

Wormit Primary School Anti - Bullying Policy **Published October 2024**

Background

This policy was established in 2024. We have made reference to:

- Fife Council's Anti-Bullying Policy January 2024
- Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service: <https://respectme.org.uk/>
- Pupil Voice (as expressed through assemblies in September 2023 and revisited in September 2024 and through the Pupilwise Survey of Jan/Feb 2024)
- Parental Voice (as expressed through the Parentwise Survey of Jan/Feb 2024 and through a school based survey on mobile phone and social media use of May 2024). The draft policy was put out to parent consultation and the comments have all been acted upon in this finalised copy.

Terminology

Throughout this document and in our practice, we refer to children experiencing and displaying bullying behaviour. We do not refer to children a 'bully' or a 'victim' as to do so places a label upon a children. It is the behaviour we need to change not the child themselves.

The Scope of this Policy

This Anti-Bullying policy is in place to support us when allegations of pupil-on-pupil bullying occur. At our school, we teach children how to respond to ill treatment at the hands of an adult through our Relationships, Sexual Health and Behaviour programme of study and what to do if something does not feel right – tell a trusted adult. We would expect and hope parents and members of the community would come to us if they had any concerns about a child's welfare ([Click here for more detail](#)). Any such concern would be dealt with in a proportionate manner following Child Protection, Safeguarding and (if relevant) HR Guidelines.



It's Everyone's Job to make sure we're OK!

Objectives

This policy should be read alongside our Relationships and Behaviour Policy (which will go out to parents for consultation in November 2024 and be published in January 2025) and our Mobile Phone and Social Media Policy – published August 2024.

Our aim is to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place and our Relationships and Behaviour and practice and policy is a key part of achieving that aim as is the advice to parents within the Mobile Phone and Social Media policy. Our reflective and restorative approaches support children to reflect on actions and incidents and how they and others felt. In session 2024-25 we are rolling out 'Keeping your Cool in School' across the school to teach our pupils about their responses and empower them to have assertive responses.

At Wormit Primary School, we seek to embed the rights of the child as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into all our work. Article 3 asserts that all decisions made must consider children's best interests and Article 19 asserts that all children must be kept safe from harm. Article 28 gives the right to an education and Article 29 states that education should develop a child's abilities and personalities and teach them to respect others' rights and values. These principles are at the heart of our anti-bullying policy. We all work together (as a school community – staff, parents and pupils) to prevent all forms of bullying, including online bullying and prejudiced- based bullying. Children have the right (under the UNCRC) to attend school without experiencing bullying behaviour. Those children who display bullying behaviour have the right to be taught to respect the right of others to be safe from harm and have an education.

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

All members of staff and parents have a duty to act on any reports or suspicion of bullying. The Headteacher, is the single point of contact for anti-bullying. Any staff member suspecting bullying or receiving an allegation of bullying (from pupil or parent) must report it to HT immediately. We recognise the importance of a timely and thorough investigation into any bullying allegation. If HT is not in school, it must still be reported immediately even if the initial investigation is carried out by another staff member. All staff members are able to contact HT at all times as per the staff handbook.

What is Bullying?

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

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on the other person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes

place in the context of relationships. It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out and it can happen face to face and online.

Bullying behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour might not be repeated, the threat that it might can be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these. This behaviour can include:

- *Being called names, teased, put down or threatened face to face and/or online*
- *Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked*
- *Having belongings taken or damaged*
- *Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you (face to face and/or online)*
- *Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or phone*
- *Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives*
- *Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be (face to face and/or online)”*

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

In line with Fife Council Policy, we draw a distinction between bullying and conflict:

“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.”

Our School Context

The responses to the Parentwise and Pupilwise Surveys of Jan/Feb 2024 give an overall picture of a school in which children feel happy and safe and where action is taken on bullying. The results of this survey are available on the school website. However, there are a few parents and pupils who disagree that the school takes action on bullying and there are more than a few who don’t know whether we do or not. This suggests a need to make our practice and policy more accessible and this has been considered as we have consulted on and finalised this policy in Term 1 of 2024-25.

Within a school based survey of May 2024, 32% of parents responding indicated that one of their children had experienced bullying behaviour face to face and 15% indicated that one of their children had experienced bullying behaviour online. 74% of parents responding indicated that they worry equally about online and face to face bullying, 16% say they worry more about online bullying, 6% say they worry more about face to face bullying and only 4% say they do not worry about bullying at all.

It is clear therefore, that anti-bullying is an important matter to our school community.

How we aim to be a zero bullying school

Through discussions with pupils at assemblies, we ensure that our children understand what bullying is. Children often identify bullying as being something that happens over a long period of time and it is important that we support them to understand that a single act can be an example of bullying if it leaves someone afraid and feeling vulnerable. It is also important that we support children, through assemblies and the curriculum, to understand the difference between bullying and conflict.

It is important for children to be taught the impact that bullying behaviour can have and the reasons why bullying behaviour may be exhibited so that all involved can be supported.

We have a well established set of school values. These are known and referred to through the life and work of the school and at every assembly. Our children are able to link the values to anti-bullying:

Respect – when we live our value of respect, bullying behaviour is unlikely to happen.

Courage – when we live our value of courage, we can stand up for ourselves and others by using our words and asking for help and this can prevent bullying behaviour.

Determination – when we live our value of determination, we can be determined against bullying behaviour.

Equality – when we live our value of equality, we respect and celebrate diversity and protect against bullying.

Friendship – when we live our value of friendship, we do not show bullying behaviour. We teach our children that it is ok not to like someone, you might not be friends with them, you might not have much in common with them but you should still show them friendship.

Inspiration – when we live our value of inspiration, we can copy the examples of other who treat us well and we can inspire other by our own kind behaviour and by living our school values.

Excellence – when we live our value of excellence, we aim to be the best we can be and we aim for a zero bullying school.

We encourage children to 'THINK' before they speak, or write or type:

Before you speak:

THINK

T = Is it True?

H = Is it Helpful?

I = Is it Inspiring?

N = Is it Necessary?

K = Is it Kind?

We teach 'THINK' at assemblies and refer to it through restorative conversations. The 'I' for inspiring is a concept best discussed with older children though it is very relevant to our school as it links to our value of inspiration. We regularly give examples of inspiration at school e.g. we might be inspired by an artist to do a similar piece of work or we might inspire others by behaviour well or by doing a particularly good or interesting piece of work to encourage others to aim high. In terms of anti-bullying/friendships, an inspiring comment might be do you want to join in this game? or I learnt a new

game, shall I show it to you? or Can I join in with what you are doing because I think I have a good idea.



At Assemblies in September 2024, children have reminded us of the Golden Rule. If we keep the golden rule, we don't retaliate when someone is unkind or hurts us. If we don't like it we don't do it back. This doesn't mean that you need to put up with someone being unkind – you can stick up for

yourself by telling someone to stop and by asking for help if they don't; you can stick up for friends by asking someone to stop or by asking for help. All the major world religions and atheism and humanism have a version of the Golden Rule.

All conversations are pitched at the correct level for age and stage. Where a concept is introduced at assembly, teachers follow it up in class so that it is discussed at an age and stage appropriate level.

Within Nursery, our youngest learners use 'We are Kind, Gentle and Helpful' as the first steps towards learning anti-bullying strategies. In P1 we tend to focus most on friendship as a school value, safe and being kind. As the children go up through the school they gain a progressive understanding of the concepts above.

Responsibilities

To achieve a school which has zero tolerance of bullying, we need to take a collective responsibility to addressing bullying. We agree with Fife Council policy over the ethos that can achieve this:

“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.”

Parents have a responsibility to monitor their child’s online world and to speak to them about their friendships. They have a responsibility to report any concerns to the school as soon as they occur and to work in partnership with the school to resolve them.

- **We strongly advise against parents approaching another parent regarding an incident that has happened in school as this prevents the school from investigating and dealing with issues in a timely manner.**
- **We also strongly advise against parents telling their child not to ‘tell tales’. It is important that children do tell when they need help and it is an important part of our school ethos that children can stick up for themselves and for friends by using their words and by asking an adult for help.**

Where incidents occur online or outside of school, there might not be a role for school staff to be directly involved in dealing with the incidents but if the children involved attend our school, it is important that we know this is happening so that we can offer support and advice to all involved. Our Smartphone and Social Media Policy has been developed in consultation with parents at our school and offers very clear advice about devices for children and their use of social media/gaming. If parents follow this advice, it can significantly reduce the possibility of their child experiencing or displaying bullying behaviour online. However, if children do experience bullying or

conflict online we actively want to be made aware so that we can understand and help.

We ask parents to model respect at school, demonstrating to children the attitudes and behaviours we want them to adopt.

Staff have a responsibility to monitor relationships and report any changes to a child's behaviour or other concerns as soon as they are noted. Reports of bullying or indeed of conflict are always believed and investigated. Changes of behaviour or reports of bullying should be reported to the headteacher who is the single-point of contact. Staff attend annual child protection and safe guarding training which helps us all to spot the signs that something is wrong for a child even if they don't report it themselves. All staff have access to all policies (including this one) on the school website and each year they complete a form for the headteacher to confirm all mandatory training is up to date and that they can access and are familiar with all policies and so know their responsibilities within them. All staff members have a responsibility to model respect at all times, demonstrating to learners the attitudes and behaviours we want them to adopt. All staff members have a responsibility to act upon any child coming to them to ask for help with a friendship issue, conflict or bullying.

The Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure all allegations and observations of bullying are acted upon and recorded, to report back to staff, parents and pupils and to model respect at all times. The headteacher also has the overall responsibility to ensure that all plans are followed through on to reduce any likelihood of bullying behaviour becoming persistent or heightened. Where a plan is not working and bullying behaviour is persisting, the headteacher has a responsibility to respond to this in a timely manner and take further action and intervene with further planning in line with this policy.

Pupils have a responsibility to report any concerns about their peers to a trusted adult (age and stage appropriate). All children are taught that asking for help with friendships is part of our school ethos. We do not encourage children to refer to each other as 'telling' and we have a zero tolerance policy to the use of derogative language around this such as 'snitch' and 'grass'. We ask pupils to THINK before they speak and to live our school values with the aim of making us a zero-bullying school.

In investigating reports of bullying and conflict, it is important that we make sure all children's voices are heard. We do this by building our ethos of asking for help in the hope that children will report incidents as quickly as possible and while they are still fresh in the minds of all involved. We understand though that some children find this hard and they may need time to process what has happened and so they speak to a trusted grown up at a later point. We encourage parents to come to us with any concerns their child has raised at an early point – to speak up for them and we do take on board parental advice about the best time and place to speak to the child. If any parent ever feels their child has not been listened to, it is important that they come to use to discuss this – the headteacher is the best person to approach.

Prejudice Based Bullying

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

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



Although only 6 of these characteristics may apply in primary schools; pregnancy, 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.



While material deprivation 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.

We recognise the importance of building our learners' understanding of diversity both through planned experiences and through careful choice of resources.

When reports of bullying are made, we always give consideration as to whether the child experiencing bullying has a protected characteristic and a note is made on their chronology – this note is made regardless of the outcome of the investigation and in addition to the usual recording. In our school, a chronology is maintained for all children who have any concerns or support to note.

School systems for recording and monitoring bullying

When it is reported that a child is being bullied then action is taken promptly and firmly. The allegation is thoroughly investigated – this is usually by the headteacher but it might be that the initial investigation is carried out by the staff member to whom it was reported (under advice from the headteacher or principal teacher) who would then feedback to the headteacher, who is the single-point of contact. The starting point is always a conversation with the child who we are concerned is being bullied. The child will be involved in planning a strategy moving forward, in line with our Relationships and Behaviour policy. We recognise that, once investigated, issues may be found

to be due to conflict rather than bullying but it is still essential that all involved feel supported, the matter is resolved and relationships are restored. Partnership working and good communication with parents is key to this being successful and it is important that parental views are noted as part of the recording process.

Where the investigation indicates that there has been a bullying incident, this will be recorded as such (note for staff, this is recorded by the HT or PT on SEEMIS in the Bullying and Equalities module). All parents involved will be informed that the incident has been recorded as a bullying incident. Where the investigation indicates that this has been a conflict rather than bullying, it will be recorded but not as a bullying incident (note for staff, this is recorded by the HT or PT within the chronology of all children involved). All parents involved will be informed that the incident has been recorded. Any parental views will be recorded. In either event, the relationship between the children in question will be monitored moving forward to ensure the matter has been fully resolved. Supports will be put in place as described below. Recording is the responsibility of the headteacher in the role of single-point of contact for anti-bullying. Or the principal teacher in her absence.

Support for children involved

As bullying happens within relationships, the most desirable outcome (where possible) is to restore the relationship and move forward positively. This particularly important as our school is part of the wider community and children will play and learn together for years to come.

These supports are used for a child experiencing bullying behaviour:

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

These supports are used for a child displaying bullying behaviour:

- Made aware of the seriousness of their actions and possible consequences
- Investigation to see if there are any underlying issues which may be triggering bullying behaviour
- Monitored by teacher and/or PSA
- Involved in restorative conversations

- Encouraged to share feelings and discuss emotions – e.g. through kitbag sessions
- Involved in specific work e.g. on personal space or anger management
- Where deemed necessary referred to an external agency for targeted support
- Sometimes a ‘Circle of Friends’ may be appropriate for the child displaying bullying behaviour
- Supported through a monitoring system appropriate to their age and stage

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

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

Where bullying has taken place (or indeed where there has been any conflict between pupils) it is important that all staff working with the pupils are aware of this so that they can monitor it moving forward. The Headteacher has the responsibility to make sure all staff are aware – this includes informing new staff of historic incidents.

Using the curriculum to talk about bullying

The curriculum can be used to:

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

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

Parental Comments from the Consultation September 2024

Please note, all development comments have been acted upon and included in the body of the policy. If any parent made a development comment in the consultation of September 2024 which they feel have not been addressed, please contact lucy,jess@fife.gov.uk

- *The latest anti-bullying policy is well thought out and gives me confidence as a parent to know what steps to follow should an incident occur. T.H.I.N.K seems to be an effective way of getting the message across in school too as my child has mentioned it on more than one occasion.*
- *It is clear and coherent, with good links to UNCRC. Also, it's nice to see the school values feeding into it.*
- *The policy seems thorough and well informed. It is encouraging to see an emphasis on supporting both children who are being bullied, and those who may display bullying behaviours. Understanding the role of friendship and using friendship as a core concept for understanding positive and supportive behaviour is also a positive aspect of the policy.*
- *I think this is a very good policy and covers a wider range of bullying than past policies I have read on previous schools.*
- *I am supportive of this draft policy. I liked the definitions, and was pleased in particular to read the sections of the difference between conflict and bullying, and the part about supportive/restorative work with the child displaying bullying behaviour (rather than a very punitive approach) as well as the child who has been in receipt of this.*
- *I do agree that it is important not to potentially devalue the harmfulness of bullying, by over-labelling conflict.*
- *I think the school is very proactive on any potential or bullying. All members of staff do such a great job at minimising any confrontation and support my child in all situations. I feel at ease sending my child into a safe environment with the knowledge that this policy is very much in use practically. I think my child's attitude and behaviour very much reflects it.*
- *It is similar to previous policies I have read. I also like THINK. They promote a similar saying in madras especially with phones. We have similar values at home so it is all relevant to school and community.*

Date of next review: August 2026