



## HOLMSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AUGUST 2023



### Background

Halmston Primary School endorses the principles, aims and objectives of South Ayrshire Council in providing a **positive, respectful, safe and supportive environment for all members of the school community.** (*SAC guidelines on anti-bullying strategies*). The school undertakes to create an ethos of positive relationships and inclusion, which recognises that bullying behaviour can take many different forms. The school will endeavour to:

- reduce and eradicate wherever possible instances of bullying in any form
- establish appropriate procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying in schools
- ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the school policy and fulfil their obligations to it.
- promote the welfare and rights of children and young people and ensure that they are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected responsible and included.

The approach to combating bullying and developing positive relationships will be based on the school values and principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside the six Nurturing principles. Bullying is a breach of children's rights. Under the UNCRC, all children and young people have the right not to be discriminated against or treated unfairly; to be treated in their best interests and to have their rights respected, protected and fulfilled.

Halmston Primary School is also committed to providing a Nurturing environment for all learners based on the following 6 Nurture Principles.

### The Six Principles Of Nurture

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

### Definition of Bullying

***“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on the person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term their sense of agency. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships: It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face-to-face and online.”***

**Respectme, 2015**

***“Respectme”*** is Scotland’s anti-bullying service and its vision is of a respecting, just, equal and inclusive Scotland in which all children and young people can live free from bullying and harassment and are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Bullying is a behaviour carried out by an individual, or group, which can impact on another individual, causing them to feel unhappy, hurt, unsafe or fearful. It can be expressed through physical, emotional, verbal or intimidating behaviours.

Bullying can seriously affect an individual's self confidence and self-esteem and have a negative effect on wellbeing. It can have wider consequences for the family and friends of the individuals concerned.

In deciding whether bullying is taking place, the school will investigate each instance individually to determine whether:

- there is a deliberate intent to cause harm
- the behaviour is persistent, systematic or repeated
- **the impact on the person being bullied is resulting in continued hurt, insecurity or fear to the detriment of their physical, emotional or mental wellbeing and development**

Behaviours typical of bullying include

- Physical:** kicking, hitting, punching, pushing, tripping and other forms of unwanted physical contact
- Verbal:** threats, including physical violence or extortion. E.g. taking someone's lunch money; name-calling; spreading rumours; persistent teasing or hurtful comments; shouting; swearing, putting down ~ these may be received directly; or through written notes; or electronically through phone calls, text messaging, electronic games connected to the internet, e-mail or social networking internet sites
- Emotional:** offensive or threatening gestures; deliberate isolating or excluding from friendship groups; taking friends away; hiding, stealing or damaging property, making people feel that they are being bullied or making them fearful of being bullied.

The school also recognises that while anyone can be subjected to bullying behaviours and attitudes, there are occasions when bullying is based on prejudice and individuals or groups may be targeted because of who they are or who they are perceived to be. Holmston Primary is committed to following **The Equality Act 2010**. This act provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimization based on a range of "*protected characteristics*". These characteristics are defined in the Act as:

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

In addition to the Protected Characteristics covered by the Act, there is an expectation that other groups will be considered, for example:

- Looked after children;
- Young carers;
- Children and young people living in deprivation; and
- Body image issues.

## Preventing Bullying

In promoting a culture where bullying is unacceptable, it is vital that:

- all staff adhere to the highest standards in modelling positive values and behaviour
- We adhere to the articles detailed in the Convention for the Rights of the Child and promote the principles taught through the Rights Respecting School
- School assemblies are held regularly which contain a clear message that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated
- we plan strategies including relevant CPD for all staff in order that they are aware of changes in children's behaviour, demeanour or attitude which may indicate that they are being bullied
- we run a targeted Nurture programme to support vulnerable pupils
- staff are aware of isolated children and attempt to involve them in a sympathetic group – in the gym, in the classroom or in the playground or dining hall
- we ensure that respectful behaviour is encouraged throughout the school, both in informal settings and through providing pupils with the opportunity to discuss issues in a coherent, progressive social education programme including health education and drama
- ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of procedures outlined in the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, including school rules and guidelines on the misuse of mobile phones, computers and other technologies
- we regularly examine the school environment and wherever possible, to provide an adult presence to reduce the risk of bullying behaviour
- bullying and the impact of bullying behaviour is addressed through planned programmes of study where content is regularly visited to ensure that it is meeting the needs of children and young people
- we work in liaison with external agencies and professionals (Campus Cop and 'Show Racism The Red Card' for example)

## Procedures for dealing with instances of Bullying

### Pupils

Pupils should be aware of their responsibilities in reporting bullying incidents.

Pupils should know that it is **never** acceptable to display or support bullying behaviour.

- through actively encouraging or participating e.g. by laughing, joining in
- through passively encouraging the behaviour by doing or saying nothing

### Pupils should

- Report incidents of bullying to staff or parents.
- Participate in any consultation regarding anti bullying
- Treat peers and staff with respect
- Be aware of what they post and share online
- Try to deal with hurtful comments in an appropriate way. For example, tell the person who is bullying to "STOP" and walk away and report if the behaviour does not stop.
- Speak with a trusted adult if they are feeling that they are being bullied
- Stay with friends when playing – try not to be alone, especially when walking to and from school.

## **Staff**

Staff should be clear about their responsibilities to the care and welfare of pupils in their charge. They must understand that even an incident that occurs in isolation can represent bullying behaviour.

### **Staff should**

- Establish supportive relationships with pupils and use their professional judgement when responding to incidents based on evidence and investigation.
- Model behaviour which promotes Health and Wellbeing
- Undertake continued professional development about bullying behaviour and policies
- Be alert to behaviours exhibited by children and to changes in mood or relationships with others.
- Respond swiftly, investigating each complaint thoroughly and impartially whilst respecting confidentiality.
- Listen to children carefully and treat each occurrence seriously.
- Do not label individuals as bullies
- Consider the involvement of outside agencies where appropriate
- Report any incidence of bullying to a member of the management team. The Class Teacher(s) should be informed.
- Investigate the alleged incident(s), taking into account both sides, in a calm and fair manner, and record using the Bullying and Equalities Module within SEEMiS in line with Authority guidelines.
- Monitor and record all instances of prejudiced based bullying using the Bullying and Equalities Module within SEEMiS in line with Authority guidelines.
- SLT should ensure that the numbers of incidences of bullying dealt with and recorded are reported to the Authority.

### **Outcomes for Episodes of Bullying**

Serious cases of bullying will be reported to and dealt with by the Head Teacher who will include and inform parents of measures taken to support children, whether they have been bullied, or have been involved in participating in bullying behaviour.

Incidents of Bullying or racist behaviours will be recorded as per Authority Guidelines

Measures taken will be dependent on the individual circumstances of each case and may include:

- additional class work on appropriate personal and social behaviour
- additional reparative work on appropriate personal and social behaviour
- individual support from teachers and support staff
- additional supervision in particular areas of the playground
- advice to parents on recognising signs of bullying in children
- referral to the Behaviour Support Team
- completion of a wellbeing application that follows the national GIRFEC practice model
- recording of the incident within the SEEMiS Pastoral Note section.
- Arrangement of a Team Around the Family Meeting
- referral to other support agencies as appropriate
- in some cases, and with adult supervision, peer mediation and reconciliation
- discipline procedures summarised in the school's Positive Behaviour Policy being followed
- reference being made to the school Equalities Policy to determine whether any prejudiced based bullying has taken place
- that if necessary and appropriate, serious cases may be reported to the police

### Evaluation and review of this policy

The effectiveness of the impact of this policy will be assessed through:

- Analysis of the Anti-bullying monitoring returns
  - Types of incident
  - Age/ class/ year groups recorded
- A reduction over time in the number of incidents reported
- The policy will be reviewed and updated every three years or earlier if circumstances dictate.

