

# 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.

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# Anti- Bullying Policy

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## 1. Purpose and Context

This guidance is an updated version of our previous Anti-Bullying policy. It aligns with the Scottish Government’s “Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People” (2024). It reflects the current context giving guidance on issues such as online bullying, prejudice-based bullying and how to interpret the definition of bullying.

This guidance also reflects our commitment to The Promise, ensuring that responses to bullying are rooted in trusted relationships, trauma-informed practice, and an understanding of the needs of care-experienced children and young people

### Preventing Bullying in Fife Schools

Fife’s updated guidance on Anti-Bullying helps schools create environments that are safe, inclusive, and nurturing for everyone. It builds on national frameworks like **GIRFEC** (Getting It Right for Every Child), **Curriculum for Excellence**, and the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

In line with The Promise, Fife schools prioritise strong, stable relationships and a sense of belonging for every child, recognising these as protective factors against bullying

Preventing bullying is part of a wider commitment to building respectful relationships. Fife's policy supports schools to:

- Use consistent, rights-based approaches across all staff and settings
- Understand and respond to the changing needs of children and young people
- Promote inclusion, equity, and emotional safety for all

Every school is expected to use the policy to reflect on current practice and identify areas for improvement. As part of this, each school should create a clear action plan showing how they will:

- Build positive relationships and behaviour
- Prevent and respond to bullying
- Put in place the right supports and structures for pupils and staff

Anti-bullying responsibilities are shared across the Directorate, schools, individual staff, children and young people, and families. In keeping with The Promise, families are valued as equal partners, and schools commit to communication that supports meaningful engagement. Children and young people will be involved in shaping anti-bullying approaches, ensuring their voices influence both prevention and response. This collective approach reflects national guidance, including *Respect for All* and the UNCRRC, and ensures that bullying is addressed as a shared priority rooted in rights, relationships, and inclusion. (Appendix 1)

*The Nationally agreed definition of bullying is as follows:*

“Bullying is face to face and/or online behaviour which impacts on a person’s sense of physical and emotional safety, their capacity to feel in control of their life and their ability to respond effectively to the situation they are in.

The behaviour does not need to be repeated, or intended to cause harm, for it to have an impact. Bullying Behaviour can be physical, emotional or verbal and can cause people to feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out.”

– [\*\*\*Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People\*\*\*](#)

## 2. Understanding Bullying and Building Positive Relationships

It is important to tell the difference between bullying and other types of conflict or fallouts. Not every disagreement between children is bullying and calling all relationship problems “bullying” can take away from the seriousness of real bullying and the harm it causes.

Our anti-bullying work is part of a wider approach to relationships, behaviour, and trauma-informed practice. We know that bullying does not happen in isolation, it is shaped by the social environment around a child. Bullying can make a child feel unsafe, powerless, and unsure how to respond in their relationships. That is why we focus on helping children feel safe, confident, and supported.

To build positive relationships and behaviour, we focus on:

- Helping children and young people understand what bullying is and isn't
- Teaching skills such as empathy, respect, and problem-solving
- Supporting children and young people to make good choices in how they treat others

We also work closely with parents and carers. Preventing bullying is a shared responsibility, and we're committed to:

- Supporting children and young people who have been bullied
- Challenging and helping those who have bullied
- Listening to families and communities when shaping school policies

When staff respond to bullying, they should always consider the child's background, experiences, support needs, and the behaviour of everyone involved. Every situation is different, and our response should reflect that.

To prevent bullying and help everyone feel safe, schools should build a positive culture where respect, fairness, and inclusion are part of everyday life. When children and young people learn how to build healthy relationships and treat others with kindness, it helps create a bullying-free environment.

We use approaches that support good behaviour, promote equality, and build emotional wellbeing. These include:

- Rights Respecting Schools – helping children understand their rights and respect the rights of others
- Mentoring and peer support – giving pupils someone to talk to and learn from

- MVP (Mentors in Violence Prevention) – encouraging pupils to speak up and support each other
- Restorative approaches – helping people repair relationships after harm
- Nurturing approaches – creating safe, caring spaces for learning
- Pupil voice and participation – making sure children and young people are heard and involved in decisions

Families play a key role in supporting children and young people. This includes helping them manage online behaviour outside of school and working with schools around mobile technology use during the school day.

### 3. Whole-School Approaches to Preventing Bullying

Preventing bullying is not a standalone task confined to specific times or activities it must be embedded across all aspects of school life. In line with The Promise, this means creating environments where every child feels loved, safe, respected, and able to rely on trusted relationships. Anti-bullying work should be integrated within the curriculum, whole-school initiatives, and targeted support where appropriate. A proactive, inclusive approach ensures that respectful relationships are consistently promoted and modelled.

When children and young people feel part of a caring and connected school community, bullying behaviours are more likely to be identified early and addressed collaboratively, fostering a culture of safety, empathy, and shared responsibility.

Schools should make sure their anti-bullying policies are located on their school websites and that these are easy to understand. Families should know who to contact if they have a concern and pupils should feel confident that they'll be listened to and supported. This reflects The Promise's commitment to children's voice, dignity, and the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Personal and Social Education (PSE) lessons—and other parts of the curriculum—can help pupils:

- Understand what bullying is and isn't
- Feel confident talking about it
- Know how to report it safely
- Learn how to support others

Learning about bullying should be empowering. Pupils should feel safe, supported, and able to take part in creating a respectful school culture. Reporting systems should be simple, private, and easy to use.

Schools should regularly check how well their anti-bullying work is going. They can do this by:

- Looking at data and trends
- Listening to pupil and family feedback
- Sharing updates like “You said / We did / This is the impact”

This helps everyone to see what is working and where improvements are needed without sharing personal details about individual cases.

To support school in addressing bullying behaviours a range of approaches are adopted across Fife, these are detailed in Appendix 2.

## 4. Reporting, Recording and Monitoring

### **Reporting Bullying**

In line with *Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People* and *The Promise*, all schools must ensure that bullying concerns can be reported safely, respectfully, and consistently by both children and adults.

### **Children and Young People**

Children and young people should be supported to:

- Speak to a trusted adult—such as a teacher, support assistant, or pastoral staff member, someone they feel safe with and who knows them well
- Use agreed reporting routes—this may include verbal conversations, written notes, digital forms, or pupil voice systems
- Share how the behaviour made them feel and what support they need
- Be involved in decisions about how the concern is responded to

Reporting systems must be:

- **Clear and accessible** for all learners, including those with additional support needs
- **Emotionally safe**, protecting children from retaliation or shame
- **Rights-based**, upholding the UNCRC Articles 12 and 16 (right to be heard and right to privacy)
- **Regularly promoted** through assemblies, posters, pupil councils, and wellbeing programmes

### **Parents, Carers and Staff**

Adults should also feel confident and supported to report bullying concerns. This includes:

- **Parents/carers** contacting the school directly—via phone, email, or in person—to raise concerns about their child’s experience or behaviour
- **Staff** following internal procedures to record and escalate concerns, including using SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities
- **All adults** knowing who to speak to (e.g. the Child Protection Coordinator or Named Person) and what steps will follow

### **Schools must:**

- Ensure reporting routes are clearly communicated to families and staff
- Respond to adult concerns with empathy, transparency, and timely action
- Involve families in resolution planning and follow-up support
- Record all incidents consistently and use data to inform improvement

This shared approach ensures that bullying is addressed as a relational issue, not just a behavioural one and that everyone in the school community feels safe, heard, and supported.

## 5. Recording Bullying Concerns in Schools

When someone raises a concern about bullying, it's important that the school records it quickly—ideally within three working days. In line with *The Promise*, this process must protect the child's dignity, emotional safety, and right to be heard.

This also make sure the issue is followed up promptly, supports the wellbeing of the pupil involved and allows the school and local authority to track patterns and progress across schools.

All schools in Fife use the **SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities** system to record bullying concerns. This is part of our commitment to safe, consistent practice and data protection.

Within our Early Learning Centres .....

It is important to know that:

- A concern should be recorded even if it has not yet been fully investigated or proven
- The record should include the key details about what was reported
- The system should be updated as the school investigates the concern and takes any action

This process helps schools respond fairly and consistently, while making sure pupils feel heard and supported.

### **What Should Be Included**

When a bullying concern is raised, it is important to record a clear and accurate picture of what happened. This helps schools respond properly, support everyone involved, and track patterns over time.

Below details what should be included when recording a bullying incident:

- **Who was involved** – children, young people, staff, or other adults
- **What happened** – the type of behaviour (e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats)
- **Where and when** – the time and place the incident took place
- **Any protected characteristics** – such as disability, race, gender identity, or sexual orientation
- **Impact** – how the incident affected the child or young person, and whether they need extra support

- **Outcome** – whether the issue was resolved, not resolved, or found to be unfounded
- **Actions taken** – what the school did to respond and support those involved

In line with children’s rights (UNCRC Articles 12 and 16), schools should involve the child or young person in agreeing what is recorded, wherever possible. Their voice matters, and they have the right to be heard and to have their privacy respected.

If the incident includes discrimination or abuse linked to a protected characteristic (e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia), this should be clearly recorded. SEEMiS allows staff to log multiple types of behaviour and note whether prejudice may have played a role.

A helpful way to guide the recording process is to ask:

- What was the behaviour?
- What impact did it have?
- What does the child or young person want to happen?
- What needs to be done now—does this raise any child protection concerns?
- What attitudes or prejudices may have influenced the behaviour

All incidents should be followed up within 2 weeks of the incident date. All actions should be recorded in SEEMiS and it should be noted if the parent/carer of both the pupil displaying the behaviour or experiencing the behaviours are satisfied or not with the outcome.

## 6. Monitoring

Monitoring bullying is a critical part of creating safe, inclusive school environments. In line with *Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People*, *The Promise* and Fife Council’s Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour framework, schools must have robust systems in place to record, review, and respond to bullying concerns.

Monitoring of bullying should involve using data to inform practice. Schools should monitor their bullying data through PowerBI to identify trends, emerging concerns, and areas where additional support or training may be needed. This includes looking at:

- recurring patterns involving particular groups or contexts

- identity-based or prejudice-based harm
- the impact of transitions, relationships, or environmental factors
- whether children feel safe, heard, and supported throughout the process

Patterns in behaviour, relationships, and wellbeing help schools identify where additional relational scaffolding, staff training, or targeted support may be needed—particularly for children who are care-experienced, have experienced trauma, or may be more vulnerable to stigma or exclusion.

Feedback from children, young people, and families is also essential to monitor effectively. Schools are expected to seek input from those affected by bullying about how incidents were handled and how safe and supported they felt throughout the process. This qualitative feedback should be used to strengthen emotional safety and relational approaches.

As part of Fife’s quality improvement process, Education Managers work with schools to review their anti-bullying policy and practice, ensuring that monitoring is meaningful and that data is being used to drive positive change. This collaborative approach ensures that bullying is not only addressed but understood and prevented.

## 7. Staff Training and Development

All education staff will be required to undertake regular training (every 2 years) in anti-bullying approaches, aligned with *Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People* and supported by guidance from *Respectme*, Scotland’s national anti-bullying service. This training ensures that staff understand the definitions, dynamics, and impact of bullying, including identity-based harm and are equipped to respond in ways that are restorative, trauma-informed, and rights-respecting.

In line with *The Promise*, this training will equip staff to build strong, trusting relationships with children and young people, respond in trauma-informed ways, and recognise the importance of belonging as a foundation for safety and wellbeing.

The **National Anti-Racism Framework for Initial Teacher Education (ITE)** embeds **anti-racist practice and racial literacy** into teacher training, preparing new teachers to challenge racism in classrooms. In Fife, probationer support builds on this training by offering structured mentoring, professional learning, and opportunities to reflect on real

incidents. This strengthens consistency across schools and ensures that anti-bullying approaches are applied collaboratively.

## 8. Responding to Bullying: Consequences and Supportive Actions

Establishing clear, age-appropriate behavioural boundaries is essential to healthy child development. These boundaries provide structure, safety, and consistency—helping children and young people build social competence and key skills for life, learning, and work. Promoting positive behaviour is central to wellbeing and is reflected in the **GIRFEC wellbeing indicators**.

In line with The Promise, Fife’s **Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour** guidance and our **anti-bullying policy**, expectations should be developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and rights-based. This includes recognising the difference between conflict and bullying and responding to behaviour in ways that support emotional safety and relational repair.

The **Scottish Government** defines consequences as actions taken in response to behaviour. These may be:

- **Supportive and restorative**—to address behaviour that falls short of expectations
- **Reinforcing**—to recognise and strengthen positive behaviour

When behaviour causes harm, including bullying, consequences should be used constructively. This means:

- Understanding the underlying factors influencing the behaviour
- Implementing supports that reduce the likelihood of recurrence
- Ensuring responses are proportionate, trauma-informed, and aligned with the child’s rights under the **UNCRC (Appendix 3)**

In line with Respect for All and Fife Council’s Anti-Bullying Policy, schools adopt restorative, inclusive, and trauma-informed approaches when responding to incidents of bullying. The aim is to support all children and young people involved, promote accountability, and prevent recurrence. This includes recognising that both the child experiencing harm and the child displaying harmful behaviour may require support, connection, and opportunities to repair relationships.

Consequences and interventions may include:

- Restorative conversations to help pupils understand the impact of their behaviour and repair relationships
- Targeted support such as mentoring, wellbeing check-ins, or access to counselling and nurture provision
- Behaviour support plans or agreements co-developed with pupils and families to promote positive change
- Increased supervision or temporary adjustments to routines to ensure safety and rebuild trust
- Parental engagement through joint planning and solution-focused dialogue
- Referral to multi-agency partners where additional needs or risks are identified

**Exclusion is considered only in exceptional circumstances** and in accordance with national guidance. In line with *The Promise*, exclusion is not used as a punitive measure and should only be considered when necessary to ensure immediate safety and enable appropriate planning. Schools must consider the potential impact of exclusion on a child's relationships, wellbeing, and sense of belonging, particularly for care-experienced children.

All responses must be applied consistently and fairly, and be proportionate, rights-respecting, and designed to meet the needs of both the person experiencing bullying and the person displaying harmful behaviour. Schools are supported to evidence impact through both qualitative and quantitative data, ensuring that interventions are meaningful, inclusive, and sustainable

## 9. Understanding the Difference Between Conflict and Bullying

As children and young people grow and build relationships, it's normal for them to fall out, disagree, or have arguments. These moments are part of learning how to manage friendships and communicate with others—and they're not the same as bullying.

Conflict can happen in healthy relationships. Often, at least one person involved wants to fix things and make amends. They care about the relationship and want to move forward. This kind of conflict is usually short-term, and both people have equal power in the situation.

Bullying is different. It's not just a one-off disagreement—it's a pattern of behaviour that causes harm and makes someone feel unsafe, excluded, or powerless. Bullying breaks

down trust and respect in relationships and can seriously affect a child or young person's emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging.

That is why it is important to help children talk about how they feel, build strong communication skills, and learn how to manage their relationships in positive ways. When schools and families understand the difference between conflict and bullying, they can respond in the right way and support children effectively in ways that protect dignity, strengthen relationships, and uphold every child's right to feel loved, safe, and respected.

### **Prejudice-Based Bullying**

Prejudice-based bullying is recognised as a serious breach of a child's right to feel loved, safe, and respected. In line with The Promise, schools must actively challenge all forms of prejudice and stigma including those linked to protected characteristics, poverty, care experience, or family circumstances and respond in ways that protect dignity, rebuild trust, and strengthen every child's sense of belonging

Prejudice-based bullying happens when someone is targeted because of who they are, or who others think they are. It's often linked to unfair attitudes about identity, such as race, disability, gender, or religion.

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination based on nine "protected characteristics," including age, disability, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage or civil partnership.

Although poverty is not a protected characteristic, the **Fairer Scotland Duty** reminds us that schools must still challenge stigma and support children affected by material deprivation. This means recognising how poverty can impact wellbeing and relationships and taking steps to reduce unfair treatment.

By understanding and respecting all identities, schools can respond to prejudice-based bullying and create environments where every child feels safe, valued, and included.

### **Online Bullying**

Online bullying (cyberbullying) is recognised as a significant and evolving concern. It involves the use of digital technologies—including social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, and mobile devices—to intimidate, isolate, or humiliate individuals.

Online bullying must be understood as a form of relational harm, not solely a technological issue. It often mirrors offline behaviours such as exclusion, threats, and

the spreading of rumours, but is amplified by features such as non-consensual image sharing, transient messaging, and anonymous accounts.

Online bullying should be addressed within the wider context of peer relationships, emotional wellbeing, and safeguarding. Schools must ensure that systems for reporting and responding to online bullying are accessible, trusted, and trauma-informed.

Certain forms of online bullying may constitute criminal offences. Staff should be aware of the following legal provisions:

- **Equality Act 2010** – prohibits discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on protected characteristics, which may include online abuse.
- **Communications Act 2003 (Section 127)** – criminalises the sending of grossly offensive, obscene, or menacing messages via public electronic communications.
- **Malicious Communications Act 1988** – covers communications intended to cause distress or anxiety.
- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997** – provides protection against repeated conduct amounting to harassment, including online behaviour.
- **Defamation and Malicious Publication (Scotland) Act 2021** – enables individuals to seek redress for false and damaging online statements.
- **Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016** – criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.
- **Online Safety Act 2023** – introduces new offences including cyberflashing, threatening communications, intimate image abuse, and encouraging serious self-harm.

Schools must ensure that staff are trained to recognise when online behaviour crosses legal thresholds and to respond appropriately in partnership with families, Police Scotland, and other agencies. Online bullying should be recorded using SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities, with reference to protected characteristics and any relevant legal concerns.

### **Bullying on School Transport**

Fife Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people travel to and from school in safety, comfort, and with respect. While the Council provides transport assistance in line with national guidance, **parents and carers remain responsible for their child's behaviour while using school transport.**

The **Scottish Government School Transport Guidance (2021)** outlines shared responsibilities between local authorities, schools, and families. Although there is **no statutory requirement** under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to provide adult supervision on school transport, schools and families play a key role in promoting respectful and responsible behaviour.

Bullying on school transport is treated seriously and should be addressed in line with the school's anti-bullying policy. This includes:

- Recognising bullying as relational harm, not just isolated incidents
- Recording concerns promptly using **SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities**, including any prejudice-based elements
- Ensuring pupils know how to report concerns safely and discreetly
- Engaging with families to support resolution and wellbeing

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour on School Transport**

Schools are encouraged to:

- Develop a **Code of Conduct** for pupils using school transport, in partnership with families and pupils
- Consider **seating plans, peer support roles, or temporary supervision** where needed
- Use restorative and relational approaches to address incidents and rebuild trust

### **Sanctions and Withdrawal of Transport**

Where behaviour—including bullying—is persistent or serious:

- **Fife Council may withdraw travel assistance** or apply other sanctions
- **Schools may use disciplinary measures**, including detention or exclusion, in line with their behaviour policy
- **CCTV footage** may be reviewed to support investigations
- **Parents/carers may be charged** for damage caused by vandalism
- **Police Scotland will be informed** if a criminal offence is suspected

If transport is withdrawn, it becomes the **parent/carer's responsibility** to arrange and fund alternative travel to ensure the child continues to attend school.

## Anti-Bullying Responsibilities Across the System

### Directorate Responsibilities

- A named member of the Directorate leadership team leads on anti-bullying policy. They are responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented effectively and for reporting to the Directorate and Fife Council.
- The Directorate monitors how well the policy is working across schools and services, using data from SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities.
- Policy development and support are based on evidence—using recorded incidents, outcomes, and feedback from children, families, and staff.
- The Directorate supports schools by:
  - Coordinating training and professional learning
  - Sharing good practice
  - Working with partner agencies
- As part of the quality improvement process, Education Managers work with schools to review their anti-bullying policy, how it's being used, and what the data tells us.
- Each year, schools are expected to review their anti-bullying practice. This includes:
  - Analysing bullying data and outcomes
  - Gathering feedback from children and families about how incidents were handled
  - Identifying areas for improvement
- Ensure all staff undertake Respect Me anti-bullying eLearning courses every 2 years

## Establishment Responsibilities

- The **Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)** is responsible for ensuring the school has an up-to-date anti-bullying policy that is clearly communicated (e.g. on the school website).
- The policy should be reviewed every two years and embedded in the School Improvement Plan, linking to ethos, Relationships & Behaviour Policy and Health & Wellbeing curriculum.
- Policy development and review must involve staff, pupils, parents/carers, and community partners. Feedback—both planned and unsolicited—should shape improvements.
- School leaders must:
  - Ensure all staff undertake Respect Me anti-bullying eLearning courses every 2 years
  - Include anti-bullying in at least one annual professional learning session
  - Talk regularly with learners and families about anti-bullying approaches
  - Record all incidents using SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities
  - Use the monthly **Power BI report** to identify trends and plan targeted responses
- Out-of-school clubs should align their policies with the school's and ensure relevant information is shared appropriately.

## Individual Staff Responsibilities

All Fife Council Education staff should:

- Be familiar with their setting's anti-bullying policy and contribute to its review
- Follow procedures for recording, responding to, and monitoring bullying incidents
- Support children who have been bullied and those displaying bullying behaviour
- Share relevant information with the child's Named Person or other professionals to ensure safety
- Reflect on their anti-bullying practice as part of ongoing professional development
- Undertake Respect Me anti-bullying eLearning courses every 2 years

## Children and Young People Responsibilities

Children and young people are encouraged to:

- Tell a trusted adult if they experience or witness behaviour that makes them feel unsafe
- Accept support to resolve bullying concerns
- Take part in activities that promote equality and inclusion (e.g. MVP)
- Be safe and respectful online
- Be positive role models by standing up against discrimination and reporting concerns

## Family Responsibilities

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Support their child's health, wellbeing, and respectful relationships
- Monitor and discuss safe online use and behaviour
- Speak to school staff if their child needs help or if bullying is suspected
- Be familiar with the school's policies on anti-bullying, equalities, and mobile device use
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve concerns and promote a culture of respect
- Talk with their child about the importance of valuing others and celebrating diversity

## Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour

All schools in Fife are expected to develop their own **Relationships and Behaviour Policy**, rooted in the values of respect, inclusion, and emotional safety. This policy should be co-created with staff, learners, and families, and embedded in the daily life and culture of the school community.

The **Promoting Positive Relationships & Behaviour in Schools** guidance provides practical tools and materials to support this work. It forms part of Fife's wider **Relationships and Behaviour Strategy**, helping schools create environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and ready to learn.

### Wellbeing Approaches

The **5 Ways to Wellbeing** framework supports emotional health across school communities. It encourages:

- **Connect** – Build strong relationships with others
- **Be Active** – Take part in physical activity to boost mood and health
- **Take Notice** – Be present and appreciate your surroundings
- **Keep Learning** – Try new things to grow confidence and skills
- **Give** – Help others and contribute to your community

This approach can be woven through Health & Wellbeing planning, pupil voice activities, and whole-school initiatives.

### Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

**MVP** is Fife's recommended approach to addressing bullying and promoting respectful relationships. It is a peer-led leadership programme that empowers young people to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours—including sexting, controlling behaviour, sexual harassment, and consent.

Using a **bystander approach**, MVP encourages pupils to take safe, positive action when they witness bullying or discrimination. It helps build a culture where everyone understands their role in creating a respectful school environment.

MVP has been adopted by all 32 Scottish local authorities, with most actively delivering it in secondary schools. Schools using MVP report stronger relationships and increased confidence in tackling bullying and prejudice.

## Respect Me: Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service

**Respect Me** defines bullying as both behaviour and impact—what someone does and how it affects another person's sense of control or 'agency'. Bullying happens in relationships and can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened, or excluded. It can occur face-to-face or online.

Respect Me promotes inclusive, rights-based approaches to bullying prevention and offers training for schools and families. Their **online learning modules** and **Anti-Bullying Week resources** (co-designed with children and young people) help schools refresh policy, raise awareness, and demonstrate a commitment to respectful relationships.

## Key Principles for UNCRC-Aligned Consequences

### 1. Respect the Child's Dignity and Voice

- Ensure children are heard in decisions affecting them (Article 12).
- Use restorative approaches that allow pupils to express their views and participate in repair.

### 2. Prioritise Wellbeing and Development

- Responses must support the child's physical, emotional, and educational development (Article 6).
- Avoid punitive measures that isolate or shame; instead, promote learning and growth.

### 3. Ensure Non-Discrimination

- Apply consequences fairly and consistently, without bias based on background, identity, or circumstance (Article 2).
- Use data to monitor equity in behavioural responses.

### 4. Use Proportionate and Constructive Measures

- Consequences should be appropriate to the behaviour and context (Article 3).
- Understand underlying factors (e.g. trauma, unmet needs) before deciding on a response.

### 5. Protect the Child from Harm

- Responses must not cause further harm or distress (Article 19).
- Prioritise emotional safety and relational repair.

### 6. Support Reintegration and Inclusion

- If exclusion is used, it must be temporary, planned, and accompanied by support for reintegration (Article 28).
- Maintain access to education and wellbeing support throughout.

## Example School Anti-Bullying Policy

### Parent friendly version

#### Our Commitment to a Safe and Caring School

At [School Name], we believe that bullying is never acceptable. It's not "just a phase," part of growing up, or something children should have to deal with on their own. Everyone in our school community deserves to feel safe, respected, and included.

We know that bullying can happen, and when it does, we take it seriously. We act quickly and thoughtfully to support everyone involved and to stop the behaviour.

We are committed to creating a caring, respectful environment where children can learn, play, and grow without fear of being bullied.

#### *What We Aim to Do*

Through our anti-bullying policy, we want to make sure that:

- Everyone understands what bullying is, how we prevent it, and how we respond when it's reported
- Pupils know how to speak up if they or someone else is being bullied—and feel confident doing so
- Our curriculum helps children talk about worries and build the skills to handle difficult situations
- We monitor bullying incidents so we can learn from them and improve our approach

#### *What Is Bullying?*

Bullying is behaviour that:

- Happens more than once
- Is meant to hurt someone—physically or emotionally
- We understand that bullying can:
- Cause real distress and harm

- Be based on differences—real or perceived—such as race, disability, gender, or beliefs

Happen anywhere: in school, online, on the way to and from school, or during trips and activities

Everyone, staff, pupils, families, and the wider community, has a role to play in preventing bullying and speaking up when it happens.

### *Our Beliefs*

We believe that:

- No child should ever experience abuse of any kind
- We all have a duty to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing
- Bullying affects everyone involved—not just the person being bullied
- Children who are bullied may struggle with friendships, learning, and mental health
- Children who bully others may also need support to change their behaviour
- Witnesses to bullying can feel scared, guilty, or unsure what to do

### *How We Prevent Bullying*

We take a whole-school approach to prevention. This includes:

- Clear expectations for behaviour, both in person and online
- Regular conversations with pupils, staff, and families about bullying and how to stop it
- Training for staff and volunteers
- Clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying
- A strong school ethos that promotes kindness, respect, and inclusion
- Encouraging pupils to speak to any trusted adult if they're worried
- Keeping detailed records of bullying incidents so we can spot patterns and take action.

## Celebrating Diversity and Promoting Inclusion

We know that bullying is often linked to how people treat those who are different. That's why we actively celebrate diversity and teach children to value and respect each other.

We take extra steps to support children who may be more vulnerable to bullying. This might include:

- Extra supervision at break times
- Peer support groups like "circle of friends"
- Lessons that help children understand and appreciate differences
- Targeted support or interventions when needed

## *How to Report Bullying*

Anyone can report bullying- a child, a parent, a friend, or a member of staff.

Children can speak to any adult in school or ask someone they trust to speak on their behalf. Reports can also be made in writing, by phone, or by email.

We will always take reports seriously and make sure the right person follows it up.

## *How We Respond*

We follow a clear process to investigate and respond to bullying. We:

- Act quickly, fairly, and consistently
- Make sure everyone involved feels safe and supported
- Listen to all voices and take appropriate action to stop the behaviour
- Use restorative and supportive approaches to help children learn and move forward

*How We Monitor and Improve*

We regularly review how well our anti-bullying work is going. This includes:

- Looking at reports and records
- Gathering feedback from pupils, families, and staff
- Reviewing the policy each year with our school community and making improvements where needed
- Sharing updates with the whole school community

Policy written by: .....

Date: .....

**Contact details**

Nominated anti-bullying lead Name:

.....

Email: .....

Phone: .....

We are committed to reviewing our policy and practice at least once a year. This policy was last reviewed on: [Date]

Signed: .....

Date: .....

## Example School Anti-Bullying Policy

### Pupil friendly version

#### **Our School's Anti-Bullying Promise**

At [School Name], we believe everyone has the right to feel safe, respected, and included. Bullying is never okay. If something is making you feel scared, hurt, or left out—whether it's happening in person or online—we want to know, and we will help.

We are a school that cares. We work together to build a kind, welcoming place where everyone can learn and grow. That means treating each other with respect, listening to each other, and standing up for what's right.

#### **What Bullying Means**

Bullying is when someone does something that makes another person feel unsafe, upset, or powerless. It might be name-calling, spreading rumours, leaving someone out on purpose, or sending unkind messages online. Even if it only happens once, it can still be bullying if it causes harm.

Not all fallouts or arguments are bullying. Sometimes people disagree or say things they don't mean. That's part of learning how to get along. But bullying is different—it's about hurting someone on purpose or making them feel small.

#### **What We Do to Prevent Bullying**

We talk about bullying in class, in assemblies, and through programmes like MVP and Rights Respecting Schools. We learn how to be kind, how to solve problems, and how to speak up when something feels wrong.

We also make sure you know how to get help. You can talk to any adult you trust, use a worry box, or ask a friend to help you speak up. However you choose to tell us, we will listen and take it seriously.

#### **What Happens When You Tell Us**

When you report bullying, we will:

- Listen to you and make sure you feel safe

- Talk to everyone involved and try to understand what happened
- Help people make things right using restorative conversations
- Offer support to anyone who needs it
- Keep things private and respectful
- Write down what happened so we can learn from it

### **Respecting Everyone's Differences**

We are all different—and that's something to celebrate. No one should ever be bullied because of who they are, what they believe, or how they look. That includes things like race, disability, gender, religion, or family background.

We want our school to be a place where everyone feels proud of who they are and where everyone belongs.

### **Online Bullying**

If someone is unkind to you online—through messages, social media, or games—that's not okay. Online bullying can hurt just as much as face-to-face bullying, and we will help you deal with it. You can report it the same way, and we will support you.

### **Bullying on the Way to School**

If bullying happens on the bus, in a taxi, or on the way to school, we still take it seriously. You can tell us, and we will work with families and staff to make sure you feel safe travelling to and from school.

### **What You Can Do**

You can help make our school a safe and happy place by:

- Being kind and including others
- Speaking up if something feels wrong
- Supporting friends who are struggling
- Respecting everyone's differences
- Telling an adult if you or someone else needs help

## Appendix 6

# Anti-Bullying Policy Requirements

1.	The agreed national definition of bullying as set out in Respect for All	
2.	A statement which sets out the organisational stance on bullying and the scope of the policy	
3.	Strategies and action statements to describe how all forms of bullying will be prevented and responded to	
4.	A clear statement that bullying is a violation of children's rights and is incompatible with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, now enacted in Scots Law	
5.	A statement of how the application of the policy upholds the statutory equality duties, where it applies, and/or how it will respond to bullying related to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010, as well as forms of prejudice and discrimination related to other characteristics, for example socio-economic or appearance-based bullying	
6.	Expectations and responsibilities of staff/volunteers, children and young people and parents to support and uphold the policy aims	
7.	A clear commitment to promoting and role modelling respectful behaviour by adults in the school or setting	
8.	The avoidance of using labelling language, i.e. 'bullies', 'victims', 'perpetrators'	
9.	The recording and monitoring strategies that will be used for management purposes in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, e.g. SEEMiS	
10.	Evidence that children and young people have been able to access their right to express their views in matters that affect them, and for these views to be given weight due in both policy development and implementation phases	
11.	Evidence that parents have, in line with their rights, been included and consulted in the policy development process	
12.	Evidence that staff/volunteers have been included and consulted in the policy development process	
13.	How often the policy will be communicated, evaluated and reviewed with children and young people and their parent(s) and staff/volunteers (it is good practice that this takes place a minimum of every three years)	
14.	A commitment to training and supporting staff and volunteers	

