



# Caldervale High School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Revised October 2025

Head Teacher – T Fox

DHT with Responsibility for the Anti-Bullying Policy – R Irvine

## **Rationale**

Caldervale High School is committed to the promotion of positive relationships and the fulfilment of our school values of *kindness, respect and belonging*. We believe all members of our school community have the right to work and learn in an environment where they feel respected and safe, free from harassment and bullying. Bullying of any kind, either in-person or online, is a direct breach of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), with Article 29 highlighting our responsibility to ensure the following:

*Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others' human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to: live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.*

## **Aim**

We regard bullying of any form as unacceptable and it is vital all members of our school community are able to identify these types of behaviour and know how to address them. This requires a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and the impact on the young people involved.

The aim of this policy is to develop that shared understanding and to define our expectations, roles and responsibilities as members of the Caldervale High School community.

## **What do we mean by bullying?**

As a school community it is important that we have a shared understanding of what we mean by bullying. We have adopted the definition in the document Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People 2024 which defines bullying as the following:

*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 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 phones/tablets.
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives (face-to-face and/or online).
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be (face to face and/or online).
- Increasing the reach and impact of bullying or prejudice through the recruitment and/or involvement of a wider group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying/>

## **Impact of bullying**

The impact of bullying can be far reaching and the behaviour can harm people mentally, emotionally, socially and physically. It denies young people of their right to feel safe and can affect their confidence and feeling of self-worth. The actual behaviour (for example, actions, looks, messages, confrontations or physical interventions) does not always need to be repeated for it to have an ongoing impact. The fear of the behaviour reoccurring may also have a lasting impact and this ongoing threat that something *might* happen can lead to increased levels of anxiety and worry.

Bullying is more likely to take place in the context of an existing imbalanced relationship, but may also occur where no previous or current relationship exists. In such situations, identifying the underlying cause of the behaviour can be challenging; however, every effort should be made to understand the specific context and contributing factors. Bullying may be carried out by an individual or may involve a group of young people acting together. In such cases, we would consider each young person to be responsible for their actions and the impact of their behaviour.

## **Differentiating bullying from conflict**

It is important our young people have opportunities to discuss how they feel and that we help them develop the social competence and communication skills needed to manage their relationships. Opportunities should exist across the curriculum for this to happen and teaching staff should consider where this could occur within the context of their own subject area; it is not the sole responsibility of the PSHE programme to provide this. We know that young people will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships. This is not considered to be bullying; this is considered to be a normal part of growing up.

It may be possible to differentiate conflict from bullying by having regard to the relationships and dynamics involved. Conflict is normal and can happen in healthy, happy, equal relationships. Usually at least one party involved doesn't want the conflict to continue unresolved, and will try to take early action to make amends and improve the situation. Healthy relationship conflict is not the same as bullying and is unlikely to lead to bullying as the people involved have a vested interest in restoring equilibrium and staying connected to each other.

Young people experiencing conflict will usually require support. It is likely the conflict will have an impact on wellbeing and the Pupil Support teacher should discuss and consider the specific wellbeing indicators affected and ways in which the young person can be supported. Any specific action points should be agreed with the young person and where appropriate, communicated with staff and parents.

### **Differentiating bullying from potentially criminal behaviour**

There is no legal definition of bullying in Scotland and bullying is not, in itself, considered a crime. However, the nature of certain behaviours that could be perceived as, or reported as, bullying may include behaviour that is criminal in nature.

Understanding the individual facts and circumstances present in any situation is important to distinguish between bullying and potentially criminal offences. Examples include the following.

**Physical behaviour:** peer-on-peer violence can be verbal abuse, physical aggression and/or physical violence, which can have both short- and long-term impacts on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of all involved. If there is an intent to cause harm, regardless of whether or not an injury occurs, this may amount to an assault.

**Sexual behaviour:** when someone is coerced or pressurised to do something sexual or is touched inappropriately, this is not bullying. This is sexual assault or abuse and a form of gender-based violence (GBV).

**Online behaviour:** there are various legal provisions designed to protect individuals from online harassment, abuse, and harm. Some online behaviour may therefore be illegal.

**Hate Crime:** bullying can be motivated by prejudice similar to hate crime. The distinction between bullying and hate crime is that for hate crime, the behaviour aggravated by prejudice must be motivated by malice and ill-will towards a group of people due to a relevant characteristic or intended to stir up hatred, and be criminal in nature, such as assault, graffiti or a breach of the peace. For example, damage to property through graffiti may constitute a crime and this may be aggravated by prejudice towards an individual who possesses or appears to possess a relevant characteristic protected under the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.

If Pupil Support staff or DHTs are investigating a bullying incident that may constitute a criminal offence, they should seek guidance from our Campus Officer at the earliest opportunity. If the Campus Officer is unavailable, advice should be sought from Police Scotland. If the specific circumstances suggest a young person has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed, the member of staff should consider whether this requires input from the Child Protection Coordinator, Ryan Irvine.

It should be noted that under The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, a child under the age of 12 cannot be arrested, charged or prosecuted for a crime. However, Police Scotland may still be involved.

## Differentiating bullying from structural and social inequalities

As a school community we are aware that our young people have developed many different views and attitudes over their life. These views and attitudes will have been influenced by parents, family, friends, their community and online activity such as social media. When these views and opinions are incompatible with our school values of kindness, respect and belonging it is important they are appropriately challenged. If the views or opinions of a young person are evident of structural inequalities, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, or prejudice and discrimination towards disability or faith then this requires further investigation as these characteristics are protected by the Equality Act 2010.

These views and opinions can manifest themselves in many subtle and implicit behaviours, including microaggressions, misrecognition, implicit bias and *othering*. *Othering* is a process whereby individuals and groups are treated and marked as different and inferior from the dominant social group. Such behaviours will have an impact on the young person experiencing the behaviour but it is likely that those witnessing the behaviour will also be impacted. If these behaviours are not adequately addressed, they will have a negative impact on the ethos and culture of our school.



### CONFLICT

Usually at least one person 'doesn't want the conflict to go on unresolved, and will try to take action to improve the situation. It can highlight the importance of the relationship, providing a chance to build on strengths, solve problems, and move forward positively.

Healthy relationship conflict is not the same as bullying and is unlikely to lead to bullying as the people involved have a mutual interest in restoring equilibrium and maintaining connection.

### BULLYING

Bullying occurs within social relationships and typically involves an imbalance of power that allows a relationship of dominance and subordination to emerge. Bullying can be intentional or unintentional, occurring once or repeatedly.

Resolution usually requires adult support, meaningful intervention and a change of behaviour in the instigating person. There can sometimes be an escalation from bullying to violence.

### CRIMINAL

While bullying is not in itself a crime, some behaviour that may be reported or perceived as bullying could constitute a criminal offence, such as physical or sexual violence, online behaviours or hate crime.

It is not for staff to determine if behaviour is criminal; they should seek immediate support from Police Scotland if they have reason to believe that a crime may have occurred or that a child or young person has been seriously harmed.

## Preventing bullying

We believe if we work together as a community to encourage positive behaviour and promote our values of kindness, respect and belonging, we will create a caring environment where every individual feels safe and nurtured. This involves all staff taking a pro-active approach to bullying prevention and challenging hurtful behaviour at the earliest opportunity. Other preventative strategies include:

- Teachers should meet pupils at the classroom door at the beginning of every lesson and dismiss classes in an orderly manner. This will minimise opportunities for incidences of bullying behaviour in corridors.
- Where possible, teachers should stand at classroom doors or in stairwells at the period changeover to oversee and manage the flow of pupils.
- At social times, the canteen, front door and playground will be supervised by SLT and staff who volunteer for this role. SLT will also oversee school transport at the end of the school day. These actions provide opportunities for young people to speak to staff and allow staff to intervene early to prevent any escalation.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in lunchtime activities and Future Fridays as this will help strengthen friendships. Lunchtime sessions in the SfL department and the LCSC are also available.
- All young people have the opportunity to speak to their Pupil Support teacher. Where possible, this is on a regular basis during PSHE classes or by arrangement if a young person requests this. It is important that reports of bullying are dealt with swiftly to avoid any escalation which will cause further distress.
- Wellbeing tracking should be completed at the start of every term and Pupil Support staff should follow up on any decline in wellbeing. When recurring themes such as bullying are identified, the PSHE programme should be adapted to address these issues.
- PSHE lessons will offer young people the opportunity to explore various types of relationships and understand how these can be affected or harmed by different behaviours. Regular reinforcement of our high expectations, including the message that bullying behaviour is not and never will be acceptable, should be a recurring theme across all year groups.
- Teachers should consider where inequalities and diversity can be discussed and explored within their curriculum as this will provide opportunities for discriminatory views and opinions to be explored and challenged. All staff should also role model the positive behaviours and attitudes we expect to see within our young people.
- Welcome back assemblies at the start of each term, year group and house assemblies should address topics such as relationships, expectations and personal safety. Further inserts can be planned to include topics such as internet safety.
- Senior students should role model positive behaviours and play an active role in preventing hurtful and bullying behaviour through their delivery of Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). Seniors will also provide peer support through buddying and mentoring programmes and will be trained and supported in this role.

## **Responsibility of young people**

Our young people have an important role to prevent bullying. This includes:

- Contributing positively to our school community through the values of kindness, respect and belonging.
- Acting responsibly and treating others as they would like to be treated.
- Avoiding any behaviour that could be defined as bullying behaviour through their actions, words and use of social media.
- Participating fully in all activities that promote positive behaviour and help raise awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Protecting fellow members of our community by reporting bullying behaviour to a responsible adult.
- Acting as role models and having a positive influence on peers.

## **Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

Partnership with parents is important as we work to develop our shared understanding of bullying and we rely on parents as follows:

- To support the school to build and maintain a community in which everyone feels valued, respected and safe and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, accepted and celebrated.
- To promote the school values of kindness, respect and belonging.
- To encourage their child to take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour and to commit to repairing any harm done.
- To encourage their child to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to a member of school staff, in most cases the Pupil Support teacher.
- To discourage their child from becoming involved in any behaviour (through their actions, words and use of social media) that could be defined as bullying.

## **Responding to Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying is complex and is the relationship between behaviour and its impact on the other person. It removes another person's agency and makes them feel helpless. Staff dealing with bullying behaviour, usually the Pupil Support teacher or DHT, will use their knowledge of the young people involved, their professional learning and judgement to determine the strategy which they believe will work best to respond to the bullying behaviour. We recognise that every incident of bullying behaviour is different and therefore the response may vary.

However, the following principles will apply:

- We encourage pupils who experience bullying behaviour to report this, preferably as soon as the situation occurs.
- If the report is made to a parent, we encourage parents to alert us as soon as possible.
- If the report is made to a member of staff, they should inform the Pupil Support teacher, sharing the details of what they know.

- We encourage witnesses to bullying to report the bullying behaviour in support of their friend/peer.
- Anonymised reports will also be investigated and we will be sensitive to concerns about the potential for escalation.
- We will be alert to changes in behaviour, attitude and wellbeing of a young person and address these concerns sensitively to explore possible reasons.
- We will actively listen to reports and investigate all incidents thoroughly, providing regular feedback to those involved.
- We will focus on supporting the young people involved and explore different ways to resolve the issue.

## **Investigation**

Pupil Support staff are best placed to carry out investigations and should do so with consideration to all involved. This may involve working with colleagues to ensure this is done in effectively and efficiently. The investigation should aim to discover the following:

- What was the behaviour?
- What impact did it have?
- What does the young person want to happen and how can they be supported to regain their agency?
- What do I need to do about it – for example, is there a child protection concern?
- What attitudes, prejudices or other factors may have influenced the behaviour?

When parents or carers are involved—either because they reported the incident or the child aged 12 or over has consented to sharing the details—it is important that they receive regular updates, in accordance with the timeframes agreed at the outset of the investigation.

The pervasive nature of bullying means that it can take place in a variety of locations and situations making it difficult for us to investigate incidents that occur out with school. However, we recognise that situations can follow a young person into the school and have a negative impact on their wellbeing. In such cases, we will clearly communicate to parents or carers the limitations of our ability to investigate the matter, while outlining the steps we will take to support the young person's wellbeing.

## **Outcome of investigations**

The outcome of the investigation and all possible responses should be child-centred. Careful consideration should be given on how to support the young person experiencing the bullying and the person displaying the behaviour. When communicating the outcome, privacy must be respected but it is important that reassurance is given that appropriate action has been taken. Without this, there may be a feeling that nothing has been done in response to the concern raised.



## **Recording incidents of bullying**

It is important that a thorough picture of the bullying incident is recorded. When recording bullying incidents, the following information must be included:

- the children and young people involved, as well as staff/volunteers or any other adults who witnessed the incident or were involved in the initial response;
- where and when bullying has taken place;
- the type of bullying experienced, e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats;
- any prejudice-based attitudes or behaviour presenting;
- details of any protected characteristic(s);
- consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns;
- the outcome, including if the issue was resolved, not resolved or unfounded;
- the impact of the incident, including consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns; and
- actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.

These details should be recorded in the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities Module. Where bullying has an element of discrimination or protected characteristic, this should also be recorded.

## **Conclusion**

At the heart of our anti-bullying policy is a commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where all members of our school community feel valued and protected. We recognise that preventing and addressing bullying requires a collective effort—from staff, students, parents, and carers—guided by our shared values of kindness, respect, and belonging. Through clear procedures, consistent communication, and a proactive approach to positive relationships and wellbeing, we aim to ensure that bullying has no place in our school. Together, we will continue to build a culture where everyone can thrive.