

# Dykehead Primary School

*'Determined Pupils Succeed'*

## Anti-Bullying Strategy



### Rationale

At Dykehead Primary School our aim is to take a preventative approach to bullying, by fostering a positive school ethos characterised by our school values and by relationships of trust. In most cases, this environment, combined with pro-active education about bullying, will prevent children from engaging in this kind of behaviour. As such, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Positive Relationships Policy, which lays out the procedures the school employs in order to promote and maintain relationships.



However, where these universal supports have not been enough and there is an allegation of bullying, Dykehead Primary School has a clearly defined Anti-bullying Strategy, in accordance with the Scottish Government policy "A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Children and Young People" (2010), and the North Lanarkshire Council policy "Bullying: It's Never Acceptable" (2012).

Under "Getting It Right for Every Child", we deploy our Anti-Bullying strategy in order to ensure the wellbeing of every child in our care, especially in relation to their safety and inclusion. As a Rights-Respecting School, we aim for all our pupils to understand our Anti-Bullying message in the context of respect for each other's rights under the UNCRC.

This policy will outline a shared definition and understanding of Bullying; the processes for reporting, investigating and recording of bullying behavior; and the staged intervention approach that the school will follow in its response to allegations of bullying.

### Definition of Bullying

***Bullying is when a person (or a group of people) behaves in a way that is unkind or abusive towards another, or excludes them. It can be direct, or in-direct. Bullying can be physical, verbal or emotional. It is sometimes a result of prejudices about people's differences. Bullying can be persistent, but even one incident can have an impact. It is still bullying even if it is not intentional, because it still has an impact.***

*Definition by the pupils of DPS, January 2018*



**Intent** is not required in order to confirm an incident as Bullying, as in some circumstances a child may not be aware that their behavior is bullying. The focus is on the impact the behavior has had, rather

than whether or not the person acted deliberately to cause harm. Bullying does not have to be **persistent** in order to have an impact on a child's wellbeing. A single incident can have an effect on mental health, confidence, and self-esteem. Bullying can affect children in different ways, and Dykehead Primary School will take account of the effect this is having on an individual child, in order to reduce the **impact** and restore the child's ability to cope and respond to the feelings they are having.



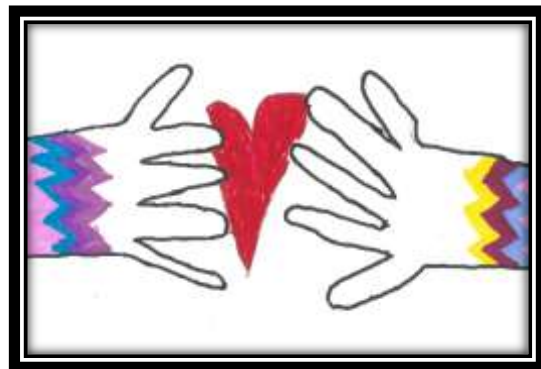
### **When it's Not Bullying**

Children inevitably fall out and disagree as they learn how to form and maintain relationships. It is important that children learn how to manage conflict positively, as this helps them to learn about cooperation and develops their resilience. In such cases the school can be a source of support for children in repairing relationships. This would be managed by involving the children in restorative conversations with their peers, mediated by an adult. It is important to be mindful that if such behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying. Disagreements can lead to bullying behaviour where the balance of power in the relationship is unequal, for example an older child to a much younger child, or a group of children falling out with or excluding one child.

### **Prejudice Based Bullying**

Bullying behaviour can be a result of prejudices relating to actual or perceived differences. The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to discriminate against people based on characteristics including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity



The school aims to create an environment where diversity is celebrated, and any behaviour demonstrating discrimination based on any of the above characteristics is deemed unacceptable. For more information please see our Equality & Inclusion Policy.

In a digital age, Bullying behaviour can also take place online. This will normally take place outside of school, where children have access to social media. This behaviour may still be reported at school, and the management team would refer to matter to the children's parents. The school would strongly advise that parents adhere to the minimum age guidelines on social media use. More guidance on this can be found at [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

## Reporting of Bullying Behaviour

Children sign an Anti-Bullying Contract at the start of each school year, where they show their commitment to making Dykehead Primary a bully-free school, and to reporting bullying if they experience it or witness it. In the majority of bullying incidents, there are other children present who witness the events. The school aims to create an environment in which all children feel confident in reporting bullying behaviour, and understand how to report what they have seen. Children must also be taught what to report, how, when and to whom.

- **What?** Children are involved in the creation of a shared definition of Bullying for our policy, so that they recognise Bullying behaviour when they see, or experience it. The school also shares an “Is it Bullying?” checklist, to support children in deciding what must be reported.
- **How?** Children also know that they can approach a member of staff, or a trusted adult outside of school, in order to report bullying.
- **When?** An important part of the message for children is that they should not wait to see whether things get better. They must report any instances of bullying behaviour, as soon as possible after it occurs. Behaviour does not need to be persistent in order to be bullying, one incident is enough to merit reporting.
- **Who?** Children know that they can report bullying to any member of school staff, however any allegations of bullying will be passed to a member of the school management team to investigate.

## Investigation of Bullying Allegations

The school management team take responsibility for investigating all allegations of bullying promptly. This will involve taking testimonies from all children involved or who may have witnessed the incident. The school has an investigation template which all senior staff follow, in order to ensure that information is gathered thoroughly and consistently, and a record of the incident is formed.



Should the incident not prove to be Bullying, it will be dealt with using the school Positive Relationships Policy, and parents will be informed as deemed appropriate by the school management team.

If the incident is substantiated as Bullying, the school will follow the stages of intervention outlined below.

## School Response to Bullying

Following investigation, Dykehead Primary School will respond to substantiated incidents of Bullying using a staged intervention approach. In all cases, a balance will be struck between supportive actions and sanctions as deemed appropriate. At each stage, the school will make reference to the rights of all children under the UNCRC.

### **Stage 1**

- Make clear that the type of behaviour being exhibited is totally unacceptable, utilising the school behaviour management scheme as appropriate.
- Work with the person showing bullying behaviour to make them aware of the impact of their actions on others, improve their behaviour and prevent a recurrence.
- Offer the opportunity for both children to attend a mediation meeting with a member of the school management team, where they can suggest their own solutions to resolve conflict or improve relationships.
- Continue to monitor and support the person being bullied to assess the impact on their emotional wellbeing.
- Inform parents of the incident and any action taken, seeking to work in partnership to prevent a recurrence of the bullying behaviours.
- Utilise school-based nurturing approaches to support the children where appropriate.

### **Stage 2**

For more severe incidents, involving physical violence, or for incidents that have recurred despite Stage 1 support strategies being employed.

- Any actions from Stage 1 that may not yet have been taken
- Daily behaviour/ target sheet for person demonstrating bullying behaviour
- Mentoring or buddying system
- Social skills or “Circle of Friends” group
- Requests for Assistance to other agencies as appropriate, which may include but are not limited to:
  - Educational Psychology
  - Community Learning and Development
  - Social Work
- Solution-focused meeting with school staff, pupil and parents

### **Stage 3**

In extreme cases such as physical attacks and ongoing harassment, a young person showing bullying behaviour may be required to temporarily undertake their lessons individually with a member of staff outwith their classroom. Cluster supports such as a period of time in a wellbeing hub, may be considered. Exclusion from school would be a measure of last resort, where the pupil continued to pose a risk to pupils or staff. Stage 1 and Stage 2 strategies may still apply upon their return to their classroom, in order to support the pupil and prevent a recurrence.

### **Recording of Bullying**

All allegations of bullying are recorded on SEEMIS, (North Lanarkshire Council's online Education Management Information System) in accordance with local authority guidelines. Incidents are to be recorded within three days of the investigation being completed. The school management team will also record actions taken, and any opinions expressed by the parents.

Where other agencies are involved, this will mean sharing of information about the incident. Parents' permission will be sought in such cases, unless the school is required to provide information as part of a police investigation or a child protection case under social work.

### **Involvement of Parents**

Parents have a key role to play in supporting their children when they have experienced bullying or have bullied other children. At Dykehead Primary School we aim to involve parents in all aspects of our Anti-Bullying strategy. Parents will be informed at the earliest stage of a bullying investigation. The school has an Anti-Bullying information booklet for parents, which will be provided to parents when their child is involved in a bullying incident, and is also available at any time via our school website.

Any meetings between parents and the school management team are conducted with complete confidentiality, and we will never discuss personal information about a child with other parents.

Parents can access a training module on Anti-Bullying, which contains suggestions on how best to support your child and what advice to give. This can be accessed at [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

### **Responsibilities and Commitments**

All members of our school community have responsibilities in relation to making our school an environment that does not tolerate bullying.

The School Management Team will:

- Oversee pastoral care of all pupils
- Investigate any allegations of bullying
- Devise appropriate actions in line with the Staged Intervention approach
- Communicate with relevant partners such as staff, parents and outside agencies
- Record bullying investigations on SEEMIS pastoral notes, and record confirmed bullying in the SEEMIS Bullying & Equalities module
- Periodically review Anti-Bullying procedures and Positive Relationships policies

The teaching and support staff will:

- Have pastoral responsibility for pupils in their care
- Be vigilant to bullying which may be taking place but not reported

- Report any allegations of bullying to the school management team
- Contribute to investigations or actions as appropriate
- Teach pupils strategies for positive relationships through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum
- Deploy effective classroom management techniques, in line with the school Positive Relationships policy, and display the school charter
- Contribute to review of school policies

Pupils will:

- Sign an Anti-Bullying Pupil Agreement and understand the commitment they are making
- Report any bullying behaviour they may witness in school
- Conduct themselves responsibly and with respect for others, in line with our school values
- Contribute their views to any review of school Anti-Bullying and Positive Relationships policies

Parents should:

- Support their child in understanding what bullying behaviour is, and why it is wrong
- Provide a positive role model for their child of inclusive, non-discriminatory behaviour and attitudes
- Work with the school where necessary to support their child in forming and maintaining positive relationships and attitudes
- Have the opportunity to contribute to review of school policies

### **Complaints or Comments**

We welcome feedback from parents, however if you are not satisfied with the way in which an allegation of bullying has been dealt with by the school, please raise this in the first instance with the Head Teacher. Your concern will be investigated and you will be informed of the action (if any) that is to be taken in at least 5 days but no longer than 28 days. If you are unhappy with action taken by the school you may choose to direct your concern to NLC Education & Families.

