

St. Thomas' Primary School



Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy

2019
(revised 2023)

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Introduction

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

- Reading Education Scotland document: A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Children and Young People
- Reading NLC Anti-Bullying Policy and Prevention Guidelines (RespectMe)
- Staff via in-service training and questionnaires
- Pupils via questionnaires and class workshops
- Parents via questionnaires and workshops

It has been developed through the school's School Improvement Plan 2019/20 with an emphasis on Health & Wellbeing.

It has been updated through the school's dedication to a Rights Respecting School's Ethos. The UNCRC Articles that this policy applies to are: 12, 19, 29, 36, 39

It is underpinned by our Commitment to The Charter for Catholic Schools and to, 'This is Our Faith' celebrating Gospel values in our school

Aim of Policy

The policy reflects the needs of St Thomas' Primary and is the result of consultation with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.

The Policy aims:

1. To support the ethos of the school in promoting positive relationships, fostering equal opportunities, and raising attainment for all.
2. To enable pupils to become effective contributors, responsible citizens, confident individuals and successful learners in line with the Curriculum for Excellence.
3. To establish Restorative Practice Vision through Approaches and Methodologies
4. To support staff by providing a clear and consistent framework for promoting positive behaviour.
5. To encourage an ethos of respect through our Rights Respecting Schools agenda.
6. To build an anti-bullying ethos and where appropriate to respond appropriately to incidents that may occur
7. To support pupils in developing emotional intelligence in resolving difficulties – Emotion Works
8. To support pupils by communicating expectations in a clear way – Expected/Unexpected behaviour
9. To ensure there is regular review by senior management and staff.
10. To be accessible to all members of St. Thomas' community.
11. To take cognisance of Scottish Government guidance and local authority initiative consistent with the GIRFEC agenda.

A Brief Introduction to Rights Respecting Schools Ethos

UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools programme helps a school to use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to help develop a clear set of values that are actively upheld by pupils. These rights are set out to help children develop to their full potential knowing that all children have the same rights no matter what their background or where they live.

In total there are 42 rights, which are called articles (see appendix 1). For example,

Article 28 – Every child has the right to an education.

Article 31 – Every child has the right to relax and play.

At St Thomas' Primary, we want everyone to understand the importance of what rights are and what responsibilities they have. Our goal is that we respect our own rights and do our best to always respect other people's rights. We are a GOLD Rights

Respecting School!



At the beginning of each new school year each class will create a class charter.

This is an agreement that highlights adult and child responsibilities in relation to their rights and in order for rights to be upheld.

It is an agreement between pupils and adults of how to have a positive and fair learning environment.

It helps to maintain a learning environment where everyone feels safe, happy and respected.

There will be a rights steering group (The Rights Knights).

The children in the group will decide ways of promoting rights within the school and community.



Supporting Positive Relationships

Each class will run a support system in class for supporting positive relationships and promoting positive behaviours which impact on core curriculum outcomes.



Our class reward systems will have a firm focus on praising and rewarding positive behaviours.

The support system will run alongside our Class Charter which each class will have.



Our whole school follow the Emotion Works programme to develop emotional intelligence within our children.



A Brief Introduction to Restorative Approaches

This may be a new approach to you and your children.

Restorative approaches are based on the principle of restorative justices (RJ), which is a way of repairing harm that has its roots in a number of ancient cultures including Native American, Maori, Aboriginal and Anglo-Saxon.

In the school context there is growing recognition of the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships in order that effective learning can take place.

Incidents in schools that are dealt with restoratively provide opportunities for harm to be repaired.

The process takes place when all parties are in agreement that they want to address the harm this way and, in particular, it is important that the person causing harm accepts that s/he has done so, they will be ready to be held accountable and be willing to repair the wrongdoing.

Where possible, restorative approaches bring together those harmed and those who cause harm through a structured process.

Those who have been harmed have an opportunity to express themselves and to have a say in how the matter is resolved.

An agreement is then formed by all parties, with the commitment of all present and includes a shared understanding of the consequences of any breach of this agreement.

If it is not possible to resolve the situation completely, restorative processes can also enable the harm, and ways of repairing it, to be explored.

The structure is based on a simple series of questions which can be used in a variety of settings, from small-scaled conversations in corridors or classrooms to large conferences involving families and community members, or whole classes.

This could also be used at home in conversations with your children.

- What has happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling at the time? And now?
- Who has been affected by what has happened? How have they been affected?
- What is needed to make this right?
- How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?

Experience both internationally and in the UK suggest that restorative approaches are most effectively used within a school culture where emotional health, wellbeing and literacy are developed on an on-going basis.

(Adapted from)

Lewisham Restorative Approaches Partnership – Evaluative Review, September, 2005

The potential advantages of restorative approaches in the school setting include:

- A safer, more caring environment and a more effective teaching and learning environment
- A greater commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another
- A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts
- A greater awareness of the importance of connectedness to young people. The need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults
- Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behaviour that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect, young people
- Reductions in fixed term and permanent exclusions
- A greater confidence in the staff team to deal with challenging situations
- An increased belief in the ability of young people to take responsibility for their choices, and more people giving them opportunities to do so.

Our school has a commitment to the use of positive behaviour management through Restorative Approaches.

Restorative Practice - School Support Structures

1. New members of staff will be issued with an induction pack which includes reading materials on restorative approaches.

2. All staff will be issued with a badge which highlights a restorative approach i.e. the 5 magic questions.
3. Further reading and resources should be centrally located, for access by all staff.
4. An identified area set up to facilitate peer mediation.
5. Minor altercations within the class or yard should be dealt with by staff using a restorative approach.
6. A consistent system of rewards.
7. A member of staff should be identified as coordinator for our Relationships Practices throughout the school.

Information About Bullying

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)

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 IS 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.

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 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)

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

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 Thomas' to prevent bullying?

- Restorative Approaches
- Class Charters / Rights and Responsibilities
- Emotion Works
- Staff Training and awareness raising
- Celebrate difference and recognise vulnerable groups
- Investigating incidents promptly, fairly with sensitivity
- Positive and Motivational Displays
- Children's weekly rewards at assembly
- Certificates and stickers
- Reflections in dealing with moral dilemmas – Emotion Works
- Health and Wellbeing: social and emotional wellbeing work.
- This is Our Faith
- Assembly activities – focus throughout year and Anti-Bullying Week
- Communication with parents
- Recognising and celebrating Anti-bullying Week
- 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 electronically on the Seemis platform (as per NLC policy)

Praise and rewards are an effective encouragement of effort and achievement and should be a starting point in classroom management within the school.

In achieving positive relationships within St Thomas' the following systems will be implemented;

- Rights Knights
- Individual class systems to promote positive behaviour
- Recognition of achievements through assemblies
- Certificates and display of achievements related to the Curriculum for Excellence
- Out of School Hours Learning opportunities
- Display
- Frequent positive verbal praise from all staff
- Roles of responsibilities for pupils within the school through class charter and in wider school circumstances.
- Clear communication with parents

Sanctions may be necessary where a pupil's actions are seen to be causing harm to others.

The school can employ a system of reflection sheets. The pupil causing harm can be asked to complete a sheet that asks them to reflect on the incident, they may need support in completing the sheet.

This sheet may then taken home to be completed and signed by the parents/carers. Comments are welcomed from home as communication is vital in affecting change in behaviours.

Parental Involvement

The Scottish Parliament has passed the **Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006** to encourage and support more parents to become involved.

Because parents have such a vital role to play in their children's education, the Act aims to make it easier for parents to become involved in their own child's education and in their child's school more generally.

What does the law say?

The main aims of the Parental Involvement Act (the new law) are to:

- help parents become more involved with their child's education and learning
- welcome parents as active participants in the life of the school
- provide easier ways for parents to express their views and wishes.

To help achieve these aims, St. Thomas' Primary have a Parent Council who represent the parent body as a whole and are involved in consultations and decisions regarding what happens in the school.

What is a Parent Council?

The role of a Parent Council is to:

- support the school in its work with pupils
- represent the views of all parents
- encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community

The school and the local authority must listen to what the Parent Council says and give it a proper response. The school's Parent Council will decide such things as:

- how their Council will be set up
- what it should be called
- what size it should be - e.g. in a very small primary school, all parents could be involved
- who should be a member of the Parent Council
- how they should be appointed
- when the most convenient time is to hold meetings
- what will be discussed at meetings - these might be topics such as school uniform, parking near the school, the school's anti-bullying policy, etc.

More information about parents as partners in children's learning, or any aspect of Scottish education, can be found on Parentzone.

What does the Act mean for St Thomas'?

St Thomas' already has a range of ways to ensure that parents are involved in the life of the school.

Existing methods and new ideas for involving parents will be included in the school development plan. We will continue to seek better ways of involving parents and will:

- welcome and encourage partnership with parents
- provide responses to requests from parents for advice or information
- tell parents about school events and how they can be involved in the life of the school
- tell parents about what their child is learning and meetings/events involving their child
- setting up and running a Parent Council
- have a clear complaints procedure and also guidance on how parents can contact the education authority if they want to.

Communication with Parents

St. Thomas' keeps parents informed of their child's learning, meetings and school events in a variety of ways including:

- Two formal parents evenings involving their child
- formal written reports
- meet the teacher
- curriculum afternoons and evenings
- notice of the intended learning and teaching each term
- appointments with staff or the management team on request
- termly newsletters
- school website, social media sites
- school displays
- regular homework related to classroom work
- children will receive rewards and merit certificates which will then be sent home
- invitations to parents to help in events and outings
- Parent Council updates
- contact of serious concerns about children will be communicated by the SMT after consultation by the class teacher
- Pupil reflection sheets
- children's work being shared at reporting events, inviting comments from parents

St. Thomas' values its positive, constructive relationships with parents and the wider community

Reflection Sheet

Early Level

Name:

Class:

Date:

1. This happened today...

2. How did you feel?
(sad? upset? angry? hurt? jealous? sorry?)

3. Next time I will...



Pupil signature –

Parent/Guardian signature/comment

Reflection Sheet

First Level

Name:

Class:

Date:

1. What happened that I have to think about?

1. How did I feel?
(sad? upset? angry? hurt? jealous? sorry?)



2. Was anyone else affected?

3. What could I have done differently?

Pupil signature –

Parent/Guardian signature/comment

Reflection Sheet

Second Level

Name:

Class:

Date:

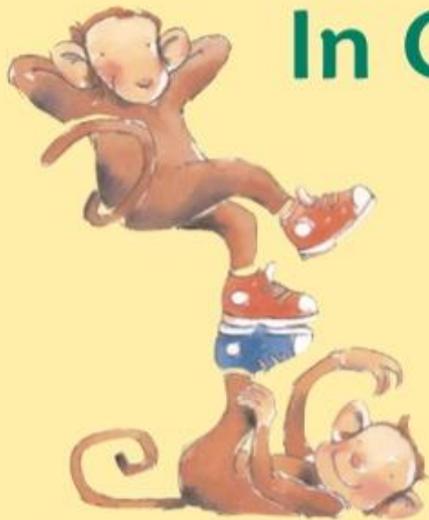
1. What happened that I have to think about?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. How were you feeling?
(sad? upset? angry? hurt? jealous? sorry?)
4. Was anyone else affected?
5. What could I have done differently?

Pupil signature –

Parent/Guardian signature/comment

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In Child Friendly Language



"Rights" are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1
Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2
All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3
All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4
The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 5
Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6
You have the right to be alive.

Article 7
You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8
You have the right to an identity—an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9
You have the right to live with your parents, unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10
If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11
You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12
You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13
You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14
You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15
You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16
You have the right to privacy.

Article 17
You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18
You have the right to be raised by your parents if possible.

Article 19
You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20
You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21
You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22
You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23
You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24
You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25
If you live in a care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have those living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26
You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27
You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28
You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29
Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30
You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion—or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

Article 31
You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32
You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33
You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34
You have the right to be free from sexual abuse. Article 34(a) one is allowed to kiss up or sell you.

Article 35
You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 36
No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

Article 37
You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 38
If you live in a care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have those living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 39
You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40
You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41
If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42
You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

Articles 43 to 54
These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

