Shetland

Islands

Council

Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools

Procedures and Guidance

June 2018

Children's Services

Contents

APPENDIX 1 - RECOGNISING BULLYING

> Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on the other person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this 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 and it can happen face to face and online.
>
> (respect me, 2015)

There are many reasons why someone bullies another person. Often it could be to exert control over a person or situation and they may feel that they will never get caught or be held accountable for their behaviour. The bullying behaviour could be learned and it could be that they are, or have been, exposed to a culture which supports and accepts bullying behaviour. They may have been bullied themselves and are bullying as a form of self-protection to prevent them being bullied again. It is also possible that they are not aware of the effects or impacts of bullying behaviour or that they do not perceive their behaviour as causing harm to another person.

Bullying can last for a short period or go on for years, if unchecked, and is an abuse of power by those who carry it out. It can be premeditated, opportunistic, random or serial. Bullying can involve observers and onlookers, who may do nothing to stop the bullying or becoming actively involved in supporting it. There is no such thing as 'typical' bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice that relates to perceived or actual differences and although a bullying behaviour may not be repeated, the sustained threat or fear of bullying via actions, looks, messages and confrontations can extend and maintain the impact of the original behaviour.

Persistence, premeditation and repetition do not need to be present for bullying to have taken place. These elements can add to the severity of the bullying behaviour and impact on the person being bullied but are not prerequisites in defining a bullying incident.

1.1 What was the Behaviour?

Bullying behaviours can cause emotional, material and/or physical harm. Bullying behaviour can include:

- posting on social media, sharing compromising or meme images, sending nasty text messages, gaming and social networking group exclusion. Focus groups of young people in Shetland tell us that more and more bullying behaviour is taking place online.
- isolating others, tormenting, threatening gestures, ridiculing, humiliating, intimidating, excluding, manipulating and coercing. Children and Young People with additional support needs can often be targeted by this type of bullying behaviour
- name calling, spreading rumours, threats, teasing or belittling. This kind of bullying behaviour is particularly prevalent for incidents of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.
- pushing, kicking, hitting, biting, tripping, etc. This type of physical bullying behaviour can often occur as one off incidents but the threat of this kind of behaviour, through gestures and other body language, can create ongoing fear in young people being bullied.

1.2 What was the Impact?

Speaking to the young person about the impact is essential for framing how you respond to bullying. Some bullying behaviour has no impact on another person but should still be challenged. Some bullying behaviour can cause general annoyance and irritation and some bullying behaviour can cause significant mental health problems.

It is wrong to assume to know the impact an incident has on a young person and young people tell us the most important factor in determining when bullying has taken place and the action that needs to be taken, is consideration of how the behaviour has made that child or young person feel.

The impact of bullying can include feelings of:

- Embarrassment
- Humiliation
- Intimidation
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Shame
- Anger

And can lead to behaviours such as:

- Irritability
- Self-harm
- Academic underachievement
- Non-attendance
- Withdrawal from activities
- Poor behaviour

1.3 Banter to Bullying – Teenagers' Perspective

Minor disagreements, changing friendships, impulsive behaviour and a natural tendency to push boundaries are common behaviours amongst teenagers. Secondary aged students tell us that they can often be rude to each other and share derogatory remarks where no harm is intended or received. However, teenagers also describe how banter can become intimidating bullying behaviour. They tell us that appraisal of this behaviour is very individual as every person reacts and responds differently to potential bullying behaviour and the most important factor in determining whether bullying has taken place or not is the impact of the behaviour on the individual.

Young people also tell us that bullying behaviour is most intimidating when it is displayed by someone not regarded as a friend but most hurtful when it is displayed by a so called friend. The tone of what is said and the words used are described as more hurtful than physical bullying. Nevertheless, young people tell us that an incident of physical bullying creates the most fear as they are never sure when it might happen again when compared to verbal bullying which is more frequent and expected.

"Every situation is unique so we need to have a way of thinking about bullying that lets us consider different responses, rather than one fixed way of doing things."

Respect for All, 2017

1.4 When is it not Bullying Behaviour?

As children and young people learn to build and form relationships, it is common that they will fall out and disagree with each other. This is a normal part of childhood relationships. However, in an environment where this behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying behaviour, making those being bullied feel afraid, uncomfortable and unsafe.

There is no legal definition of bullying in Scotland and, as such, bullying is not a crime in itself. However, some incidents which can be misunderstood as bullying are more serious and criminal in nature. It is important to ensure that there is a clear distinction between bullying and other potential forms of criminal offences such as hate crime, child sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. For instance, when someone is coerced or pressurised to do something sexual or is touched inappropriately, this is not bullying. This is sexual assault or abuse and a form of gender-based violence.

Some bullying behaviour can be a hate crime which 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 or transgender identity. A hate crime can take a number of forms that are potentially a form of criminal harassment and should be treated as such.

It must be recognised some online behaviour may be illegal and children and young people should be educated about the consequences of sharing inappropriate, harmful, sexually

intimate content or images online.

1.5 Online Bullying

Online bullying occurs most commonly on social media applications, social networking sites and gaming platforms. Online bullying requires the use of a computer, smart phone, tablet or games console and having a greater knowledge of communication platforms, or a wider social network can enable one person to bully another online. The degree of anonymity, which can mask the identity of the persons displaying the bullying behaviour, can make it difficult to respond to incidents.

Online bullying is not limited to a specific location such as a school or club therefore online bullying can follow a child or young person into their own home which has traditionally been a safe place to avoid children and young people who display bullying behaviour. Online bullying can therefore invade many aspects of the person's life and leave them feeling overwhelmed with little opportunity to escape. Furthermore, online bullying is viral - capable of reaching a far broader audience, more quickly, and posting an embarrassing photo or video can spread throughout social networks, crossing personal, school and community boundaries, increasing the chance that others will join in with the bullying.

The impact of online bullying is as hurtful and damaging as other forms of bullying behaviour. Advances in technology are simply providing an alternative means of targeting people. If a child is being bullied online, it's possible that they're also experiencing bullying offline, at times by the same people for the same reasons; it's not always exclusive.

Online bullying will be taken as seriously as any other form of bullying and should consider the behaviour and what impact it has had on the child or young person.

1.6 Prejudice Based Bullying

Prejudice based bullying is where bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice or is perceived to be motivated by prejudice and is most commonly associated with discriminatory language or behaviour.

Actual or Perceived Sexual Orientation including Gender identity or Trans identity

This type of bullying is when people behave or speak in a way which makes someone feel bullied because of their actual or perceived sexuality. People may be a target of this type of bullying because of their appearance, behaviour, physical traits or because they have friends or family who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or simply have not defined their sexuality or orientation. Commonly bullying can take place because they are seen as being different. Like all forms of bullying, this kind of bullying can be through name calling, spreading rumours, online bullying, physical or sexual or emotional abuse. In terms of gender reassignment, it is essential that the individual's chosen name as well as the correct pronoun is used or this can be experienced as bullying behaviour.

Additional Support Needs or Disabilities

Children with additional support needs and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to bullying behaviour. Discriminatory language is a form of bullying often experienced by such children. Barriers to inclusion is a form of bullying and an equalities issue.

Race and Racism including culture

The term racist bullying refers to bullying that is perceived to be because of the colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, origin or national status of a person. Racist bullying can range from ill-considered remarks, which are not intended to be hurtful, to deliberate physical attacks causing serious injury.

Religion, Belief or Faith

Bullying based on faith or religion is directed against individuals and groups because of their actual of perceived beliefs or their connection with a particular religion or belief.

Body Image and Physical Appearance

Bullying on the grounds of appearance is one of the most prevalent types of prejudice based bullying. Bullying may be linked to body image, height, weight, or more specifically when a person has a condition, injury, mark or scar, paralysis or illness that affects the way they look or move. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools and work places to remove barriers and create a positive environment for people with disfigurement. Face equality is about being treated fairly and equally regardless of appearance.

Care Experienced Children

As Corporate Parents, Shetland Islands Council, along with partners, have a duty to protect and promote the wellbeing of looked after children and young people in the same way as a parent fulfilling their parental responsibilities would safeguard and protect their own child.

Other Common Perceived Reasons for Bullying

Socio-economic prejudice

Mental Health

Sexism and Gender

Marriage/Civil Partnership of parents/carers or other family members

Asylum Seekers/Refugee Gypsy/travellers status

Pregnancy and Maternity

APPENDIX 2 - RESPONDING TO BULLYING

It should be recognised that incidents of bullying can occur in all schools and it is essential that such incidents are taken seriously and dealt with in a fair, consistent and inclusive manner.

Bullying behaviour can be viewed directly online and may also be reported by parents, other school staff or agencies and organisations. Regardless of how schools become aware of bullying behaviour, it will be taken seriously.

When a bullying behaviour is reported at school, the Head Teacher or other designated member of staff should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

It is not simply about the school environment or the policy and procedures in place to deal with bullying, it is about the ability of adults to listen, care, empathise and support the young person during that disclosure conversation.

Children and young people's experience of bullying will be directly affected by the response they get.

Framing an effective response starts with meaningful, active listening, and providing reassurance to the child that they have done the right thing coming forward. A supportive conversation will encourage the child to reveal the nature of the bullying behaviour and its impact on them.

We need to listen to what the child wants to happen next and be mindful of decisions and actions which might have unintended negative consequences. The child should be helped to feel safe and be reassured that steps will be taken to address the problematic behaviour.

Children and young people will naturally disclose to someone they trust. Beyond parents, children and young people in Shetland tell us they are most likely to disclose a bullying incident to their class teacher in primary school and their pupil support teacher in secondary school.

The most effective way to structure a response to bullying is to ask these questions:

- What was the behaviour?
- What impact did it have?
- What does the child or young person want to happen?
- What do I need to do about it?
- Is this behaviour motivated by prejudice?

Considering the behaviour (facts) and impact (feelings) of the incident, as well as listening to what the child or young person wishes to happen, will provide the basis for a teacher's professional judgement to determine whether the incident constitutes bullying or should be addressed as an incident of unkindness or indiscipline.

If deemed to be bullying, all incidents must be recorded on the Bullying and Equalities module of SEEMiS regardless of outcome. This includes recording:

- The basic information regarding date, time, location of the incident and which staff will be responsible for dealing with the incident.
- Details of the alleged incident including the person experiencing bullying behaviour and the person displaying bullying behaviour
- Details of the nature and description of the incident

It is best practice to update this information with the young person/s present however this may not always be practical. If this is not possible, notes should be taken when discussing an incident of bullying behaviour and entered on SEEMiS as soon as is practicably possible and no later than the end of the following school day.

Thereafter, SEEMiS should be updated as the incident is maintained, monitored, reviewed and concluded.

2.1 Responding to Online Bullying Behaviour

Schools staff should treat disclosure of online bullying incidents in the same way as face to face bullying and explore the bullying behaviour and the impact on the young person experiencing it.

As social media becomes the preferred method of communication for teens in particular, young people also report a noticeable increase in the number of online bullying incidents.

Consequently, it is vital that schools know how to respond to online bullying incidents. While every situation is slightly different, it helps to have some general guidelines on how to handle online bullying, and support children and young people develop the resilience to overcome online bullying.

Schools should instruct children not to respond the posts, comments, texts or calls. This is challenging but remind the young person that not giving a response is about retaining a sense of agency, or personal control, and the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour will feed off any reaction.

Schools should ask pupils to save all messages, comments and posts as evidence. Children may naturally want to delete everything so it is important to educate children that retaining evidence can be really important in building a picture of the bullying behaviour.

2.2 Responding to Prejudiced Based Bullying

Schools staff should treat disclosure of prejudiced based bullying incidents in the same way as other types of bullying and explore the bullying behaviour and the impact on the young

person experiencing it.

It is common for bullying behaviour to stem from differences or perceived differences and schools should be prepared to tackle this prejudice based bullying wherever it occurs.

The education of children within school and positive role modelling behaviour is key to reducing the prevalence of prejudice based bullying where young people learn to respect differences, celebrate diversity and understand what healthy relationships are.

A hate incident is any incident that is not a criminal offence, but something which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hate or prejudice.

A hate crime is an offence motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group by race, sexual orientation, religion or faith, disability, and transgender or gender identity. This should be reported to the Police.

Schools should use SEEMiS to record accurately any instances of prejudice based bullying.

2.3 When Bullying crosses School and Community Boundaries

Bullying behaviour must be challenged regardless of where it originates.

If bullying behaviour is taking place on school transport it is a shared responsibility of the school, parents, local authority and school transport operator to ensure that the behaviour is identified and action is taken to respond to the behaviour.

Parents consistently report that the personal relationship they have with the head teacher would encourage them to contact the school in the first instance regarding a bullying incident which has taken place during school journeys as well as during the school day itself.

Parents also report they might inform the school if an incident had occurred during evenings and weekends at youth club or at the local sports club and this information should be welcomed by the school.

Even when an incident originates out of school, bullying will cross boundaries of school and community and pupils will almost certainly still discuss it at school. This is particularly true for online bullying where, for example, children and young people will read the posts on social media and then may use this information as a means to engage in additional bullying at school.

Bullying behaviour which may have roots in school is likely to continue well beyond the school gates and bullying behaviour which takes place in the community is likely to transfer to school.

Schools are encouraged to:

- Intervene and participate in the response to bullying behaviour; and/or

- Signpost parents to a service who are deemed to be in a better position to deal with the behaviour

This might include working with Neighbourhood Support Workers, Youth Services and Police Scotland to respond to bullying happening beyond the school.

The school should reassure parents that children will be supported and monitored if necessary, note the information in pastoral notes and inform the Named Person where appropriate.

"Once a need/significant events/concerns has been brought to the attention of the Named Person, it is then the Named Person's responsibility to assess all of the information they have. They will decide whether to take action to provide help, or arrange for the right help to be provided, to promote the child/young person's development and well-being."

GIRFEC in Shetland - Guidance

Community groups should have in place their own policies and procedures for safeguarding, protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of children. The Anti-bullying Framework for Shetland provides guidance and templates for community organisations to identify and respond to bullying in their club, group or organisation.

respectme have produced further support at: http://respectme.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Policy-through-to-Practice-2017-Version.pdf

2.4 Dealing with Children and Young People Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Children and young people who are bullying will require challenge and support to change their behaviour. Schools should identify and understand the root causes of why they are bullying and any feelings or triggers which lead them to bully. This will help them understand their behaviour, the impact on others and develop strategies to prevent further bullying behaviours. This is an opportunity to discuss what healthy relationships are and facilitates a more positive conversation about the bullying behaviour. Bullying takes place within the context of relationships therefore punitive measures alone are unlikely to change behaviour as the relationship and interaction elements can be overlooked. This can also perpetuate a peer identity that a person displaying bullying behaviour may find it difficult to get away from.

In Shetland, both parents and young people themselves are supportive of consequences for persons displaying bullying behaviour but these must be relevant, proportionate and meaningful. Both support and sanction is intended to change the behaviour rather than label anyone as a bully.

Consequences and sanctions can act as a deterrent and intervention simultaneously. Measures may include:

- Making it clear that the type of behaviour exhibited is totally unacceptable;
- Explaining to the persons displaying bullying behaviour that their actions have an effect on others and ask them to consider the implications;
- Involving other members of staff who work with the persons displaying bullying behaviour and persons being bullied;
- Informing parents or carers of the incident and any action taken;
- Involving outside agencies including the police in extreme circumstances, such as physical attacks or ongoing harassment which is continuing outside the school gates.
- Temporary removal of privileges or access to activities

Support can include:

- Restorative Approaches
- Solution – Focussed Approaches
- Positive behaviour strategies with agreed individual goals to be attained;
- The use of daily conduct sheets;
- Establishment of buddy systems of social skills groups such as 'Circle of Friends';
- Class, year group and individual discussion with staff about the effects of bullying;
- Peer mediation and workshops to raise awareness of bullying behaviour and it's impact;
- Involvement of other agencies at a school and individual level.

It is good practice for staff to monitor the relationship between the pupils involved in a bullying incident even when the initial bullying behaviour has stopped.

2.5 Dealing with Children and Young People Experiencing Bullying

Resilience can be described as: 'The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances.'

Children and young people have different levels of resilience and therefore will cope with adversity and bullying in different ways. Young people in Shetland tell us not to expect young people themselves to deal with relationship issues including bullying because they don't always have the social skills, emotional strength or practical knowledge to know where to turn. Children and young people need adult guidance to talk about bullying and to look for support and advice to cope with the impacts of bullying behaviour.

An environment where children and young people feel a sense of attachment to stable, caring adults who model positive relationships will help develop resilience by promoting:

- Respect for others
- Responsibility for others
- Co-operation and working together

- A transparent, open environment where adults and young people have choices
- Activities which create connectedness and attachment to the staff and students in a school

Children and Young People must also be given practical advice to dealing with bullying behaviour. This creates options and choice for young people. www.respectme.org.uk has a number of examples for young people including:

- Share bullying experiences with a trusted adult or friend
- Ignore the bullying or walk away
- Block and report people online
- Keep a record of the bullying behaviour through a diary, texts you receive or screenshots
- Use a clever comeback but be aware of misunderstandings if posting texts or messages online

A video resource and facilitators notes can be found on the respectme website to assist classroom discussions on this topic.

It is good practice for staff to discuss with the child or young person when and how often staff may 'check in' with the pupil, even when the initial bullying behaviour has stopped.

2.6 Punitive Only Approaches

Bullying behaviour is not a fixed state and children and young people report moving in and out of bullying behaviour. Punitive approaches by their nature require forensic examination of an incident which is extremely time consuming and focusses on who said what and when and to whom and in what order. In the social media world we now live in, this approach becomes even more time consuming diverting time and attention away from understanding behaviours, selecting appropriate interventions and developing solutions. A punitive approach focusses on the person displaying bullying behaviour and fails to acknowledge or support the person experiencing bullying behaviour. This can make any person experiencing bullying behaviour a passive recipient in a punitive system and disregards their involvement in the solution. It does not support any person experiencing bullying to regain their sense of agency and should be avoided.

2.7 Engaging Parents

Schools should decide when and whether to inform parents and the child or young person must be involved in, and informed of this decision.

A bullying incident can be emotive and parental reaction can sometimes only focus on punishment and sanctions for the person displaying bullying behaviour. Children and young people in Shetland tell us that involving their parents can sometimes be detrimental to resolving the situation, given parents natural position to defend and protect their own child.

If a school is working to the principles of the UNCRC then children themselves should be at the heart of the discussion around informing parents. This approach is supported by children and young people in Shetland who described how their own relationships with their parents was a really important factor in reaching a successful outcome for relationship type issues such as bullying.

This is particularly important where a child may experience prejudice based bullying behaviour around LGBT orientation. A sensitive, child-led approach to this situation will avoid premature disclosure of thoughts and feelings around sexual orientation or gender. It is essential that a young person does not lose control of any disclosure around their sexuality.

In most cases, it will be right and appropriate to inform parents and follow up with them once an incident has been concluded, however, in a very small number of situation, schools retain the authority not to disclose if it is not in the child or young person's best interests. In such circumstances it is good practice to seek advice and to record the reasons for not informing the parents.
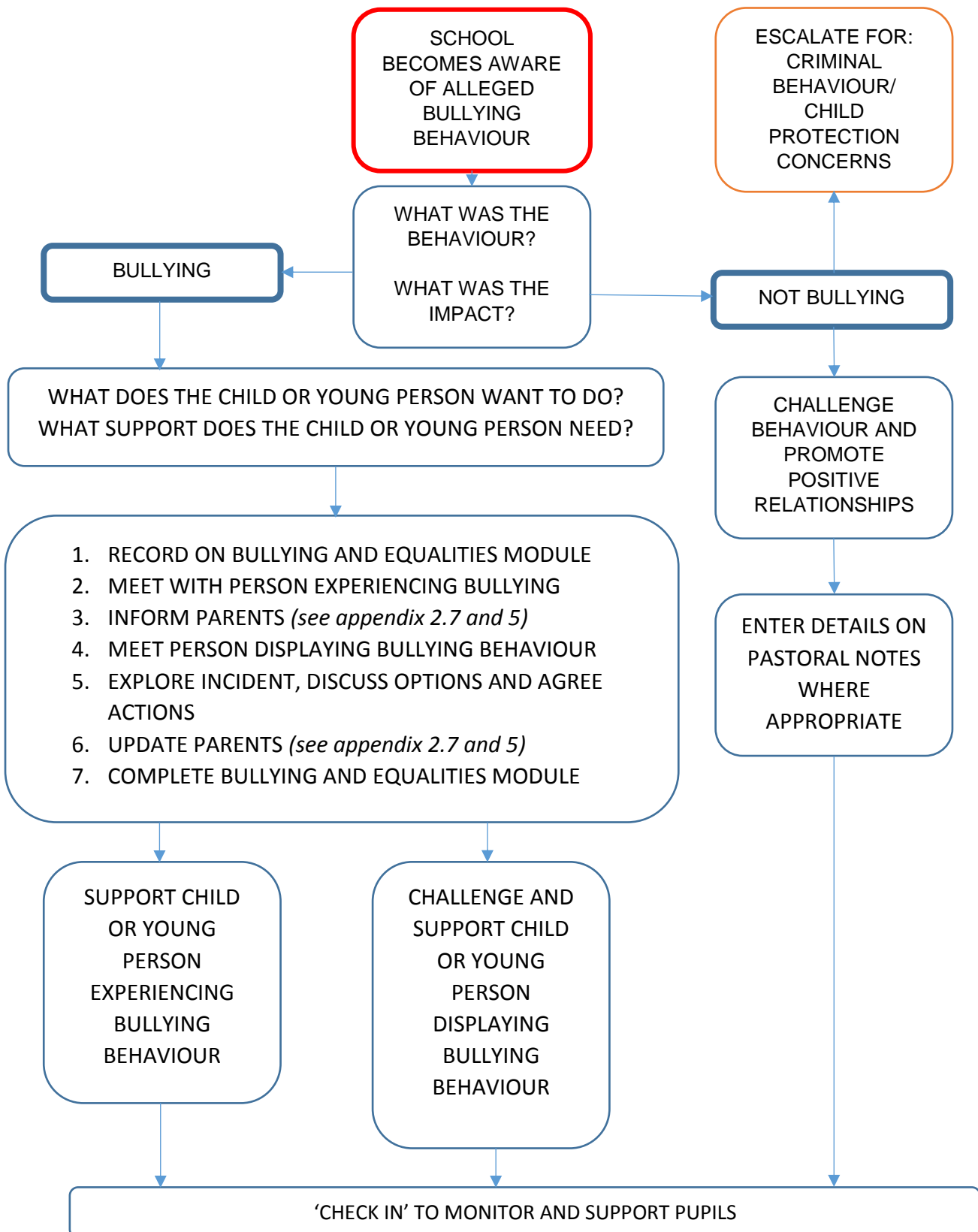
2.8 Restorative Approach

"A restorative school is one which takes a restorative approach to resolving conflict and preventing harm. Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right."

Restorative Justice Council

Restorative conversations place a greater emphasis on understanding and resolving the relationships issue and provide a structured conversation for staff to deal with bullying behaviour to help prevent it from happening again. A restorative approach works best when there is something to restore, ie a valued friendship which has soured. The approach is less effective when the people have no friendship history, but regardless of prior friendship, children and young people should be supported to co-exist respectfully in school time.

APPENDIX 3 - FLOWCHART

SCHOOL BECOMES AWARE OF ALLEGED BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

ESCALATE FOR: CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR/ CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

WHAT WAS THE BEHAVIOUR?

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

BULLYING

NOT BULLYING

WHAT DOES THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON WANT TO DO? WHAT SUPPORT DOES THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON NEED?

CHALLENGE BEHAVIOUR AND PROMOTE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

1. RECORD ON BULLYING AND EQUALITIES MODULE
2. MEET WITH PERSON EXPERIENCING BULLYING
3. INFORM PARENTS *(see appendix 2.7 and 5)*
4. MEET PERSON DISPLAYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR
5. EXPLORE INCIDENT, DISCUSS OPTIONS AND AGREE ACTIONS
6. UPDATE PARENTS *(see appendix 2.7 and 5)*
7. COMPLETE BULLYING AND EQUALITIES MODULE

ENTER DETAILS ON PASTORAL NOTES WHERE APPROPRIATE

SUPPORT CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON EXPERIENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON DISPLAYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

'CHECK IN' TO MONITOR AND SUPPORT PUPILS

APPENDIX 4 - RECORDING AND MONITORING

SEEMiS allows schools to add details of any alleged incidents and monitor and review any actions necessary. The form can be completed in stages, but the mandatory fields in red have to be completed before saving.

Click - Management > Bullying and Equalities > Maintain Incident

The sections are:

- Basic Information
- Alleged Incident
- Nature of Incident
- Monitor /Review
- Action Progressed

Basic Info

Click on Ellipses button to the right of:	
Reported To	Get the filter with all staff - Type in the name of the person
Incident Owner	Only those given access to Confidential notes will be displayed here. Select the member of staff.
Addressed by	Select the member of staff.
Incident Location	This is a pull down list. Select the appropriate location.
Incident Date	Select the date
Incident Time	Enter a time remembering a.m. and p.m.
Reported by	This is a free text field. Type in a person's name and title if they are a member of school staff

Alleged Incident

The area has a section for Person Experiencing bullying behaviour and Person Displaying Bullying Behaviour. There is a pupil area and a staff area. Only use the pupil area. There is an area to add other people connected to the incident.

Persons Experiencing	Click on **Add Pupil**
Persons Displaying	Click on **Add Pupil**

Nature of Incident

Select	This is a pull down list
Nature of Incident	Select pulldown and then add
Characteristic	Select pulldown and then add You can choose more than one if you wish and 'remove' will delete the one that is highlighted
Add incident detail	This is a text box to provide a brief narrative *"Mhairi was being pushed around and tormented by Nikki because she was overweight."*

**At this point, the incident can be saved and completed later.

Monitor/Review

This section should be completed as the incident is brought to a conclusion.

Reviewer	Add staff name
Due date	Add date
Completed	Add date
Do they feel their concerns were listened to?	Pull down answer – Yes/No/NA
Do they feel satisfied with the outcome?	Pull down answer – Yes/No/NA
Parent/Carer satisfied with the outcome?	Pull down answer – Yes/No/NA

Action Progressed

This section shows how you have investigated this incident and the conclusion.

Action Procedures	Type in the actions taken – a short narrative eg. "*Mrs Boyle met with Nikki and her mother and explained the outcome of Nikki's actions against Mhairi.*"
Incident Conclusion	Pull down list and click
Extra bit will now appear	
None Button	
Person Experiencing - Action Taken	List the interventions - Counselling, Peer Support etc
Person Displaying – Action Taken	List the interventions - Interview, parental involvement etc
Take Action Box	
Save	
New Incident	Click to add another incident

APPENDIX 5 - COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Discussions with parents in the development of this policy revealed that most parents would like to know when their child has been involved in an alleged bullying incident.

Nevertheless, it is important for schools to consider the views of the child or young person before parents are notified and understand that, it may not always be in the best interests of the child to inform parents.

In such circumstances it is good practice to seek advice and to record the reasons for not informing the parents.

In most cases, schools should inform parents/carers:

a) When a school has identified bullying behaviour and impact
b) When a school has responded to the incident and concluded the matter

Schools can choose to do this by logged telephone call, email or letter and schools may base their communication on the following scripts 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5F.

5A - Example Notification – child or young person experiencing bullying

School Name

School Address

Parent/Carer
Address

Telephone:

Fax:

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for:

Direct Dial:

Our Ref:

Date:

Your Ref:

Dear Parents/Carer,

I am contacting you today to let you know that *your son/daughter/name of student* may have experienced bullying at school.

I can assure you that we do not tolerate any form of bullying and the matter is being addressed following the procedures set out in the Shetland Islands Council Anti-bullying in Shetland Schools policy.

We will be considering the alleged behaviour and what impact it has had on *your son/daughter/name of student* and will contact you with more information as soon as possible.

For more information, you can go online and search "Respect Me – Parents" for detailed guidance for parents and carers.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

5B - Example Notification – child or young person displaying bullying behaviour

	School Name
Parent/Carer	School Address
Address	
	Telephone:
	Fax:
	www.shetland.gov.uk
	If calling please ask for:
	Direct Dial:
Our Ref:	Date:
Your Ref:	

Dear Parents/Carer,

I am contacting you today to let you know that an allegation of bullying, which appears to have involved your [*son/daughter/name of student],* has been reported and we are in the process of considering the behaviour and impact of this incident in line with the Shetland Islands Council's Anti-bullying in Shetland Schools policy.

The allegation has to do with *[characteristic or perceived reason for bullying behaviour]*

As soon as we have concluded what has happened, and taken action to prevent any reoccurrence we will contact you with further information.

For more information, you can go online and search "Respect Me – Parents" for detailed guidance for parents and carers.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

5C - Example Notification – child or young person experiencing bullying – not bullying

School Name

School Address

Parents/Carer

Address

Telephone:

Fax:

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for:

Direct Dial:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date:

Dear Parents/Carer,

I am contacting you today to let you know that we have completed a thorough assessment of the alleged bullying behaviour involving your child and it has been determined that the incident should not be considered as bullying.

The reasons for this decision are: *[enter reason/s]*

Our primary concern is that our pupils feel safe and secure at school, therefore, even though the incident has not been treated as bullying, we will monitor the situation and continue to promote positive, healthy relationships in school.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

5D - Example Notification – child or young person displaying bullying behaviour – not bullying

School Name

School Address

Parents/Carer

Telephone:

Address

Fax:

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for:

Direct Dial:

Our Ref:

Date:

Your Ref:

Dear Parents/Carer,

I am contacting you to let you know that after assessing the allegation of bullying behaviour we have considered it to be unfounded.

The reasons for this decision are: *[enter reason/s]*

We are continuing to educate students about positive, healthy relationships at school to avoid misunderstandings of what constitutes bullying behaviour.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

5E - Example Notification – child or young person experiencing bullying – confirmed incident

School Name

School Address

Parent/Carer
Address

Telephone:

Fax:

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for:

Direct Dial:

Our Ref:

Date:

Your Ref:

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am contacting you today to let you know that we have completed a thorough assessment of the alleged bullying behaviour for *[name of pupil]* and appropriate actions are being taken so this type of incident does not happen again.

For your child, the following actions have been taken to ensure that they feel safe at school *[share the steps in any plan put in place for the pupil].*

We are also taking steps to deal with the person displaying bullying behaviour but we cannot give details of these actions.

We take all incidents of bullying very seriously and comply with the Shetland Islands Council's Anti-bullying in Shetland Schools policy so all of our pupils be afforded an education that is safe, secure, and free from bullying at school.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

5F - Example Notification – child or young person displaying bullying behaviour – confirmed incident

School Name

School Address

Parent/Carer

Telephone:

Address

Fax:

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for

Direct Dial:

Our Ref:

Date:

Your Ref:

Dear Parents/Carer,

I am contacting you today to let you know that we have considered the alleged bullying behaviour incident made against your son/daughter. Considering the behaviour and impact on the other student, it has been determined that an incident of bullying has taken place.

Children should be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included at school and bullying behaviour can undermine any or all of these aspects of a child's wellbeing.

There are a number of consequences for this bullying behaviour. These include:[*enter*]

Of most importance, however, is interventions to stop, and modify, the bullying behaviour and these include: [*enter*]

We trust that parents will support the school and the pupils to work through this process to ensure these behaviours stop and do not reoccur.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

APPENDIX 6 - CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Educating children on how to develop healthy relationships creates positive, supportive environments and therefore the safety to learn. All adults who work in schools have a responsibility to create and champion a school environment which fosters positive, supportive relationships and to protect and promote the social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of children and young people in their care.

When we are respectful towards each other we can create inclusive schools where prejudice is challenged. When we celebrate diversity and include everyone in our schools and wider learning communities, we build trust and tolerance supporting an excellent and more equitable school system for all. This will support our vision to help make Shetland the best place for children and young people to grow up.

Raising awareness and creating a culture where bullying is reported and challenged helps prevent bullying behaviour from becoming a normal part of school or community life. Schools and their communities should consider the culture, environment, attitudes and procedures that may silently condone or actively encourage bullying behaviours. In order to address these issues, schools are ideally placed to create opportunities for discussion and participation which will enable children, young people and parents to share an understanding of what bullying is and fully engage in the processes to challenge bullying behaviour.

APPENDIX 7 - LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on a range of protected characteristics. Any bullying related to these characteristics is unacceptable. The protected characteristics defined in the Act are:

- Disability
- Age
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

Age and marriage and civil partnership are not protected characteristics within school education. In essence, organisations have to ensure that policies aimed at preventing bullying and addressing the consequences of bullying do not directly or indirectly discriminate anyone who shares a protected characteristic. The Equality Act 2010 does not just protect people from discrimination because they have these characteristics. It also protects a person from discrimination because they are perceived to have one or more of the protected characteristics or that they are associated with someone who does have a protected characteristic. The public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 requires an organisation exercising public functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of those functions. In addition, there is an expectation within the Act that consideration will also be given to particular groups such as Young Carers, Looked After Children, children and young people living in deprivation and those with body image issues.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities and schools to educate children so they are able to develop their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest potential.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 requires local authorities and schools to give extra support to all children and young people with additional support needs, including bullying.

The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to ensure schools promote the mental, emotional, social and physical health and well-being of all children and young people.

Sending embarrassing images and memes via mobile phone device is becoming more common as a bullying behaviour. The Communications Act 2003 states that sending by means of the Internet a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent,

obscene or menacing character; or sending a false message by means of or persistently making use of the Internet for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety is guilty of an offence liable, on conviction, to lead to imprisonment. This wording is important because an offence is complete as soon as the message has been sent: there is no need to prove any intent or purpose. If staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a duty on Scottish Ministers to 'keep under consideration whether there are any steps which they could take which would or might secure better or further effect in Scotland of the UNCRC requirements' and if they consider it appropriate to do so, take any steps identified by that consideration.

Although children and young people are covered under the Human Rights Act 1998, their rights are more clearly specified under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). There are 54 articles in the Convention, setting standards in healthcare, education, and legal, civil and social services, which cover four broad areas of survival, development, participation and protection rights. Children's rights are unique in that many of them, although designed for the safety and protection of children, have to be provided for by adults and the government. A right is a basic need, rather than an entitlement or expectation and children need to be protected from bullying behaviour so that they can survive, develop and participate in a fulfilling life.

Children have the right to survive and develop healthily. The impact of bullying behaviour must be addressed in a way that meets the needs of those young people affected and involved. Adults share a responsibility to address any behaviour that can harm the development of children. The positive impact of healthy relationships, supportive role-models, inclusion, love and respect can be undermined by bullying behaviour. Teaching children how to value and promote a healthy sense of respect for themselves and others will help reduce the risk of bullying behaviour.

Children have the right to relax and play, get and share information, access free primary education and to develop their talents fully. Being excluded from activities through bullying behaviour has a harmful impact on development, health and wellbeing. As adults we are responsible for shaping an inclusive culture where all children can participate. Bullying and its impact can be detrimental to a child's capacity to learn. This right also highlights an adult's responsibility to take young people's views into account when making decisions that affect them.

Staff and parents have a responsibility to change behaviour that is making a child feel unsafe and unwilling to attend school. The impact of bullying on self-esteem and aspirations can prevent young people from reaching their full potential.

Children have the right to be listened to and have their opinions heard. Young people's views must be considered when responding to bullying behaviour. Exclusion can also impact on this right. When situations require adults to go against a child's wishes, for example when

there is serious risk of harm, there is a clear responsibility to help a child understand that their best interests are at heart.

Children have the right to practice their religion and bullying behaviour stemming from prejudices can devalue a child's beliefs. Children must respect the beliefs of others and adults have an important role to play in encouraging this, while strongly challenging prejudice-based attitudes and actions. A culture of bullying can prevent young people from engaging in their chosen activities and undermine their right to join groups. It is not fair or healthy to ask a child or young person to change their behaviour to avoid bullying as anything other than a short-term measure. The focus needs to be on changing the bullying behaviour that threatens this right. Online bullying is an example of an invasion of the right to privacy. An important adult responsibility is to give children the skills and understanding to respect their own privacy as well as that of others. Name-calling and negative labelling can deny children this right. A child's capacity to develop their sense of self can be undermined by name-calling or by conforming to bullying behaviour by labelling themselves in a derogatory way.

Children have the right to be protected including to be cared for by parents and government. Quality of care can be undermined by a failure to address bullying behaviour and its impact. Children are very clear about the significant impact and concern bullying causes them and this must be reflected by the policy, culture and practice of organisations responsible for their care.

Children have the right to be protected from violence and abuse and be protected from harm including bullying behaviour which is a protection that all the adults in their lives, regardless of their roles, share a responsibility to provide. All organisations which provide a caring function for children have a duty to provide a safe, healthy environment for children where bullying is unacceptable. All young people have a right to the support they need to recover from bullying behaviour. Every child is different and so adults have a responsibility to recognise the importance of an individual journey of recovery, informed by the young person concerned.

APPENDIX 8 - POLICY CONTEXT

This policy adopts the principles set out by Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (2017) which are:

- 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

- 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 living in Scotland will have the same opportunities and an equal chance to succeed.

Shetland Multi-Agency Anti-Bullying Framework

Based on A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People 2010, the Shetland Multi-Agency Anti-Bullying Framework was published in June 2017 and provides an overarching strategic policy that emphasises the importance of tackling bullying for children, young people and adults. It highlights the damage caused by bullying and supports a cultural change to move towards a Shetland that is free from bullying and harassment.

Since the publication of Shetland's Multi-agency Ani-Bullying Framework, updated guidance has been published by the Scottish Government. Respect for All: The National Approach to

Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (2017) is the guidance upon which this new policy for schools is written.

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence clearly articulates that health and wellbeing is the responsibility of all practitioners.

"Children and young people should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment and all staff should be proactive in promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and the wider school community."

Getting it Right for Every Child

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is based on research, evidence and learning from practice and is designed to ensure all parents, carers and professionals work effectively together to give children and young people the best start to improve their life opportunities. It provides a values based, common and holistic assessment framework around a child or young person's wellbeing, resilience and environment in order to achieve this and places children and young people's needs first.

All partners in Shetland, including the Shetland Islands Council are signed up to the GIRFEC Policy for Shetland, which commits staff to full participation in the current GIRFEC framework.

Information sharing in Shetland under our current GIRFEC framework fully complies with current legislation and has been approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Information sharing will be reviewed regarding the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), however, as the system it is currently consent based this may present few changes.

GIRFEC in Shetland can be found at:

https://www.shetland.gov.uk/children_and_families/GIRFEC.asp

APPENDIX 9 - DEVELOPING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Health and Wellbeing is the responsibility of all staff and it is a critical factor in creating and maintaining a positive ethos within a school.

Bullying behaviour is constantly changing and schools must tackle bullying as an ongoing challenge.

There is the immediate challenge of dealing with bullying behaviour as it happens but schools need to consider how they prevent it from happening again in the future. Schools need to avoid a fragile model where the school's approach to bullying behaviour relies on one or two key people in the school.

A referral system, where only pupil support or management staff with bullying behaviour can create an experience gap where only those who lead on bullying incidents know what bullying is, know how to deal with it and know how to prevent it.

Schools therefore should consider not just how they develop and implement a policy, but how to create a system which is sustainable despite the predictable staffing and pupil turnover. The whole school approach therefore is about more than just training for everyone, it is about ongoing leadership and communication with partners and the wider learning community about school values, ethos and approaches to dealing with relationship based issues such as bullying.

Particular approaches to establish an ethos where bullying is never acceptable may include:

- A Vision, Values and Aims statement which places an emphasis on mutual respect and which is agreed and discussed with all staff, learners and parents/carers;
- Buddying or mentoring systems;
- Rights respecting schools, restorative practices and solution-focused approaches;
- Visual reminders such as posters or on school website or school display screens;
- Discussion as part of Personal and Social Education (PSE);
- Activities such as role-play, art work, drama and literature;
- Featuring anti-bullying at school assemblies;
- Peer mediation;
- Circle time;
- Effective ICT/Mobile phone policies developed with staff, children/young people and parents/ carers;
- Setting an ethos which places an emphasis on respecting, valuing and caring for self and others;
- Establishing a climate where all members of the service and school community, irrespective of age or status, promote and model positive behaviours and values;
- Taking seriously any report or allegation of bullying behaviour and taking appropriate action;

- Providing support for children and young people who are experiencing bullying behaviour;
- Helping the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour to understand the impact of their behaviour and supporting them as they change their behaviour;
- Involving parents/carers, as appropriate, in supporting both children and young people who are experiencing bullying and those who are displaying bullying behaviour;
- Ensuring the level of bullying in schools is monitored and procedures are in place for maintaining records in SEEMIS;
- Ensuring that children and young people who have experienced bullying behaviour receive appropriate support and protection.

APPENDIX 10 - CREDITS

Much of the content and ethos of the Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools Policy, Procedures and Guidance has been drawn from **Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People.** Furthermore, the creation and implementation of the new policy, procedures and guidance has been greatly supported by Lorraine Glass, Partnership Manager with respect*me*, Scotland's anti-bullying service.

https://respectme.org.uk/

The Northern Alliance has also provided further expertise and advice, in particular from staff at Aberdeen City Council and Highland Council who shared their experiences and learning from anti-bullying policy implementation.

Glasgow City Council's statement on developing a whole school approach provided a comprehensive range of commitments a school and local authority can make in building a system which recognises and responds to bullying effectively and this forms the basis of Appendix 9.

www.glasgow.gov.uk

The Times Education Supplement, The Education podcast, "How schools create bullies and why you need to look again at your anti-bullying strategies" is an interview with Luke Roberts, a Cambridge University PhD researcher who has done extensive research into bullying. Some of his thoughts regarding the relationship dynamic within bullying behaviour and the importance of supporting children and young people experiencing bullying behaviour are reflected in Appendix 2.

https://www.tes.com/news/listen-how-schools-create-bullies-and-why-you-need-look-again-your-anti-bullying-strategies