



St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Class



# Relationships Policy

Updated  
October, 2017



**GIRFEC**

## **Introduction**

This policy reflects the school's decision to adopt Restorative Approaches as a basis for managing relationships within the school. It has been drafted through the following consultation:

- Staff In-Service Training (Nurture, Solihull, Restorative Practices and Circles)
- NLC Inclusion Base
- Staff Working Group

It has been developed through School Improvement Plans 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 as part of the GIRFEC priority.

The school's Relationship Policy should have an impact on all aspects of school life in promoting a positive ethos.

## **A Nurturing School**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Unconditional and positive regard is given to all members of the school community with respect for individuals
- Consistency of approach and clear boundaries for what is acceptable behaviour
- A recognition of pupils as individuals as well as part of a group
- Values that include acknowledging that the quality of a personal relationship matters and mutual support is essential
- The behaviour that the school wants to promote is modelled by all managers and staff
- Rules and routines are explained with reasons
- Managers and staff maintain a consistently positive outlook

## **Aim of Restorative Practices**

The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing the harm and building relationships.

## **Fair Process**

One of the key elements of Restorative Practices is a Fair Process.

The **Central Idea** of a Fair Process:

“...individuals are more likely to trust and co-operate freely with systems – whether they themselves ‘win’ or ‘lose’ by those systems – when fair process is observed.”

The **Three Principles** of a Fair Process

- Engagement: involving those affected in the process of decision making
- Explanation: understanding why final decisions have been made
- Expectation Clarity: explanations around new rules and standards – and what will happen if there is a failure to honour these

## **Restorative Questions**

**Below are some affective questions, which are restorative in their approach.**

### **Responding to Challenging Behaviour**

*What happened?*

*What were you thinking at the time?*

*What have your thoughts been since?*

*Who has been affected by what you did?*

*What do you think needs to happen next time?*

### **Responding to Those Harmed**

*What happened?*

*What were your thoughts at the time?*

*What have your thoughts been since?*

*How has this affected you and others?*

*What has been the hardest thing for you?*

*What do you think needs to happen next?*

## **Circles**

**Classroom circles support the two main goals of Restorative Practices**

1. Building Community
2. Responding to harm through dialogue that sets things right

Children will work together in circles within the classroom for a variety of activities e.g.

### **Proactive Circles**

*Getting to know you activities*

*Planning activities*

*Setting targets*

*Games*

*Ice-Breakers*

*Setting class rules*

*Plenary or review*

### **Responsive Circles**

*When something goes wrong in the class/playground*

*Deal with persistent problems/issues in the class*

*Deal with one off incidents*

*Help participants reach a joint solution and move forward*

## **Restorative Practice in St. Mary's Primary School**

The school has a commitment to the use of positive behaviour management through nurture and restorative approaches. The starting point for all work to resolve problems should be to understand the harm that has been done and to support them in restoring relationships.

The school no longer uses class behaviour charts or systems. Children are aware of expectations in their relationships with others. This also includes behaviours within the classroom which may disrupt effective learning and teaching. All staff take time to talk with children using restorative and reflective approaches in order to continue the development of positive relationships. There will be times when the Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher or Principal Teacher has to support this process through discussions with a child. There will also be times when parents will be involved in the process.

**Good behaviour** should not be taken for granted and will need to be taught as well as modelled by all adult members of the community. Staff will therefore share with pupils, clear expectations of behaviour for learning. All adults should take an active role in modelling and encouraging positive relationships in and outside of the classroom.

**Praise and rewards** are the most effective encouragement of effort and achievement and is the starting point in classroom management within the school.

In achieving positive relationships within St. Mary's Primary School, the following systems will be implemented:

- Whole school points system
- Class Circles (Proactive and Responsive)
- Restorative Questioning
- Peer Mediation (friendship building) facilities at interval and lunchtime
- Class achievements at weekly assembly (Star Pupil/Superstar/Birthdays)
- Wider achievements at monthly assembly
- Certificates and displays of achievements
- Out of School Hours Learning opportunities
- Roles of responsibility within each class and whole school
- Individual Class systems to promote positive behaviour
- Open door policy for parents

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **What Is Bullying?**

***“Bullying is both behaviour and impact: what someone does and the impact it has on a person’s ability to feel in control of themselves. We call this their sense of agency” (respectme)***

Our anti- bullying policy is based on the following principles:

- We will promote positive relationships and behaviours amongst all children and young people and adults around them
- We respect the rights of children and young people as paramount
- We will work together to develop a culture of mutual respect and responsibility amongst all children and young people and adults around them
- We will seek to prevent and address bullying, through the development and implementation of effective anti-bullying policies and practices
- We will address all aspects of prejudice in order to make sure all types of prejudice based bullying are treated with equal importance (including bullying based on the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010- for more information see [www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/technical-guidance-schools-scotland](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/technical-guidance-schools-scotland))
- We will support effective communication, including sharing relevant and proportionate information, where appropriate, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998
- We will seek to understand the experiences, and address the needs of children and young people, who are bullied as well as those who bully within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support
- We will share information where appropriate and work jointly to make sure we are co-ordinated and cohesive in all that we do
- We recognise bullying can have an adverse/detrimental effect on childhood development and we will try to ensure that every child and young person in St. Mary’s will have the same opportunities and an equal chance to succeed.

The object of an anti- bullying policy is to help children and young people to be able to recognise bullying behaviour and also to understand that it is wrong and why it is wrong, and how it will be addressed by those charged with their care.

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, on-going and harmful effect on the person being bullied. It can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying takes place between the person experiencing 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. (NLC anti-bullying strategy bullying: it’s never acceptable)

Bullying can include,

- Physical
- Verbal; name calling, teasing, threatened
- Material – stealing or damaging property
- Emotional/Mental – intimidation, making people think less of themselves, scaring people, blackmailing
- Social – embarrassing someone, isolation, peer pressure to do certain things
- Cyber – technology used to threaten, offend etc
- Prejudice – gender, race, sex, beliefs, asylum seekers
- Homophobic prejudice

These types of behaviour only need to happen once for the sense of “agency” of the person experiencing the behaviour to be taken away from them. North Lanarkshire’s anti-bullying policy makes it clear that we must avoid labelling children; that is why the use of the words victim and bully are not part of the language of discourse in the policy. Labels can stick and come to define a person and actually can add to the sense of isolation rather than assist with recovery and return to a state of security and can, for the person displaying these behaviours, prevent them from changing their behaviour.

Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out and it can happen face to face and online. Bullying behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour might not be repeated, the threat that it might can be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these.

For children and young people, the internet is a place, not a thing. It’s a social space where they can hang out and meet friends. Like any other place they visit, there are benefits and risks. Adults need to be engaged with children and young people about where they go online, just as they are when they go into town or to any other ‘real’ physical place.

Online bullying, or ‘cyberbullying’ as it is often referred to, shouldn’t be treated any differently; it’s still about behaviour and impact. The behaviour is the same but it takes place online, usually on social networking sites and can include a person being called names, threatened or having rumours spread about them. We should address online bullying in the same way. Our responses will be more consistent and effective when we address online

bullying as part of our whole anti-bullying approach, not as a separate area of work or policy.

### **Is intent required?**

Bullying incidents should be looked at individually. In some cases, children or young people may not be aware that their behaviour is actually bullying. They are perhaps modelling the behaviour of adults or other children and young people, not understanding that it is wrong because they have never been taught otherwise. In these circumstances, the intent to bully may not be present, but the impact and effect on the person being bullied will be no less significant because of this.

It must be explained to the person bullying that their behaviour is unacceptable and why. Intent is difficult to prove and young people can often reframe their behaviour when challenged. It's more important to focus on the behaviour and the impact it had, rather than trying to establish whether someone acted deliberately or not. ([www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk))

### **Does the behaviour have to be persistent?**

No. The issue with persistence is that the behaviour has to take place more than once, but the impacts of bullying can be felt after a single incident.

Bullying doesn't need to be persistent to have an effect on the mental health and well-being of a child or young person.

### **What about impact?**

Bullying can affect people in different ways and this should be taken into consideration. If you are unsure if behaviour is bullying, look at the effect it is having on the child or young person. If they are unable to respond effectively and regain their sense of self and control in the situation, adults need to intervene to help restore it. Keeping the focus on impact reduces the emphasis on issues of persistence and intent. What you do about bullying is more important than how you define it.

### **When it's not bullying**

We know that children and young people will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships. This is a normal part of growing up and most children and young people have the ability to bounce back from this type of behaviour. It is important to discuss how they feel and help them to develop resilience to manage their relationships.

Similarly, bullying behaviour can sometimes be unsuccessful. A person can attempt to bully someone using a range of behaviours but it may have no impact – in this case the person



has not been bullied but the behaviour needs challenged appropriately and should not be ignored.

### **Prejudice Based Bullying**

Similarly, hate crime is defined through the law as a crime motivated by malice or ill-will towards individuals because of their actual or perceived disability, race, religion, sexual orientation. A hate crime can take a number of forms that are potentially a form of criminal harassment and should be treated as such. Adults and children and young people can seek appropriate advice and guidance from Police Scotland if they feel a hate crime may have taken place.

[www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'protected characteristic'. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

### **What do we do at St Mary's to prevent bullying?**

- This is Our Faith
- Knowing Me, Knowing You Pack
- Staff Training and awareness raising
- Celebrate difference and recognise vulnerable groups
- Investigating incidents promptly, fairly with sensitivity
- Positive and Motivational Displays
- Certificates, Class points and rewards

- Peer Mediation
- Reflections in Circle Time
- Assembly activities – focus throughout year and Anti-Bullying Week
- Communication with parents
- Curricular approaches to anti-bullying

**In dealing with bullying we aim to:**

- Raise awareness about bullying
- Increase understanding for all involved
- Teach pupils about their relationships with others through the curriculum and school ethos

**What happens at our school if bullying has occurred?**

In dealing with bullying incidents;

- We will not ignore bullying
- Staff should not make premature assumptions
- All accounts of the incidents should be listened to fairly
- We will make every effort to adopt a restorative approach that encourages pupils to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves.
- We will follow up to check bullying has not resumed
- We will record bullying incidents on electronically on the Seemis platform (as per NLC policy)