

Anti-bullying Policy

Category: Pupils – Relationships and learning

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 process is one way by which we aim to reduce our exposure as a Directorate and as a Council to risk. By providing Senior Leaders in the Education Service 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.

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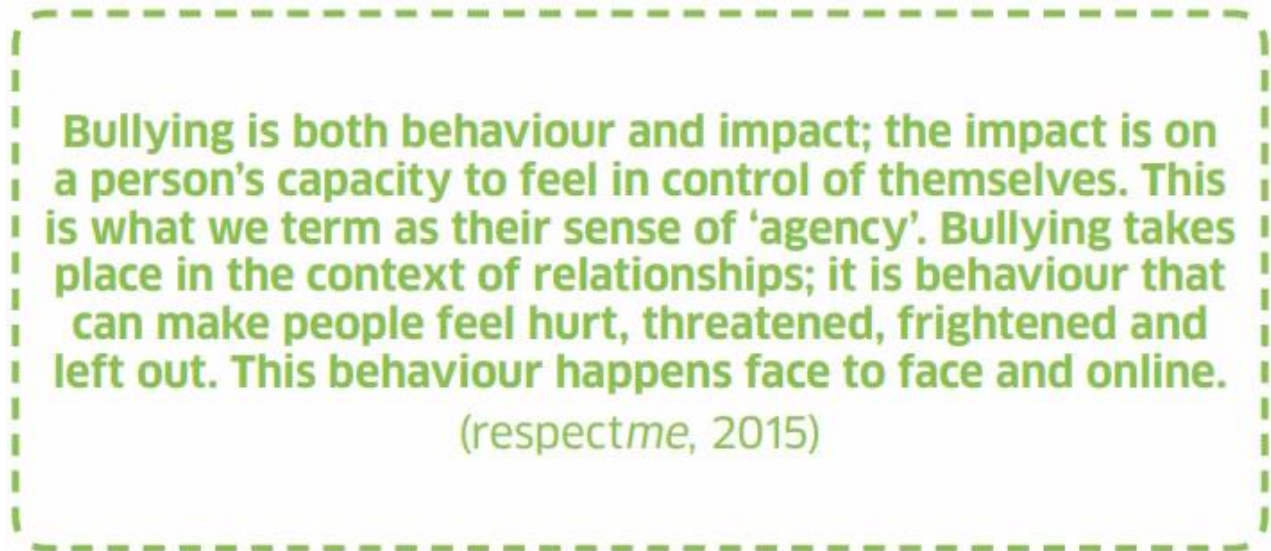
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Introduction

Fife Council Education and Children's Services Directorate, through all staff who work within it, is unequivocally opposed to bullying.

The Nationally agreed definition of bullying is as follows:



[source – Respect Me, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service](#)

We believe that 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 genuine risks associated with children and young people being bullied. Our approach to anti-bullying is set within our wider relationships & behaviour strategy and trauma-informed approach. It recognises that bullying behaviour can only be fully understood within the social context within which it occurs.

Central to 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 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, the community and partners when developing their anti-bullying policy.

We aim to ensure that children do not bully others because they understand the harm it causes and choose 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 due to their behaviour. Our firm belief is that such an approach is ultimately counterproductive and, therefore, all staff, children and parents play an active role in developing and maintaining a school's anti-bullying policy based on this principle; involvement and ownership contribute significantly to effectiveness.

The approach of staff when addressing instances of bullying should always take account of the child or young person's context and past experiences, additional support needs and the behaviours exhibited by those experiencing bullying or those displaying bullying behaviour.

Families have a crucial role in supporting children and young people, and increasingly in managing the bullying behaviour associated with social media used outwith school, as well as supporting schools around mobile phone use within school.

Children's rights

It is every child's right not to be bullied. Children's rights are unique in that many of them, although designed for the safety and protection of children, have to be provided for by adults and the government.

Although children and young people are covered under the Human Rights Act 1998, their rights are more clearly specified under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Although neither specifically mentions bullying, bullying behaviour does breach a number of the articles in both. Alongside this, both outline the responsibilities of adults to protect and safeguard children and young people from bullying behaviour.

Prejudice based bullying

“Prejudice-based bullying is when bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice based on an individual's actual or perceived identity; it can be based on characteristics unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance.” (source: [Scottish Government -Respect for All](#))

In order to respond effectively to incidents as they arise, we must also address the root cause of prejudice.

The Equality Act redresses/protects against prejudice by making it unlawful to discriminate against people with the following “protected characteristics”:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Whilst material deprivation, and in line with Fairer Scotland Duty (2021), is not a protected characteristic at time of writing, we need to mitigate against the stigmatising effect of living in chronic or acute material poverty and/or deprivation.

Directorate Responsibilities

An officer of the Directorate leadership team is identified as the lead officer for 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 the individual establishment/Service level, using 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 practices.
Through the quality improvement process, a school's Education Manager, in collaboration with the school, will review the school's anti-bullying policy, its implementation and the information derived from the information recording system (SEEMiS bullying and equalities module).

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

Establishment Responsibilities

The Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) to ensure that an anti-bullying policy is developed, implemented, maintained and communicated effectively (e.g. easily accessible on school website).
The CPC to be responsible for ensuring that the school anti-bullying policy is up-to-date (reviewed on 2-year cycle) and ensuring that anti-bullying training provided by the Directorate is undertaken by school staff.
The policy to be embedded and reviewed in School Improvement Plans, linked with targets for school ethos, and will articulate with the curriculum through the school's Personal and Social Development/Health & Wellbeing programme.
In all establishments and services, the policy's development and regular review to result from a genuine partnership between staff, children and parents/carers. Critically this process will include considering child and parent/carer feedback, both planned and unsolicited, and consultation with the wider community and partners.
Appropriate training/awareness raising of the latest practice in anti-bullying approaches to be made available to staff, children, parents and carers. Where necessary support will be sought from the Directorate to ensure this requirement is met.
On an annual basis, anti-bullying policy and practice to be included in at least one professional development session.
Talk to learners often about anti-bullying approaches.
Engage with parents/carers/families often about anti-bullying approaches.
Bullying incidents to be recorded and monitored using the Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS, in line with the guidance issued by the Directorate and the Scottish Government.
Anti-bullying 'Power BI' Report (updated monthly) to be analysed and discussed at a strategic level, with appropriate strategies and interventions identified to address emerging trends.
Out of School clubs to develop policies which align effectively with school policies and ensure the effective exchange of relevant information.

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 been 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.
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.

Children and Young People Responsibilities

Report to an appropriate member of staff if they experience behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or disempowered.
Accept support from staff to resolve any bullying concerns.
Be pro-active school citizens, by engaging in activities which support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. This might include participating in Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), for example (see Fife Recommended Approaches).
Exercise being safe and responsible when connecting with others in an online context.
Be positive role models for their peers, by showing others that discrimination of any kind is not okay and being pro-active in reporting any behaviours witnessed.

Family Responsibilities

Ensure, support and promote their child's health and wellbeing.
Encourage and monitor safe and responsible online behaviour.
Talk to an appropriate member of school staff if their child needs help/ if a bullying concern arises.
Be familiar with school policy related to Anti-bullying, Equalities and use of Mobile Devices.
Work in partnership with school staff to resolve bullying concerns and contribute towards an ethos of tolerance and non-discrimination.
Talk to their child(ren) about the importance of valuing people as individuals who make up our diverse society.

Fife Recommended Approaches

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is the Fife recommended approach to addressing bullying behaviours.

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a peer mentoring leadership programme for young people. It gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence.

It addresses a range of behaviours including sexting, controlling behaviour, sexual harassment and consent, and uses a 'bystander' approach where individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators but as empowered and active bystanders, with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way. A strong emphasis has been placed on building healthy, respectful relationships both in the school and in the community.

Mentors in Violence Prevention was introduced to Scotland in 2012 and has its origins in America (Katz, J. 1999). By 2021 all 32 local authorities have engaged with the programme with 30 now actively delivering it in their secondary schools.

A focus on an MVP approach can have a significant positive impact on a school community, particularly around building sustained positive relationships. A belief that bystanders can make a difference benefits pupils and staff to have greater awareness of the detrimental effects of bullying behaviour and to take positive action in tackling all forms of discrimination.

Respect Me

Respect Me is Scotland's Anti-bullying Charity.

Respect Me defines bullying as:

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. Difference should be celebrated and not discriminated against.

As well as promoting approaches to address bullying behaviour Respect Me offers training for establishments and parents/carers.

[respectme Online Learning Modules](#)

Respect Me also provides excellent resources for their annual Anti-Bullying Week (usually mid-November), with each new campaign being co-designed by children and young people. Getting your school community involved in Anti-Bullying Week can provide a useful focus to refresh policy, raise awareness and support the whole school community to demonstrate a commitment to respectful and inclusive relationship based on Children's Rights.

Make School Approaches to Bullying Visible

Approaches to bullying prevention do not sit in isolation and should include curriculum, whole school and targeted approaches. Engendering a sense of community will ensure that addressing bullying is seen as a shared responsibility. Anti-bullying policies should be visible and accessible to families, with clear steps on how to contact the right person at school, should a concern about bullying arise. Through well designed PSE programmes (though not exclusively) schools can support pupils to understand bullying, feel more confident about discussing this and create a culture of safe reporting. Learning about bullying should be a progressive and empowering experience for pupils. School systems for children and young people should be straightforward, easily accessible and discrete.

Schools should systematically review the effectiveness of school-based interventions to bullying behaviours. It is also important to share key messages regularly on how school approaches are having a positive impact on reducing concerns. This should not focus on individual cases, due to confidentiality, but rather data trends, snapshots of 'you said', 'we did' and 'this is the impact' for example.

School transport

Parents and carers are ultimately responsible for the behaviour of their child(ren) when travelling on school transport. Fife Council has a duty to ensure all children/young people travel in reasonable safety and comfort.

The [Scottish Government School Transport Guidance \(2021\)](#) specifies duties for local authorities and parents/carers.

Parents and school staff have a key role in encouraging pupils to behave responsibly whilst on school transport.
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There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide supervisors on school transport under the 1980 Act.
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Extract: [Scottish Government School Transport Guidance \(2021\)](#)

Strategies for promoting responsible behaviour on school buses

Schools may wish to develop a Code of Conduct for pupils travelling on school transport to support efforts to improve behaviour in conjunction with pupils and parents/carers.
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Seating plans and giving older pupils responsibilities for supervising their peers may be considered.

While the supervision of pupils is unnecessary on many journeys, it may be desirable in some circumstances where it could address issues such as inappropriate behaviour or bullying.

Supervision, as a temporary measure, can be exercised by arranging for a teacher or parent to travel on the bus or by employing an individual to accompany the pupils.
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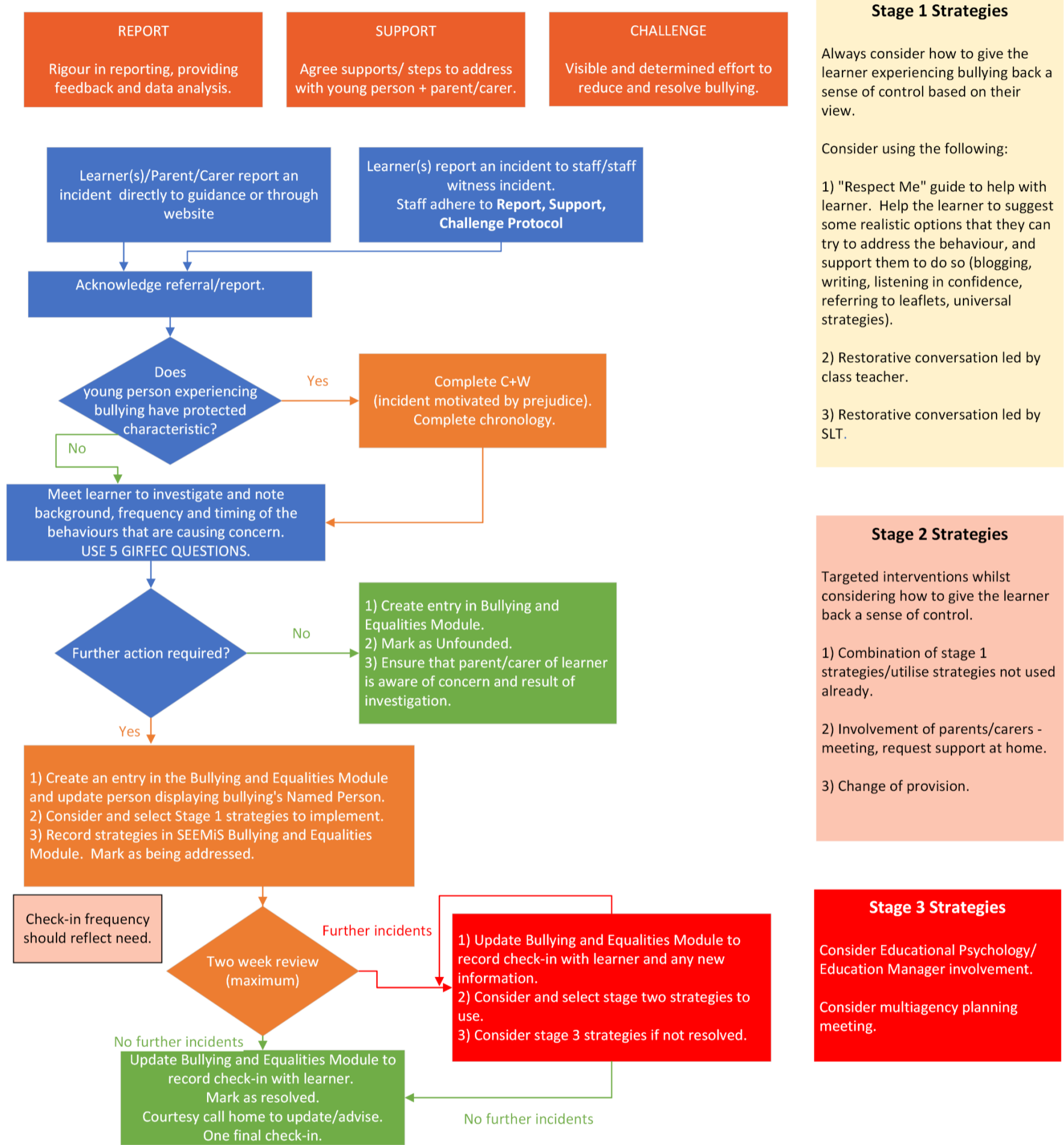
Withdrawal of Transport

Fife Council may withdraw its provision of travel assistance or employ other sanctions, as it considers appropriate, in the case of any child/young person whose behaviour during the journey to or from school is not of an acceptable standard. In addition, schools can employ a number of sanctions ranging from detention to exclusion in order to deal with persistent misbehaviour on school transport.
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School buses fitted with CCTV can be allocated to specific routes and footage can be used to assist investigations. Operators may charge parents/carers for any repair costs in the event of vandalism. Where a criminal act is suspected the police will be notified.
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Where transport is withdrawn from a child/young person, the arrangement and cost of transport may fall to the parent/carer and it may remain the duty of the parent/carer to ensure their child continues to attend school.

Antibullying Flowchart - Primary Sector

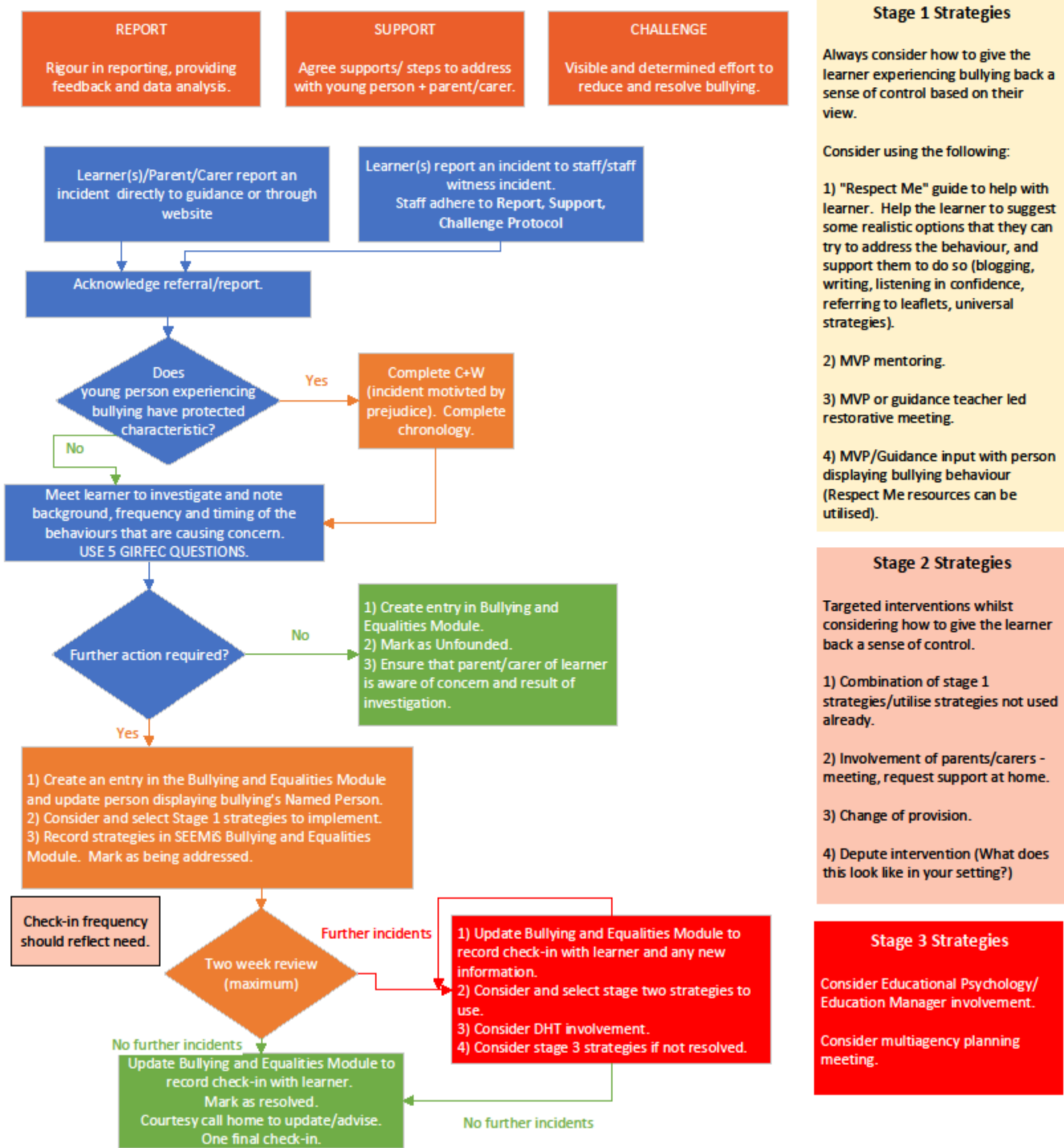


Respect Me - National Definition of Bullying.

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'.



Antibullying Flowchart - Guidance Team



Respect Me - National Definition of Bullying.
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Appendix 3: Process for reviewing current school policy and current practice.

Form a working group.

Setting up a Policy Review Working Group is ideal for taking this forward. This group should represent those who will be expected to implement the policy and those who will be recipients of it.

The group should be as diverse as possible and ideally include the following:

- An influential person to lead the policy review process – this is likely to be a teacher, headteacher or a senior staff member.
- Other staff who will be involved in its implementation.
- At least one parent/carer – and link this process to your Parent/Carer Council if you are based in a school.
- Any relevant school partner, e.g. Community Police, Educational Psychology, Community Wardens etc.
- Children and young people – or find an effective method of gathering pupil or service users' voices through consultations, such as questionnaires.
- A member of the wider school/service community, e.g. pupil support assistant, support workers, police liaison officer, catering or janitorial staff.

Agree on a plan for the way forward at the group's initial meeting. Set meeting dates/key milestones and allow enough time for meaningful consultation with staff, parents, children, and young people. Consider timescales for the new policy to be in place and map out how you will realistically achieve this.

Consider assigning roles to group members to take individual responsibility for drafting a section. The group leader can co-ordinate and edit inputs into an overall draft.

Whether there is an existing policy or the group produces one for the first time, they should familiarise themselves with Respect for All and their Local Authority guidance. These provide the framework within which a school/service policy should sit.

Self-evaluation

To help assess performance in this area, there is a Self-Evaluation Template in Appendix 5. **Use this tool as an internal working document to critically evaluate how good you are at preventing and responding to bullying behaviour and what needs to change.**

Prejudice-based bullying

In line with [Respect for All](#), all schools and services must make a clear statement about prejudice-based bullying and mention each of the protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010. Schools and services that list these help to create an environment where prejudice can be challenged. This also gives adults, children, and young people a clear commitment to respecting safety and promoting inclusion.

Online bullying

The Working Group should ensure that online bullying is taken as seriously as any other form. This should be explicit and woven throughout the anti-bullying policy, rather than a separate section.

It is essential that the working group is aware of the above core messages at this stage of the process and ensures they remain on the agenda at every single stage throughout the process.

Consultation

Consulting with the people involved in implementing and receiving the policy is crucial to its success. Not only does this allow for the critical review of any existing policy, and whether it has achieved its aims, but it also allows for fresh input into the new policy.

Consultation should be extended to:

- The wider school or service community.
- Children and young people.
- Parents and carers.

Be as inclusive and innovative as possible to attract a wide range of views. You can conduct the consultation in several ways, such as questionnaires; focus group discussions; Q&A sessions or suggestion boxes. Sample questionnaires are attached in Appendix 6.

Consider how you are going to manage the responses from your consultation. Feeding back to those you have consulted with is imperative to demonstrate that you have listened and have meaningfully considered their input. The suggestions incorporated as a result of the consultation should be seen and, ideally, acknowledged within the policy. Involving children and young people is the most successful way to address bullying and to create a positive school ethos and culture where respectful relationships are the norm. Children and young people have a right to be included and consulted. Again, you can gather their views through focus groups, surveys, and classroom or group exercises. The results will provide local intelligence about the nature and extent of bullying as they perceive it.

Bullying violates Children's Rights – see the UNCRC for further information: www.unicef.org.uk – and Children's Rights are embedded within Scottish legislation with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation>

Involving families

Parents and carers can be critical partners in supporting how bullying is prevented and responded to. A key stakeholder group is parents and carers, who have a right to be included and consulted. In relation to schools, the principles of involving parents and carers are set out in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The working group should review the current practice, involving parents and carers in developing the anti-bullying policy. The group should also consider good practice around how, when and if parents and carers are informed about bullying incidents and use the principles of children's rights to guide this discussion.

Parents and carers should be able to access school policies with ease.

Appendix 4: Checklist- principles for writing school/establishment anti-bullying policy.

Writing your policy	Yes/No
Included a statement which lays out the organisational stance on bullying, the scope of the policy and links to school vision and values.	
Included a clear commitment to promoting and role-modelling positive relationships and positive behaviour.	
Signposted Respect for All and local authority policy.	
Included a clear commitment to challenging all types of prejudice-based bullying and language.	
All of the protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 are listed.	
Listed the range of strategies that will be used to prevent and respond to bullying (see flowchart – appendix1 for primary/ appendix 2 for secondary).	
Referenced the nationally agreed definition of bullying as set out in Respect for All	
Outlined the recording and monitoring strategies used for management purposes (SEEMiS bullying and equalities module).	
Included a clear statement that bullying is a breach of Children’s Rights.	
Evidenced your consultation responses throughout.	
Set a date for review.	
Considered training needs (e.g. Guidance teachers Respect Me trained).	
Developed expectations, codes of behaviour, and responsibilities for all staff/volunteers, children, and young people.	
Provided clear instruction on how and who to contact should a young person, parent/ carer have a bullying concern.	
Agreed and produced a final draft.	
Set a date for the launch.	
Incorporated any final feedback from the consultation.	
Implementation and review	Yes/No
Involved children and young people.	
Included parental/carers involvement.	
Communication plan in place, including upload to visible area of school website.	
Additional notes:	

Self-evaluation of Anti-bullying Policy and Practice.	Date:	Yes/No
Set up a Policy Review Working Group.		
Agreed on a timescale for policy completion and set out key milestones.		
Referred people to Respect for All.		
Assigned roles/tasks to members of the Policy Review Working Group.		
Completed the Self-Evaluation template.		
Discussed the inclusion of prejudice-based bullying.		
Self-evaluation findings discussed.		
Engaged and consulted with local/community stakeholders.		
Used the sample questionnaires.		
Communicated feedback to ALL those who took part on how their views have shaped and influenced the policy.		
Involved and meaningfully consulted with the wider school/service community.		
Involved and meaningfully consulted with children and young people.		
Involved and meaningfully consulted with parents and carers.		

Appendix 5: Self-evaluation of school policy & practice.

Policy			
Activity	Critical Reflection notes	Actions required	Timescale
Does the school have a current anti-bullying policy reflecting Fife Council Education and Children's Services guidance and Respect for All?			
How well were staff, pupils, parents and other relevant stakeholders involved in the policy development?			
To what extent does the whole-school community own the policy's vision, aims and values? How well has it been communicated and implemented?			
If there is no current policy, what is the plan and timescale for remedying this?			
Whole-school staff training/involvement			
Activity	Critical Reflection notes	Actions required	Timescale
How well do all staff know and understand GIRFEC, the wellbeing indicators, the UNCRC and Respect for All?			
How well do we ensure that all staff undertake regular professional learning around anti-bullying policy and practice?			
Parental/family engagement			
Activity	Critical Reflection notes	Actions required	Timescale
How well do we support families in developing skills which lead to positive relationships, better learning and better behaviour?			

How well do we enable parents, carers and families to contribute to the life of the school/group and be involved in anti-bullying policy and practice?			
How do we ensure that relationships with parents, carers and families, the local community and partners are characterised by trust and respect?			
Recording, monitoring, continuous improvement & learning			
Activity	Critical Reflection notes	Actions required	Timescale
How effective are recording and monitoring processes where there are bullying concerns?			
How well do we know if the steps we have taken to prevent and respond to bullying have improved outcomes for children?			
What is our process for seeking feedback on the effectiveness of anti-bullying work undertaken and ensuring that valuable learning from it is incorporated into future policy?			
Do we have examples of good practice worth sharing more widely?			
Response, support & pupil voice			
Activity	Critical Reflection notes	Actions required	Timescale
How clear are children and young people about how they can report bullying and what level of support they can expect?			
How well do we support children and young people to recover their sense of agency and make decisions about their wellbeing after a bullying experience?			
How well do staff know learners as individuals?			

Appendix 6: Sample questionnaires

Wider school – teaching staff and school community

Have you seen bullying between children and young people?
What kinds of bullying have you seen?
Do you notice bullying behaviour, attitudes or language that is discriminatory, for example, racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or about faith or religion?
What is your understanding of the school/establishment's procedures about bullying?
Are you clear about what is expected of you?
What do you do when you see or hear bullying behaviour?
What action do you take when someone tells you they are being bullied?
What do you think should be included in the school policy?
What additional support or training do you need to address bullying behaviour?
How do you think bullying can be prevented?
What can you do to role model respectful relationships?

Children and young people

What kind of bullying behaviour have you seen or been involved in?
Do you notice bullying behaviour or language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or about someone's faith or religion? For example, have you seen or heard people making fun of someone, leaving them out because they are Muslim or Jewish or Catholic, or calling someone names using language that puts down gay people or girls and women?
What should someone who is being bullied do?
What should the school do about bullying behaviour?
What should the school do with people who are bullying others?
What do you think should happen about bullying outside of school?
What do you think parents and carers can do to help bullying situations?
What can you do to role model respectful relationships?

Families

Have you witnessed any kind of bullying?
What would you do if your child was being bullied?
Do you know who to contact if you have concerns?
Do you understand the steps the school/organisation would take to support the bullied person?
Do you understand the steps the school/organisation would take to deal with the person/people involved in the bullying?
What should be included in a school anti-bullying policy that would help everyone in school feel supported?
How do you think bullying can be prevented?
What do you think should happen about bullying outside of school?
What can parents and carers do to help resolve bullying situations?
What can you do to role model respectful relationships?