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Rationale

'Bullying can affect everyone—those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide.'

stopbullying.gov

We aim to create an environment in which people can work, play and learn safely and happily. Preventing and tackling bullying is integral to promoting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people, developing their social and emotional skills and improving the overall ethos of our school. Any form of bullying within our school community is unacceptable and is detrimental to the caring environment that we are aiming to achieve.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying involves a range of behaviours and requires a ranges of responses and approaches. Bullying is repeated and deliberate behaviour which causes other people to feel vulnerable, distressed or threatened.

This behaviour may include:

Physical: kicking hitting, punching, pushing, tripping and other forms of unwanted physical contact.

Verbal: threats, name calling, spreading rumours, persistent teasing about personal features, teasing about family or domestic situations, shouting, swearing, hurtful comments.

Emotional: taking friends away, tormenting, hiding, stealing or damaging property, using threatening gestures, exclusion from friendship groups, "ganging up" on people, sending offensive/threatening texts or e-mails.

Racism: threats or gestures against race, colour, creed or culture.

Threats: any threat to beat up; demand money or other form of intimidation, extortion.

Isolation: deliberately not including an individual in activities, exclusion from friendship groups.

Bullying is not:

Children falling out.

Children who do not get on with each other.

A one-off disagreement or fight between children.



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Positive Relationships - Prevention is the key

Building a positive ethos within the school and forming positive relationships is key to making *all* children no matter what their background, race, religion, abilities or what they think or say are entitled to feel safe and welcomed within our school community.

Every member of our Primary and Early Years Classes contribute to the positive ethos within the school community by showing respect for others and valuing each individual's contribution towards the development of equity for all.

Procedures

Should any allegation or incident of bullying occur it will be taken seriously and acted on in a consistent manner.

- Incident is alleged or witnessed and reported to a member of staff.
- Incident is taken seriously. Alleged incident is explored by designated member of staff who works to establish the nature and seriousness of it and those involved. Staff should look for evidence that the behaviour:
 - Occurred more than once.
 - Was intended to cause harm and distress.
 - Has created a sense of powerlessness on the part of the person being bullied.
- **If evidence of bullying is not found**, the school should:
 - Record details of the alleged incident in Anti Bullying Record.
 - Establish the nature of the incident and provide support to those involved.
 - Decide if parents should be informed.
 - Review the need to take further action which is in line with the school's positive behaviour procedures.
- **If evidence of bullying is found**, the school should:
 - Ensure that those involved are appropriately supported.
 - The parents of those involved are informed of the incident and the action the school will be taking.
 - Any disciplinary action is in line with the school's Positive Behaviour procedures.



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Advice for Parents:

Early intervention is the key to dealing with any behaviour problem such as bullying.

- Encourage your child to talk about what has been going on in school, and talk through any minor incidents calmly to ascertain what has happened.
- If you are worried that your child is being bullied, ask him/her directly.
- Find out the facts when told about an incident of bullying.
- Inform the school immediately if you feel there may be a bullying problem.
- Encourage your child to tell a teacher or the playground helpers if they or any of their friends are experiencing difficulty in or out of school.
- Watch out for signs of stress in your child - headaches, sore stomachs, reluctance to come to school - can be indications that all is not well.
- Investigate if toys/money start to go missing.
- Take an active interest in friendships and out-of-school activities.
- Supervise situations where bullying may occur, e.g. walking to and from school.
- Avoid unsupervised exposure to violence on television/DVDs/computer games.
- Spend some time discussing the different forms of violence - reality versus fantasy.

If you think your child is *being* a bully:

- Remain calm.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help. The school can put you in touch with expert help.
- Set realistic, firm guidelines and rules to help your child control his/her behaviour.
- Ensure that your child apologises, either in person or in writing to the child he/she bullied.
- Support your child to stop the bullying behaviour.

More information can be found in North Ayrshire Council's Standard Circular M6.