



**INVERCLYDE ACADEMY**  
**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Respect • Responsibility • Equality • Success**



## **Inverclyde Academy Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **The National and Local Context**

#### **Respect for All**

"Respect for All" is the national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland's children and young people. It provides a framework for all those working with children and young people to develop and implement anti-bullying policies and practices. The policy emphasizes the importance of creating a respectful and inclusive environment where bullying is not tolerated. It encourages schools and organizations to take a proactive approach to prevent bullying and to respond effectively when it occurs. The policy also highlights the need for collaboration between schools, parents, and the wider community to address bullying and promote positive relationships.

#### **Inverclyde Council Anti-bullying Policy**

The Inverclyde Council Anti-bullying Policy aligns with the principles of "Respect for All" and provides specific guidelines for schools within the Inverclyde area. The policy outlines the council's commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for all students. It emphasizes the importance of listening to the voices of young people and involving them in the development and implementation of anti-bullying strategies. The policy also highlights the role of staff, parents, and the wider community in preventing and responding to bullying. Key elements of the policy include raising awareness of bullying, providing support for those affected, and promoting positive relationships within the school community.

### **1. Introduction**

Inverclyde Academy, situated in the heart of Greenock, recognises the unique character and needs of our school community. We are dedicated to fostering a climate of mutual respect and understanding, valuing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our pupils and staff. Our approach is shaped by the voices of our young people, families, and local partners, reflecting the vibrant spirit of Inverclyde.

We affirm that every member of Inverclyde Academy has the right to feel safe, respected, and supported. Our policy is informed by local priorities as well as national guidance, and aims to empower individuals to speak out against bullying in all its forms. Working together, we strive to nurture an environment where our values of Respect, Responsibility, Equality and Success form the foundation of school life.

At Inverclyde Academy bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy outlines our approach to preventing and responding to bullying behaviours.

As part of our commitment, Inverclyde Academy has established a dedicated Anti-Bullying Committee, which forms a key part of our Pupil Parliament. This group is made up of pupils from S1 to S6, and members reflect the voices and experiences of our diverse student body.

The Anti-Bullying Committee has played an active role in developing this policy and shaping our ongoing strategies to tackle bullying and promote equality throughout the school. Their



contributions help ensure that our approaches are both relevant and effective, drawing on the insight and leadership of young people themselves.

## 2. Definition of Bullying

Inverclyde Academy adopts the national definition of bullying as set out in Respect for All (2024) and the Inverclyde Council Anti-Bullying Policy:

*“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.”*

Bullying behaviour may include:

- Name-calling, teasing or threatening behaviour
- Physical actions such as hitting, tripping or pushing
- Social exclusion or spreading rumours
- Sending abusive messages or images online
- Behaviour which makes someone feel they are not in control
- Targeting individuals based on their identity or perceived identity
- Increasing the impact of bullying by involving others

We recognise that bullying behaviour is distinct from normal conflict between peers and may, in some circumstances, overlap with behaviours that are criminal in nature (see Section X below).

### 2.1 What is NOT Bullying

It is important to distinguish bullying behaviour from normal conflict and from behaviour that may be criminal.

Conflict is a normal part of relationships and growing up. Disagreements, fallouts and friendship issues do not automatically constitute bullying. Healthy conflict usually involves equal relationships where those involved wish to resolve the situation.

**Criminal behaviour:** While bullying is not itself a crime, some behaviours may be criminal in nature, including physical assault, sexual assault, hate crime or certain online behaviours. Where there is reason to believe a crime may have occurred, the school will seek guidance from Police Scotland and follow National Child Protection Guidance.

All incidents will be assessed carefully, with professional judgement applied to determine the appropriate response.



### 3. Impact of Bullying

The impact of bullying behaviour is crucial and can include:

- Loneliness and isolation
- Low mood and anxiety
- Withdrawal from social situations and friends.
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Physical and mental health issues
- Feelings of loss of control

### 4. Legal Framework

Inverclyde Academy recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty and is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. We acknowledge that bullying behaviour may relate to protected characteristics or to factors such as additional support needs, care experience, socio-economic prejudice, family circumstances or mental health stigma. All incidents of prejudice-based bullying will be recorded, monitored and addressed in line with local authority guidance.

In certain circumstances, bullying behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, including hate crime, gender-based violence or child sexual exploitation. Pupils are made aware of the potential legal consequences of bullying, including online behaviour. Our Anti-Bullying Committee supports this work through awareness events and communications which outline the legal framework and the responsibilities of all members of our school community.

### 5. Aims

The aims of the Inverclyde Academy Anti-Bullying Policy are:

- To ensure all children, young people, and adults feel safe and are able to build relationships that prevent bullying behaviours
- To take into account the views of children and young people when addressing possible bullying behaviours
- To ensure that all bullying behaviours are addressed in line with our School Values of Respect, Responsibility, Equality and Success
- To ensure support, aftercare and intervention is available to those affected by or involved in bullying behaviours
- To uphold the rights of our children and young people in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989)

### 6. Priorities

Inverclyde Academy prevents bullying behaviour by:

- Raising awareness of prejudice-based bullying and its impact
- Emphasizing that bullying behaviour is a breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Ensuring all pupils in our school develop respectful, responsible, and confident relationships with others
- Equipping pupils, parents, carers, and staff with the skills and resilience to prevent and respond to bullying behaviours appropriately
- Providing a robust set of agreed reporting and support procedures to ensure a consistent approach to preventing and responding to bullying behaviours
- Ensuring relevant legislation and policy is understood and followed by all
- Promoting an anti-bullying culture by establishing shared values and consistent language

## 7. Actions

To effectively meet our Anti-Bullying aims and priorities a number of actions are in place or planned for implementation. These include:

- Anti-bullying awareness:
  - Regular assemblies and Personal and Social Education (PSE) sessions focus on: raising awareness about bullying; helping students recognise unacceptable behaviours and understand their impact; how to report bullying behaviours; and how to access support
  - Anti-Bullying Week programme of events and awareness raising to co-incide with National Anti-Bullying Week in November, including “Odd Socks Day” where pupils are invited to wear odd socks to celebrate that we are all different but equal
  - Yearly Anti-bullying newsletter issued to parents focused on awareness raising, and procedures for reporting and addressing concerns
- Supportive and inclusive classrooms:
  - Each classroom establishes and displays an anti-bullying charter (see appendix A) that is directly linked to the school’s core values - this charter sets clear expectations for behaviour and fosters a sense of shared responsibility among pupils.
  - Consistent language and principles: Staff and students use a common anti-bullying language which is embedded across all learning and interactions and grounded in equality, fairness, and kindness. This shared vocabulary supports consistent messaging and guides daily interactions.
- Training:
  - Staff will receive training on legislation related to prejudice-based bullying.
  - All pupils to receive training on the Equality Act and Protected Characteristics via Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme.

- Mentorship, Support and Partnerships:
  - Development of a senior phase mentor programme, whereby Senior Phase volunteers will receive training in active listening, restorative approaches, equalities, protected characteristics and child protection to allow them to act as supports to those who have been affected by bullying behaviour
  - Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Programme
  - Work with partner agencies to develop relevant group work which can be utilised as an intervention – both preventative and responsive – for those who have displayed/are at risk of displaying bullying behaviours
  - We are establishing a group of Senior Phase Pupil Mentors who will be trained to support young people who have experienced bullying behaviour. For this, we have collaborate with external agencies to provide appropriate training for these mentors.
  
- Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Regular wellbeing surveys of pupils focusing on the Wellbeing Indicators, including Safe, Respected and Included which will be utilised to inform areas for action and intervention and to inform both assembly and PSE programmes
  - Termly analysis of bullying log to explore patterns and trends and inform action and intervention

## 8. Reporting

Students can report bullying incidents through a variety of channels, including discreet or anonymous means. Options include:

- speaking directly to a staff member
- using house postboxes
- scanning QR code posters displayed throughout the school

The planned introduction of Senior Phase Pupil Mentors who will also act as approachable contacts for pupils who may feel more comfortable speaking with a peer. Senior mentors will receive training in active listening and confidentiality, and pupils can approach them during designated drop-in times or by reaching out through a dedicated contact channel.

All staff (and pupils) will be fully briefed on the procedures to follow when bullying is suspected or reported – see Appendix B.

Once a report is received, the Principal Teacher of Pupil Support logs the concern in the school's tracking system, conducts an initial assessment of the situation, and promptly initiates a fair investigation. This involves meeting individually with the person who made the report (where relevant), the pupil(s) involved, and any witnesses. Staff will ensure all parties have the opportunity to share their perspectives in a safe and supportive environment.

After gathering information, the Principal Teacher of Pupil Support will discuss with the relevant Deputy Head Teacher and they will jointly determine the next steps in line with Positive Relationships, Positive Behaviour (PRPB) policy—this may include engaging parents, implementing support strategies, or facilitating a restorative meeting. Throughout the process,



regular updates are provided to those involved, and outcomes or actions agreed upon are clearly communicated.

Parents are kept informed about how to raise concerns both formally and informally, with a yearly anti-bullying newsletter outlining these procedures. All incidents are investigated promptly, and actions are taken to support those affected and address the behaviour.

If a parent, carer or young person is dissatisfied with the handling or outcome of a bullying concern, they may access the Inverclyde Council Complaints Procedure. Details can be found on the Inverclyde Council website or by contacting the school office.

## 9. Responding to Bullying Behaviours

Our response to bullying is rooted in restorative practices, focusing on healing and reconciliation rather than punishment. For example, instead of asking "Who's to blame and how are we going to punish them?", we encourage dialogue with questions such as "Who has been affected and in what ways?", "How can we make things right?", and "What can we learn from this experience?"

These approaches have helped restore trust and understanding in previous cases, with pupils expressing that they felt listened to and empowered to move forward positively. By prioritising empathy and long-term change, we continue to promote a culture where positive relationships are at the heart of our school community.

Preventative practices also focus on problem-solving and nurturing relationships. By addressing concerns early and encouraging positive behaviour, the school works to build a climate of respect and inclusion.

## 10. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Head Teacher:** Holds overall responsibility for the implementation of this anti-bullying policy and for fostering respectful relationships throughout the school.
- **Deputy Head Teacher (Wellbeing):** Leads the prevention and response to bullying behaviour and the promotion of respectful relationships, supported in these duties by the Pupil Support team.
- **Principal Teachers of Pupil Support:** log and investigate bullying allegations, coordinate responses with Depute Head Teachers, refer students to support services, facilitate restorative conversations, and check in regularly with affected students to monitor their progress and well-being.
- **All Staff:** Are required to apply the PRPB and anti-bullying policies, contribute to a culture of positive and respectful interactions, use consistent language, and report any concerns according to established school procedures.

## 10. Support for Affected Individuals

Providing support to children and young people impacted by bullying is a central part of our in-school procedures. Every report is followed up, with regular check-ins for both those who have experienced bullying and those who have engaged in bullying behaviour.



We are establishing a group of Senior Phase Pupil Mentors who will be trained to support young people who have experienced bullying behaviour. For this, we have collaborate with external agencies to provide appropriate training for these mentors.

Support is also offered to young people who have exhibited bullying behaviour, helping them to change their actions. We will continue to work alongside partners to develop targeted small group interventions to support these individuals.

Additionally, our Mentors in Violence Prevention group works closely with our anti-bullying group, ensuring a coordinated response across these support structures.

### **11. Engaging with Parents**

Parents play a key role in preventing and responding to bullying behavior. They should be informed about the policy and involved in the process. We provide an annual newsletter to parents with a focus on anti-bullying, this will also include our QR code poster in order that parents can also report concerns. We also plan to hold an on-line event to co-incide with the launch of our in-school policy, delivered by our anti-bullying group to parents.

### **12. Monitoring and Recording**

We regularly record the views of our pupils with regard to feelings of safety, respect and inclusion via our wellbeing surveys (undertaken 3/4 times per academic year). These are used to directly inform interventions. Where concerns are highlighted by pupils in relation to these indicators a follow up discussion is held with the Pupil Support teacher.

We record and monitor incidents of bullying behaviour to identify trends and opportunities for early intervention. We undertake termly analysis of our school bullying log and this is used to inform interventions, feeding directly into our PSE curriculum, events programme and work of our anti-bullying group.

All data recording and monitoring is conducted in line with current data protection legislation and analysis focuses on key themes.

### **13. Policy Review & Communication Plan**

#### **Policy Review and Communication**

This policy aligns with the Inverclyde Council Anti-Bullying Policy (April 2025) 2025-Anti-bullying-Policy (1) and Respect for All (2024).

The policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Anti-Bullying Committee and Senior Leadership Team
- Formally reviewed in line with Local Authority timescales (next LA review due 2028)
- Publicised through assemblies, PSE, newsletters and the school website
- Available in pupil-friendly format
- All staff will receive briefing on this policy and associated procedures.

## Appendix A – Anti-Bullying Charter



- ★ **Help me to understand my rights and reassure me**
- ★ **Listen to me, include me and give me options**
- ★ **Help everyone to feel safe and in control**
- ★ **Take action with time scales and be consistent**
- ★ **Support everyone involved and help us to move forward**
- ★ **Feedback to me/us**

**Staff will:**

- Work with children and young people to understand bullying and build trusting relationships
- Listen and be aware
- Take action on behalf of the school

**Parents/carers will:**

- Remain calm and help me to feel safe
- Work in partnership with schools to make things better for everyone involved
- Respect my choices

**Pupils will:**

- Treat others with kindness and respect
- Report bullying and encourage others to speak up
- Be open to discussions and accept support

★  
**ARTICLE 1**  
ALL CHILDREN  
HAVE RIGHTS

★  
**ARTICLE 3**  
ADULTS MUST DO  
WHAT'S BEST FOR ME

★  
**ARTICLE 12**  
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO  
BE LISTENED TO AND  
TAKEN SERIOUSLY

★  
**ARTICLE 19**  
I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE  
PROTECTED FROM BEING  
HURT OR BADLY TREATED

## Appendix B – Bullying Reporting Procedures

