



anti-bullying strategy

bullying:

it's never acceptable

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *North Lanarkshire Council is committed to the belief that every child and young person has the right to grow up free from bullying. We want children and young people to live, learn, socialise and work in an inclusive community where differences between people are valued, people support one another and treat each other with respect, empathy and compassion.*

1.2 We are dedicated to fulfilling the Scottish Government's commitment to ensuring that young people become confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. All those who play a role in the daily lives of children and young people should be enabled to prevent bullying and respond to incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.

1.3 This vision is underpinned by the following values:

- We believe that children and young people come first and are at the centre of everything we do.
- We will make positive differences to the lives of children and young people.
- We will work with parents/carers and communities to meet the needs of all children and young people.

- European Convention on Human Rights
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Equality Act (2010)

Scottish Government

- A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (2010)
- ASL (Scotland) Act 2004, 2009
- Education (Scotland) Act 1980
- Protection from Harrassment(s) Act 1997
- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001
- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Health Promoting Schools
- Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Scotland's Schools
- Journey to Excellence
- National Care Standards
- Equality and Human Rights
- Football and Threatening Communications Bill 2011
- Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential (2005)

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Scottish Government is committed to the promotion of children's rights and the fulfilment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In 'A National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's children and young people' (2010), the Scottish Government lays out the legislative and policy framework for its policy on anti-bullying which is detailed as follows:

UK Government and International

- Human Rights Act 1988
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

2.2 Within North Lanarkshire, the overarching education policy document 'Raising Achievement for All' set out the commitment to help all young people 'achieve whatever they are capable of achieving, irrespective of socio-economic background, gender, race or levels of ability and disability'. The second phase of the policy 'Raising Achievement for All: Strategy for Inclusion' reinforces that to create a culture of inclusion within an establishment or centre involves creating a secure, accepting, collaborative learning community in which everyone's background, level of ability, culture and religion is valued. Phase three of 'Raising Achievement for All' is subtitled 'Experiences to Last a Lifetime'. It aims to provide learning experiences which foster and develop in pupils the skills and personal values which they will need to function well in the 21st century, including the ability to recognise and accept diversity and contribute to a just and tolerant society.

3.0 AIMS

3.1 The aims of the policy guidance detailed in this circular are:

- To prevent bullying behaviour taking place wherever possible.
- To reduce bullying when it does happen and aim for cessation of bullying behaviour.
- To provide support for children and their families who have been affected by bullying.
- To build resilience in children and young people and their capacity to address bullying.
- To develop organisational capacity to address bullying.
- To provide information on resources for people who have experienced bullying.
- To provide appropriate training for all staff working with children and young people.
- To provide a training framework which will support each establishment in developing its own anti-bullying policy.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

4.1 There are three groups on whom this policy framework will impact;- children and young people, adults (including those in school settings) and the local authority.

Children and Young People

It is vital that we work to foster positive, pro-social behaviour and attitudes in children and young people and educate them about occasions of and signs of bullying.

Children and young people will be enabled to understand that supports exist and can be accessed, and be encouraged to report incidents to responsible adults and/or young people who have been trained in peer mediation and restorative practices.

Children and young people will be supported to understand what bullying behaviour is and what it is not.

Adults and Schools

Adults, including those in school settings will promote supportive and caring communities where bullying is unacceptable and where 'telling' is the norm. It is vital that interventions are swift, effective and consistent and that values, processes and interventions are characterised by

good practice and are common across all educational establishments in North Lanarkshire.

Anti-bullying responses which are based on conflict resolution techniques and restorative approaches are encouraged and support will be timely, appropriate and easily accessible.

Each establishment's policy on anti-bullying should have a high profile and all members of the school community are required to understand their role should bullying behaviour occur.

Local Authority

The local authority will work with schools and centres to support the development of consistent and effective anti-bullying policies and provide appropriate staff development and training opportunities in partnership with respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service. This will ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to effectively respond to incidents of bullying behaviour.

The local authority will provide the required information to ensure that children, young people, staff, parents/carers and communities are aware of organisations that offer advice and support for children and young people experiencing bullying behaviour.

It will promote the involvement of children, young people, parents, carers and school communities to participate in the development and implementation of an anti-bullying strategy and policy statements.

In addition the local authority will ensure that all establishments are supported in taking account of emerging technologies in relation to anti-bullying.

A uniform reporting and data collection system will be implemented across the authority and returns will be analysed to identify emerging trends, supporting and enabling schools and establishments to develop targeted systems of support for children and young people who have experienced bullying.

The local authority will disseminate guidance and policy to all schools and centres on the security and safety of children and young people, in line with 'Curriculum for Excellence', 'Getting it Right for every Child' (GIRFEC) and 'Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential'.

5.0 OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5.1 Children and young people will be encouraged and assisted in ensuring their wellbeing in line with the eight wellbeing indicators: safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.

5.2 Children and young people will be able to discuss their concerns in a structured process which promotes them feeling valued and listened to, for example, in restorative conferences and solution oriented meetings. Restorative processes should have as their aim, where realistic, the repairing of the harm and the resolution of conflict and harm. As a result, children and young people experience relief from bullying and are assisted to return to school connectedness.

5.3 Children and young people displaying the bullying behaviour will be assisted, through restorative processes, to develop empathy and they will be encouraged to participate in any structured interventions available. Those children and young people who have experienced bullying behaviour will be able

to notice behavioural change in the person displaying the bullying behaviour.

- 5.4 Schools and establishments will have systems and processes in place that will assist children and young people in developing strategies that boost resilience, self esteem and personal confidence and support children and young people to visualise a positive future. Any support systems put in place should be positive, solution focussed and restorative in nature. In order to promote ownership of such systems, children and young people should participate in the development of support plans.
- 5.5 Robust systems of monitoring should be in place with a named member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring incidents in line with North Lanarkshire Council's reporting guidelines.

6.0 WHAT IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

- 6.1 Bullying is the hurting of one person by another or a group of others. It can be physical, emotional or psychological and often can be persistent, although one off incidents can have a serious, ongoing and harmful effect on the person being bullied. It can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying takes place between the person experiencing the bullying and the person displaying the bullying behaviour. Indirect bullying is typified by rejection of a peer group, for example, through social networks or mobile technology and is more subtle in nature, but as harmful in terms of impact.
- 6.2 Young people in North Lanarkshire identified the following as forms of bullying:
- Physical - hurting people, negative behaviour, victimisation.
 - Verbal - name calling, teasing, being nasty, being hurtful, being unjust, being unfair, gossiping.
 - Material - stealing or damaging property.
 - Emotional/mental - intimidation, making people think less of themselves, excluding people, scaring people, blackmailing, mental and emotional abuse.
 - Social - embarrassing someone whether intentionally or not, having awareness of an incident of bullying behaviour and failing to stop it, humiliation of another, manipulation of another, isolation of another, exerting peer pressure.
 - Cyber - where technology is used to send threatening, offensive or intimidating messages to another person, sometimes anonymously. People who do this often make their messages available to a wider audience, for example, on web blogs, message boards, chat rooms and websites. Other forms of cyber bullying include filming incidents and distributing them to peer groups, posting filmed incidents of particularly inappropriate events onto video sharing sites such as You-Tube and passing filmed incidents from mobile telephone to mobile telephone.
- 6.3 Many incidents of bullying are based on prejudice. Examples of this include bullying behaviour towards those who are:
- asylum seekers or refugees;
 - looked after children and young people;
 - young carers;
 - a particular gender;
 - a particular race, religion or belief;
 - a particular sexuality or perceived sexuality;

- physically disabled or who have learning difficulties;
- a particular body shape.

6.4 Homophobic Bullying

This is a specific form of bullying and is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered people (LGBT) or those perceived to be so. People who are seen to be 'different' in some way are also a target, for example, those not interested in sport or who are intensely shy. This type of bullying uses someone's own identity to abuse them and homophobic bullying can be experienced by all children and young people, regardless of their sexuality.



7.0 IMPACT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- 7.1 Bullying behaviour has an adverse impact on a range of people:

The individual experiencing the bullying

Young people in North Lanarkshire identified the following as potential impacts of bullying behaviour: anger, upset, hurt, frustration, isolation, manipulation, fear, exclusion, discrimination and embarrassment.

Adults require to be vigilant as there may be physical evidence that a child or young person is being bullied, the most dramatic being the changes in the child or young person's behaviour, peer relations, routine in school and personal appearance. There may be evidence of self harm, depression, eating disorders and suicidal feelings. School attendance is often affected and there is likely to be a reduction in aspirations and withdrawal from usual activity.

Families

Families understandably experience anxiety and guilt when it is discovered that their child or young person is being bullied. This can also provoke feelings of helplessness and stress.

Schools and establishments

The existence of bullying within an organisation contributes to a negative ethos and adversely affects group dynamics leading to relationship difficulties. Learning and development within the organisation is inhibited and concerns often arise in relation to attendance.

Culture and society

Bullying behaviour results in negative role models and messages in communities and in the media and contributes to perpetuation of prejudicial behaviour. Costs to society increase due to negative impacts such as reduced attendance on working environments.



8.0 PREVENTION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- 8.1 All behaviours occur within a context of relationships and the most powerful preventative strategies are those which aim to build communities of respect where individuals model appropriate behaviours and communicate the value and worth of every person.
- 8.2 Effective preventative strategies must involve all members of a community in building a culture which is fair, nurturing and safe and where all adults are responsible for acting as good role models. Bullying behaviours can occur anywhere in a community therefore the involvement of parents/carers, partner agencies and voluntary organisations and young people themselves in developing policy, is essential.
- 8.3 Celebrating difference and recognising the vulnerability and needs of minority groups contributes to a culture of openness, acceptance and fairness.
- 8.4 Understanding the impact of bullying behaviours on our health and wellbeing and our ability to access opportunities for learning and development will inform the steps we take to prevent and manage such incidents.
- 8.5 Regular staff training events and awareness raising, for example through health and wellbeing education, will ensure that all are informed and empowered to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying behaviour and to report it when it does occur. We will reinforce strong positive behaviour messages in the curriculum. All schools and establishments are required to identify Designated Staff Members who will undertake 'training of trainers' staff development in anti-bullying. This training will be organised and delivered in partnership with respectme, the national anti-bullying service.

- 8.6 Models of practice which support the development of proactive cultures include restorative and solution oriented approaches which aim to promote a holistic view of human behaviour, work towards more positive futures and seek to understand and repair rather than blame and punish.
- 8.7 Allied to culture building and culture changing approaches, clear and effective communication about acceptable standards of behaviour for all and procedures and strategies to manage times when these are breached help to communicate and reinforce our values and aims in relation to anti bullying. Children and young people should be made aware of and encouraged to use a range of reporting mechanisms, ensuring that their concerns can be shared with appropriate adults and be confident that these will be taken seriously and appropriate action taken where required. We will raise awareness of bullying behaviour through the use of posters, newsletters, surveys and group discussion.
- 8.8 When incidents are reported these should be investigated promptly, fairly and with sensitivity to the safety and wellbeing of all.
- 8.9 Following investigation and on establishing that bullying has occurred consideration should be given to appropriate sanctions and the ongoing need for support for all parties.

9.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 9.1 All schools and establishments will be required to use the authority's reporting procedures currently under development.
- 9.2 Schools and establishments must monitor the effectiveness of their anti-bullying policies, using the statistical capture of incidents and how the school/establishment responded to them. The whole school community including pupils, parents/carers, teaching and non teaching staff should be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of bullying incidents.

