



Pitlessie Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy



Revised June 2025

“The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community, including parents, whether for young people in school or those not in school.”

Curriculum for Excellence: Building The Curriculum 3 (2008)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is designed to apply to children and young people aged 3 to 12 in Pitlessie Primary School. It aligns closely with Fife Council policy which applies to all pupils aged 3-18.
- 1.2 Pitlessie Primary School is committed to the personal and social wellbeing of all children and young people growing up in our catchment and across 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 We are 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.
- 1.4 **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.**
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 Our anti-bullying policy 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. The GIRFEC wellbeing indicators are considered when planning the support provided for children who experience instances of bullying or children who exhibit bullying behaviours. Please see appendix 1.

- 1.8 We recognise 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. Mrs O'Brien is the single point of contact for reporting bullying incidents and has been trained in the best ways to deal with incidences of online bullying.
- 1.9 Our anti-bullying approach is incorporated into both our whole school assemblies and our health and wellbeing curriculum in our classes. Respecting yourself and others are a core part of our values as a school and as such are inextricably linked to our conversations with children daily. This means that our approach to anti-bullying is woven into our every day as well as being talked about explicitly as part of our learning.
- 1.10 Pitlessie Primary School is fully committed to equality and diversity and to ensuring that our school 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 2, reproduced here with the kind permission of Respectme.

Details can be obtained from the Respectme website at: <http://www.respectme.org.uk/prejudice.html>

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

1.11 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.

1.12 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), and the national initiative, Getting It Right for Every Child. 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 on a 3-year cycle 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, where appropriate, using the Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS Click+Go, in line with the guidance issued by the Directorate;

- 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 Incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded using the Bullying and Equalities module within the school's SEEMiS Click+Go system.
- 5.2 Should the incident be dealt with by a member of staff, this incident should be passed to SPoC as soon as possible so that it can be recorded on SEEMiS. Likewise, any contact with parents should be passed to SPoC.
- 5.3 Appropriate training has been received regarding the recording of bullying incidents for the school's Single Point of Contact (SPoC) - Lesley O'Brien. Directorate guidance on the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents is available on FISH.
- 5.4 An appropriate record of bullying incidents will be maintained and we are aware 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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/>

5.7 Fife Council will also use the information recorded in the council systems to compile reports for council officers and schools, to inform service improvement.

5.8 We will provide an analysis, where appropriate, of incidents of bullying in our annual Standards and Quality Report for Fife Council Area Committees.

6.0 Staff training

6.1 On an annual basis, all staff will participate in at least one training event, organised or led by the anti-bullying Single Point of Contact, Lesley O'Brien.

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. We will provide this update in the August of each year, with newly appointed staff having access to this training material in our induction folder..

6.3 We will consider whether or not it is appropriate to update our anti-bullying policy each August once guidance from the Directorate is received.

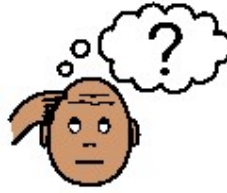
6.4 Our school educational psychologist was and will be consulted on our anti-bullying policy on an ongoing basis.

6.5 The SPoC will have the opportunity to undertake further training if this is felt necessary or as a result of guidance from the Directorate.

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. We shall embed this into our self-evaluation cycle to ensure our policy strongly underpins the practice we have in our school.



What do I think?

I want to feel	What would help?
Safe 	
Healthy 	
Achieving 	
Nurtured 	
Active 	
Respected & Responsible 	
Included 	

Appendix 2 – Prejudice-based bullying¹

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 have in common is difference or perceived difference – some children and young people don't see or understand diversity, they still only see difference.

Difference, or perceived difference, can be a catalyst for children and young people being bullied. If you would like to find out more about the different types of prejudice-based bullying listed below, visit our useful links section.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Children and young people who are asylum seekers or refugees may be at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly. Stigma, due to lack of knowledge and understanding of asylum seekers and refugees, together with a reluctance to burden parents with extra worries can allow bullying to continue and go undetected.

Body Image

Body image is hugely important to children and young people and bullying because of body image can have a significantly negative impact. For example, a child or young person who is noticeably over or underweight may find that they are particularly vulnerable to bullying behaviour.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying is mainly directed towards young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) or young people who are questioning their sexuality. However, it can also be directed at young people who do not conform to strict gender 'norms'. For example, a boy who doesn't like football may stand out as being different. Ultimately, any young person can be homophobically bullied and any young person can display homophobic attitudes, which should be challenged.

Transgender

Is an umbrella term used to describe someone who does not conform to society's view of being male or female. Children and young people who are experiencing confusion over their gender identity may be the target of transphobia. Transphobia at its most basic is the fear of a transgender person and the hatred, discrimination, intolerance and prejudice that this fear brings. This can result in bullying behaviour towards an individual because they are not seen to be conforming to gender stereotyping and 'norms'. If children and young people are experiencing confusion over their gender identity, they may be reluctant to challenge bullying behaviour that could attract further attention to them.

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Looked after children

Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated are vulnerable to bullying behaviour for a number of reasons: It may be due to regular changes in schools or where they are placed, which can make forming friendships difficult; they may have poor relationship skills stemming from attachment difficulties; inappropriate reactions to situations as a result of learned behaviours; a reluctance to make friends; low self-esteem, lack of role models and a heightened sense of privacy.

Race and Ethnicity

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups, including the gypsy/travelling community, often experience bullying based on perceived differences in dress, communication, appearance, beliefs and/or culture. The status of 'minority' in a school, community or organisation can often make a child or young person the focus for those involved in bullying behaviour. This can arise from a misguided and/or learned belief that they 'deserve' to be treated differently or with less respect.

Religion and Belief

Lack of knowledge and understanding about the traditions, beliefs and etiquette of different faiths, or having no faith, 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 fuel bullying.

Sectarianism

Most people understandably associate Sectarianism with religion. 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 as a target for sectarian abuse - whatever your beliefs may be.

Sexism and Gender

Gender inequality and stereotyping can leave children and young people, and in particular girls, who do not conform to these norms vulnerable to bullying.

Bullying in the form of derogatory language, online comments 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 if they do not behave in such a way towards others. Personality traits that do not fit in to the unwritten rules of 'appropriate' male and female behaviour can make children and young people a target for their actual or perceived difference. These terms can be of an explicit gender-based nature and it is worth noting that many can involve using terms for people who are gay and lesbian as a negative towards someone.

This behaviour should not be confused with sexually aggressive behaviour, which is potentially a form of criminal harassment and should be treated as such. For this reason, in Scotland we recommend against using the term 'sexual bullying' as a descriptor in policies or in practice – it is an unclear and reductive term. Sexual assault and exploitation are not types of bullying, they are abuse.

Gender-based bullying – if unchallenged can lead to a deepening of attitudes and behaviour towards girls or those who do not conform to gender norms that can escalate to more abusive behaviours. This behaviour can take place face-to-face, in private and online or sometimes a combination of all of these. What happens or is shared online will directly impact upon a person and that should be our focus. In all probability, online activity will relate directly to an experience or conversation they have had in person.

Successful anti-bullying work focuses on equalities and developing and modelling relationships based on respect and fairness – and this must include gender.

Disablist Bullying

People who bully others may see children and young people with disabilities as being less able to defend themselves and less able to tell an adult about the bullying. The bullying behaviour is likely to be focused upon their specific disability or disabilities, whether they are in mainstream schooling or in specialist provision, and may result in a need for additional support to be provided.

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 or 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.

Social and Economic Prejudice

Bullying due to social and economic status can take place in any group no matter how little diversity exists in it. Small differences in perceived class/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, belongings, clothing, hygiene, etc can become widespread through those considering themselves to be in the dominant social economic group or class. Bullying of children who endure parental substance misuse can also be prevalent in some locations.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2010, we have a duty to assess all new policies and guidance to ensure it fulfils our duties under the Act. The Equality Act 2010 sets out a range of individual characteristics that are 'Protected' from discrimination and unfair treatment including bullying. All children have the right to feel safe regardless of Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race,

Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual orientation. All anti-bullying guidance should include all of the protected characteristics as well as other issues that may see children discriminated against such as body image or socio economic status.

Bullying, whether linked to prejudicial attitudes or not, can sometimes create additional support needs for children and young people. There is specific legislation in this area in the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009. Further support can be accessed at <http://www.enquire.org.uk/pcp/pdf/ASL-Act-2009-changes.pdf>