibility of all staff to report bullying incidents using the school system.
- The school should have an up-to-date behaviour and relationships policy, which gives a clear commitment to the promotion and modelling of positive relationships across the school community.
- The school should develop a range of strategies used to prevent and respond to bullying behaviours.
- All Fife schools should comply with the Directorate and national guidance on the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents using SEEMiS. The details of the school procedures for recording and monitoring should be clearly stated in the policy.
- The engagement of all stakeholders in the creation or updating of the school policy should be clearly stated within the policy.
- Schools are reminded that the anti-bullying policy should be considered as part of the normal school self-evaluation processes. The school should state in the policy how frequently it would be evaluated and reviewed.
- Finally, the schools policy should contain a statement about staff training and life-long continuous professional development.

## **Appendix 2 – Quality Assurance framework for Council Officers**

### **Quality improvement – monitoring schools' approaches to anti-bullying**

The following key quality improvement questions are based on the framework for reflection for schools. Where appropriate schools should be expected to generate evidence in support of responses to these questions.

#### **1. Ethos: Key question – In broad terms does the school's ethos clearly reduce and prevent bullying?**

Supplementary prompts:

- a. How does the ethos of the school help to reduce, prevent and provide appropriate support in relation to bullying?
- b. How does the school's anti-bullying policy articulate with the school's relationships and behaviour policy?
- c. What common themes are shared by the policies?
- d. What opportunities are there for joint policy development?

#### **2. Policy: Key question – Does the school have an effective policy in place, has it been developed in the recommended way, and can it be seen to support the reduction and prevention of bullying, and the resolution of any incidents, which occur?**

Supplementary prompts:

- a. Does the school have an up to date anti-bullying policy?
- b. When and how the anti-bullying policy was last reviewed?
- c. How do children, parents and staff contribute to the development and review of policy?
- d. How familiar are **all** staff with the policy?
- e. Have **all** staff participated in annual updating regarding bullying?
- f. How is bullying considered in staff meetings throughout the session?
- g. How does the school use feedback from children and parents regarding bullying, to reflect on and improve practice?
- h. How does robust and reliable information regarding bullying inform the school improvement process? (See 3c)

#### **3. Managing incidents: Key question – Does the school effectively manage any bullying incidents which do occur, and does it learn as an organisation, from these?**

Supplementary prompts:

- a. What are the key features of the school's approach to managing bullying incidents?
- b. How confident are staff about their skills and knowledge regarding approaches to anti-bullying, and what are the implications of this for training?
- c. Does the school consistently record bullying incidents and their resolution, in line with the agreed process?
- d. How does the school learn at an organisational level from the management and resolution of bullying incidents?

## **Appendix 3 – Self-evaluation tool for schools**

### **Approaches to anti-bullying – a reflective framework for schools**

The following questions offer a framework for reflection. They are not exhaustive and aim to provide a starting point for discussion, ideally involving all staff. The framework can also be used in an adapted form with Parent and Pupil Councils

#### **1. Ethos**

- a. How does the ethos of the school help to reduce, prevent and provide appropriate support in relation to bullying?
- b. How does the school's anti-bullying policy articulate with the school's relationships and behaviour policy?
- c. What common themes are shared by the policies?
- d. What opportunities are there for joint policy development?

#### **2. Policy**

- a. Does the school have an up to date anti-bullying policy?
- b. When and how the anti-bullying policy was last reviewed?
- c. How do children, parents and staff contribute to the development and review of policy?
- d. How familiar are **all** staff with the policy?
- e. Have **all** staff participated in annual updating regarding bullying?
- f. How is bullying considered in staff meetings throughout the session?
- g. How does the school use feedback from children and parents regarding bullying, to reflect on and improve practice?
- h. How does robust and reliable information regarding bullying inform the school improvement process? (See 3c)

#### **3. Managing incidents**

- a. What are the key features of the school's approach to managing bullying incidents?
- b. How confident are staff confident about their skills and knowledge regarding approaches to anti-bullying, and what are the implications of this for training?
- c. Does the school consistently record bullying incidents and their resolution, in line with the agreed process?  
How does the school learn at an organisational level from the management and resolution of bullying incidents?

## **Appendix 4 – Prejudice-based bullying**

Children and young people can experience bullying for a variety of reasons; where they live, their sexual orientations, gender, disability, the colour of their skin, what clothes they wear or what team they support. The one thing that these all have in common is difference or perceived difference.

Difference, or perceived difference, can be a catalyst for children and young people being bullied.

This section outlines the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 as well as other characteristics, which may lead to bullying that are not covered by the Equality Act 2010.

**Additional Support Needs:** These can arise for any reason and be of short or long-term duration. Additional support may be required to overcome needs arising from learning environment; health or disability; family circumstances or social and emotional factors, and therefore may relate to a protected characteristic. A child or young person may be bullied because they have an additional support need and crucially being bullied can also lead to an additional support need.

**Age:** Age is a protected characteristic although prejudice and discrimination based on age is not applicable in school settings; it can affect children and young people in a variety of other settings. For example, in workplaces, further and higher education and in wider society.

**Asylum Seekers and Refugees:** Children and young people who are asylum seekers or refugees may be at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly. Some bullying behaviour against these groups may be of a racist nature which, given that race is a protected characteristic, can contravene equality legislation and have hate crime implications. Stigma, due to lack of knowledge and, given that race is a protected characteristic, understanding of asylum seekers and refugees, and reluctance to burden parents with extra worries can allow bullying to go undetected and continue.

**Body Image and Physical Appearance:** This can be hugely important to children and young people with bullying because of body image having the potential to negatively impact on their wellbeing. In some cases, body image and physical appearance may relate to a protected characteristic, such as race or disability.

**Disability:** Disability is a Protected Characteristic. People who bully others may see disabled children and young people as being less able to defend themselves and less able to tell an adult about the bullying. The language and behaviour used may be a result of a lack of understanding about the nature of a person's disability. Increased knowledge and understanding about disability and the impact it can have can help reduce bullying.

**Gender Identity and Transphobic Bullying:** The term 'transgender' is an umbrella term for those whose gender identity or expression differs in some way from the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Gender identity reflects an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, neither or aspects of both. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic. Transgender people face significant societal prejudice largely because they are perceived as not conforming to gender stereotypes, expectations and norms. As a result, transgender children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying.

This can manifest in many ways including transphobic name calling or deliberately misgendering them. An individual may also experience transphobic bullying if someone is perceived to be transgender or someone they are associate with, is transgender, i.e. a parent, relative or other significant figure.

The term 'gender reassignment' is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 and refers to those who propose to go through, are going through, or have gone through a process of gender re-assignment.

**Gypsy/Travellers:** Children and young people who are Gypsy/Travellers may be at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly. Some bullying behaviour against these groups may be of a racist nature which, given that race is a protected characteristic, can contravene equality legislation and have hate crime implications. Perceived risks about bullying and given that race is a protected characteristic parents' own experiences of discriminatory behaviour may lead to low levels of enrolment and poor attendance for Gypsy/Traveller children and young people as well as early exit from formal education. Other Traveller families, such as Roma, may have similar concerns.

**Sexual Orientation, Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying:** Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010. Bullying based on sexual orientation is largely motivated by prejudice towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Homophobic bullying is when a young person's actual or perceived sexual orientation is used to exclude, threaten, hurt, or humiliate them.

Any young person can be homophobically bullied, whether they are LGBT or not. Sometimes young people can be homophobically bullied because others think that they are LGBT, because they have LGBT family or friends or often because they are seen as different or not conforming to traditional gender stereotypes. Transgender children and young people can therefore also experience homophobic bullying. Homophobic language and jokes around the school can create a climate of homophobia; for example, the use of the word 'gay' to mean sub-standard or uncool. This type of language should therefore be addressed.

**Intersectionality:** Understanding the different and unequal social and economic outcomes for particular groups, based on intersections between race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and age. In the context of anti-bullying, it is important to understand the connection between the experience of belonging to one or more of these groups and a resultant inequality in attainment and wellbeing.

**Looked After Children and Young People:** Looked after children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying. Children can face bullying behaviour simply because they are looked after and seen in some way as 'different'. Children who are looked after away from home can also experience bullying behaviour in their residential care home, at school and in their community. Looked after children and young people may not always have a stable support network to turn to when experiencing bullying. For some children forming positive relationships with peers and adults can be more difficult due to their early childhood adversity. Developing trusting and supportive relationships between children and practitioners is required to address bullying of all forms and in all settings.

**Marriage/Civil Partnership:** Marriage and civil partnership is a protected characteristic. Whilst it is unlikely that a school-aged pupil will be in a same sex marriage or civil partnership and directly experience prejudice and discrimination as a result, there could be

instances of indirect discrimination, for example, if the child or young person is associated with someone (parent, sibling, etc.) who is in a same sex marriage or civil partnership or in a same sex relationship. Marriage and civil partnership discrimination and prejudice can also affect children and young people in a variety of other settings, for example, in workplaces, further and higher education and in wider society.

**Racism and Race:** Race is a protected characteristic. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups often experience bullying based on perceived differences in dress, communication, appearance, beliefs and/or culture as well as their skin colour and accent. The status of the ethnic group a child belongs to (or people assume they belong to) in a school, community or organisation can often lead to a child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour. This can arise from a misguided and/or learned belief that they are less valued and 'deserve' to be treated differently, or with less respect.

**Religion or Belief:** Religion or belief is a protected characteristic. Lack of knowledge and understanding about the traditions, beliefs and etiquette of different faiths can lead to religious intolerance. Lack of awareness about the differences in practices of religions such as prayer times, dietary requirements, fasting and the wearing of religious clothing or articles of faith can result in misunderstandings and stereotyping, which may lead to bullying. People who have a religion or belief as well as those who do not, are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

**Sectarianism:** Most people understandably associate sectarianism with religion, which is a protected characteristic. The reality of prejudice however means that your family background, the football team you support, the community you live in, the school you attend and even the colour of your clothing can mark you out for sectarian abuse – whatever your beliefs may be. In Scotland, sectarianism is most often related to Protestant and Roman Catholic divisions within Christianity but can also relate to other religions, for example Sunni and Shia Muslims within Islam, and Orthodox and Reform Jews within Judaism.

**Sexism and Gender:** Sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment are all protected characteristics. Bullying in the form of derogatory language and the spreading of malicious rumours can be used to regulate both girls' and boys' behaviour – suggesting that they are not being a real man or a real woman. These terms can be of an explicit sexual nature and it is worth noting that many can involve using terms for people who are gay and lesbian as a negative towards a person's masculinity or femininity. Sexism and gender stereotypes feed into homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Gender stereotyping, based on the notion of acceptable and unacceptable male and female behaviour, can leave children and young people who are perceived not to conform to these notions vulnerable to indirect and direct bullying. Personality traits that do not fit into the unwritten rules of 'appropriate' male and female behaviour can lead to bullying because of the prejudice towards their perceived difference.

**Socio-economic Prejudice:** Bullying due to socio-economic status can take place in any community. Small differences in perceived family income/family living arrangements/social circumstances or values can be used as a basis for bullying behaviours. These behaviours, such as mocking speech patterns, accents, belongings, clothing, etc can become widespread through those considering themselves to be in the dominant socio economic group. Bullying of children who endure parental substance misuse can also be prevalent.



**Young Carers:** The lives of young carers can be significantly affected by their responsibility to care for a family member who has a physical illness or disability, mental health problem, sensory, learning disability, or issues with the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Young carers are at risk of bullying for a variety of reasons. Depending on responsibilities at home, they may find themselves being unable to fully participate in school or after-school activities or 'fun stuff'. This can make it difficult for them to form relationships; it can hinder successful transitions or lead to educational difficulties.

Respect For All, 2017