

**Shetland  
Islands  
Council**



**Children's Services**

# Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools

Policy

June 2018

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. A whole school approach which places the values of respect and inclusion at the heart of its ethos will help to prevent bullying by creating an environment which fosters positive relationships, better behaviour and high expectations for all children and young people.
- 1.2. Bullying behaviour impacts on children's and young people's health and wellbeing and can affect their levels of participation, attainment and inclusion in school life. Children should be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included at school and in the wider community.
- 1.3. Bullying behaviour has been described as an adverse childhood experience and can undermine all aspects of children's wellbeing.
- 1.4. Bullying is never acceptable. It is not a normal part of growing up and does not build character.

## **2. Policy Statement**

- 2.1. We are committed to ensuring all schools foster positive, supportive relationships that protect and promote the social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of children and young people in their care.
- 2.2. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and young people to participate without the fear of bullying and aim to:
  - Recognise that bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone, it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
  - Be aware that only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school
  - Work together to promote awareness, understanding and mutual respect amongst pupils and staff and to construct strategies for preventing and responding appropriately to bullying
  - Provide schools with a clear framework for recognising and responding to bullying behaviour and a process for recording and monitoring incidents
  - Monitor and evaluate change and improvement over time

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1. The scope of the policy will cover all children and young people aged 3-19 within schools. The policy provides procedures and guidance to ensure clarity, consistency and coherence in approaches towards recognising, responding to, recording and preventing bullying.

- 3.2. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying in Shetland Schools procedures and guidance.
- 3.3. The policy has been developed in consultation with children and young people, parents, teachers and colleagues from the wider learning community.
- 3.4. The policy is for **everyone** working in schools and describes how we can help prevent and better recognise and respond to bullying.
- 3.5. It is expected that all schools shall adopt this local authority policy and share the contents of the policy with pupils, parents, school staff and other relevant stakeholders to clarify what is expected of them in their role and communicate changes to procedures and practices.

#### 4. Legislation and Children's Rights

- 4.1. 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
- 4.2. This policy reflects the following relevant and recent legislation
  - The Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
  - Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007
  - Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
  - Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
- 4.3. We are committed to promoting and securing the rights of children under the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#). These rights are unconditional and not dependent on children and young people fulfilling responsibilities.
- 4.4. Bullying is a breach of children's rights and it is every child's right not to be bullied.

## 5. Recognising Bullying Behaviour

- 5.1. “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)

- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. Children and Young People experiencing bullying are not weak and should not be labelled as a victim as this is a term that disempowers children and makes it more difficult for them to escape the victim narrative. Children and Young People displaying bullying behaviour should not be labelled as bullies as it is the behaviour that requires to be changed, not the person.
- 5.4. Bullying behaviour can be social, emotional, verbal, physical and material and we will respond to face to face, online and prejudice-based bullying equally.
- 5.5. More bullying behaviour is migrating online which can blur the figurative lines between school and community incidents and challenges the traditional roles and responsibilities of those who become aware of bullying behaviour.
- 5.6. Online bullying is pervasive, viral and does not occur in a fixed place. It commonly exists in forms such as humiliating memes, unflattering images, secretive groups and behaviour which isolates or embarrasses others.
- 5.7. 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.
- 5.8. Perceived reasons for bullying can include, but are not restricted to, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, bullying of children with additional support needs or disabilities, racist bullying, faith bullying, bullying due to appearance and bullying of children in low income families or those who are looked after by the local authority.
- 5.9. All prejudice-based bullying is unacceptable and incidents of this type will be recorded accurately in SEEMiS.

## **6. Behaviour and Impact**

- 6.1. We recognise that bullying behaviour has an impact and that 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. By considering behaviour and impact, schools will be in a position to:
- challenge and change bullying behaviour
  - effectively support and build resilience in the person experiencing the bullying behaviour.
- 6.2. The impact of bullying can be minor and simply irritate a child or young person. In some cases it may have no impact at all. Bullying can also have a severe impact on a young person's mental health and include feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, intimidation, fear, anxiety, shame and anger and can lead to behaviours such as self-harm, academic underachievement, non-attendance, withdrawal from activities and poor behaviour.
- 6.3. We recognise that every person reacts and responds differently to bullying behaviour because of their own level of resilience or sensitivity. This is why it is so important to consider how the person experiencing the behaviour feels and what solutions they want to be a part of.

## **7. Responding to Bullying Behaviour**

- 7.1. Regardless of how schools become aware of bullying behaviour, it will be taken seriously. Any response must consider the bullying behaviour and the impact it has had on the young person.
- 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?
- 7.2. Consideration of 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. Regardless, schools staff should take action to resolve the situation as soon as is practicably possible.

## **8. When Bullying Crosses School and Community Boundaries**

- 8.1. Bullying behaviour, which originates outside of the school gates, i.e. on school transport, in the community or online is likely to infiltrate the school and the impacts of external bullying will still be felt within the school. Examples include:
- Bullying behaviour which takes place on the way to and from school including on school transport
  - Bullying behaviour which takes place online between pupils from the same school
- 8.2. Damaged relationships at school, during the school journey, online and in the wider community will all impact on a young person's ability to learn and participate in school life.
- 8.3. Whilst schools will not be responsible for responding to incidents which originate outside the school gates, they may do so.
- 8.4. Where a school deems that another service is better placed to lead on the response to a bullying incident outside the school boundaries, staff must signpost parents to these services and resources.
- 8.5. It is good practice for schools to ensure that the information is passed on to the named person and to parents, where appropriate and participate in a multi-agency response to bullying behaviour where required.
- 8.6. Schools should always provide pastoral support for children and young people who have disclosed bullying behaviour to a trusted teacher or other member of staff.
- 8.7. The important point to consider is not who is singularly responsible for dealing with the incident but how all partners take responsibility for dealing with bullying behaviour.
- 8.8. This requires significant co-operation and partnership working between schools and the wider community to take action to deal with bullying incidents.

## **9. Child or Young Person Displaying Bullying Behaviour**

- 9.1. Schools can use a number of sanctions and strategies for the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour. These must be proportionate, meaningful and support behaviour change.
- 9.2. Most importantly, the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour should understand why their behaviour is wrong and should be supported to change their behaviour.

- 9.3. Schools should not undertake punitive measures alone as this fails to acknowledge the impact on those experiencing bullying behaviour.

## **10. Child or Young Person Experiencing Bullying Behaviour**

- 10.1. The child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour will need support to deal with the incident. This support should focus on steps that can be taken to help children regain their sense of agency, building resilience, developing coping skills and increasing the number of secure relationships around them.

## **11. Engaging with Parents**

- 11.1. Parents must be viewed as positive partners in working towards a resolution of bullying behaviour. Parental engagement should be constructive and focussed on resolution.
- 11.2. Children and young people experiencing bullying or displaying bullying behaviour must be informed, and have their views taken into account, before a school makes contact with parents.
- 11.3. In exceptional circumstances it may not be in the best interests of the child or young person to inform parents and schools should seek advice when considering a decision not to inform parents.
- 11.4. When parents are notified this should take place when the school:
- a) Has identified bullying behaviour and impact; and
  - b) Has responded to the incident and concluded the matter.
- 11.5. Opportunities for dialogue with parents/carers should be available throughout the process.

## **12. Recording and Monitoring Bullying Behaviour**

- 12.1. All incidents will be recorded on SEEMiS which replaces the need for all other paper based administration. The information recorded includes:
- 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 child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour and the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour
  - Details of the nature and description of the incident
- 12.2. Further information should be added to SEEMiS as the incident is maintained, progressed and concluded.



- 12.3. Use of SEEMiS will ensure there is a systematic and consistent approach to recording and concluding incidents, and will improve data security and relevance.
- 12.4. Schools will no longer be required to submit information on bullying incidents twice yearly as the information be available at all times through SEEMiS.
- 12.5. Bullying data will be monitored annually by the local authority.

### **13. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 13.1. Shetland Islands Council's Children's Services will:
  - Provide up to date policies, procedures and guidance to school and other educational establishments on the prevention and recognition of bullying and an effective response to incidents
  - Gather, maintain and report Shetland-wide data from SEEMiS on bullying levels and types in Shetland's schools
  - Co-ordinate training and other professional development opportunities and resources for all staff working in schools
  - Engage with young people and partner organisations to ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and taken account of
  - Plan, resource and implement strategies and campaigns which raise awareness of bullying
- 13.2. Head Teachers and School Management Teams will:
  - Adopt this policy to deal with bullying behaviour in schools
  - Ensure that staff, pupils and parents and carers are familiar with the contents of this policy
  - Ensure staff put the policy into practice universally and consistently
  - Work to engage staff, pupils and parents and carers as active partners in reducing bullying and its impact
  - Respond promptly and appropriately to all alleged incidents according to the response procedures
  - Record all incidents including the decisions and actions taken according to the procedures
  - Liaise as necessary with other agencies and services to address needs of individuals, groups or populations according to Shetland's Interagency Child Protection Procedures
  - Ensure all staff have regular and up-to-date training and professional development about bullying
  - Fulfil Named Person Role under Shetland's GIRFEC policy, where appropriate.

- 13.3. These duties may be delegated to a promoted member of staff such as the Depute Head Teacher or Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator who will follow up incidents and ensure that these have been properly addressed.
- 13.4. The Head Teacher or other delegated person, must make clear to pupils and parents who is the responsible member of staff and provide information to all about how to contact them through posters and notices on display around the school, school websites and school handbooks.
- 13.5. The Named Person will:
- Follow Shetland's GIRFEC process when a notification to the named person is received
  - Be the first point of contact for children and families and can be called upon when there is a concern about a child's or young person's wellbeing that is not easy to address
  - Be notified of any changes to a child or young person's family circumstances which may have an effect on the wellbeing of the child
- 13.6. Teachers will:
- Promote and safeguard the health, welfare and safety of pupils
  - Contribute towards good order and positive relationships and behaviour in their class and the wider school
  - Adhere to this policy for identifying and responding to bullying behaviour
  - Report any bullying incident to the Head Teacher/member of staff responsible
  - Challenge behaviour and attitudes which lead to bullying and discrimination prior to incidents arising
  - Implement preventive strategies, including fostering positive relationships with young people
  - Undertake training or professional development about bullying

Protecting pupils from bullying behaviour and supporting pupils who display and experience bullying behaviour sits at the heart of a teacher's role as well as fundamental to teachers' professional values and their personal commitment to enhancing the life of every young person within school.

## **14. Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

- 14.1. Schools will select from a number of strategies aimed at reducing the prevalence of bullying behaviour. The focus of all preventative work should be on creating a school environment where bullying cannot thrive. This can be achieved through whole school approaches to promoting positive relationships and a culture where everyone takes ownership of tackling bullying.
- 14.2. Strategies may include school based activities such as:
- Personal and Social Education classes
  - School guidance on promoting positive behaviour
  - Peer Support and Buddying Arrangements
  - School Assemblies
  - Restorative Approaches
  - Solution Oriented Approaches
- 14.3. Strategies may include some programme based activities including:
- Circle of Friends
  - Nurture
  - Adverse Childhood Experiences Awareness
  - Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
  - UNCRC and Rights Respecting Schools
  - Mentors in Violence Programme (MVP)

## **15. Training and Development**

The policy will be supported with training and professional learning opportunities at school and local authority level.

## **16. Links to other policies**

- Attendance in School Policy
- Managing Exclusions in Shetland Schools Policy
- School Transport Policy
- GIRFEC in Shetland

## **17. Policy Review Date**

This policy, procedures and guidance will be reviewed during academic year 2021/22 for publication in June 2022.