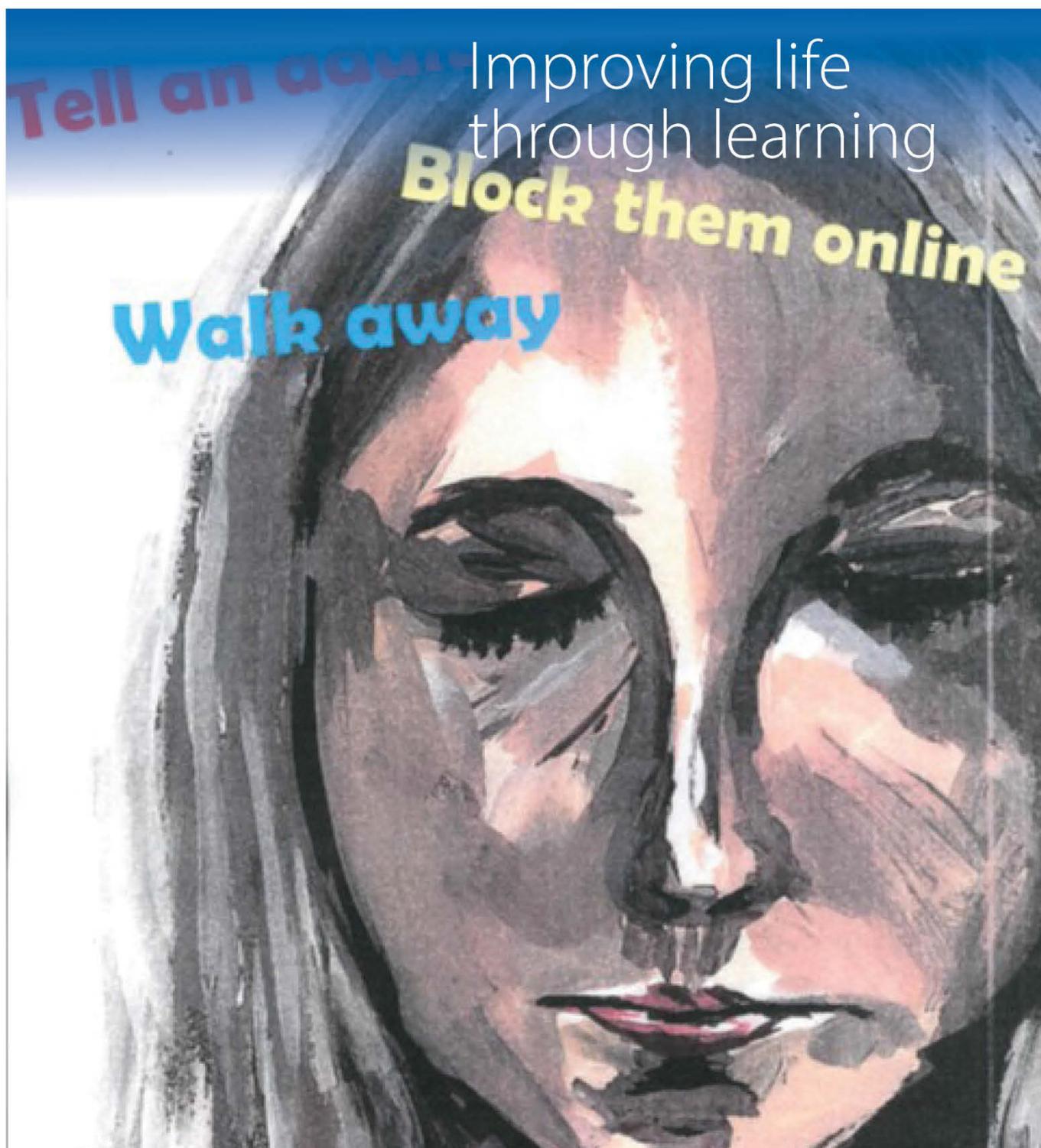


Stirling's Approach to Respect for All Preventing and Challenging Bullying Behaviours



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Introduction

'Bullying has a detrimental impact on children and young people's wellbeing. Children and young people have the right to be safe and secure with strong, positive relationships with peers and with adults, in order to thrive and to achieve their full potential.'

Respectme, 2015

The purpose of this guidance is to refresh local policy in line with ['Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People'](#).

Through the vision *'to be somewhere everyone can thrive'*, Stirling Council endorses the principles:

- every child and young person in Scotland will grow up free from bullying and will develop respectful, responsible and confident relationships with other children, young people and adults
- children and young people and their parents/carers, will have the skills and resilience to prevent and/or respond to bullying appropriately
- every child and young person who requires help will know who can help them and what support is available
- adults working with children and young people will follow a consistent and coherent approach in dealing with and preventing bullying from early learning and child care onwards.

Stirling establishments value cultures where children and young people's rights are at the forefront; diversity is fostered and respectful relationships, built on mutual trust and understanding, are developed. The scope of this policy extends beyond educational establishments and encompasses all services where there is contact with children and young people.

This guidance includes an explicit commitment to addressing all forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. It is designed to support practitioners, parents and carers, club leaders, children and young people to be assured that bullying behaviour is not acceptable in Stirling. Central to this is our work to build capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people, and all those who play a role in their lives, to develop environments where bullying cannot thrive. Underpinning this is Stirling's commitment to prevention, early intervention, valuing and meeting individual needs, in line with the principles of *Getting it Right For Every Child*, in order to achieve responsible inclusion for every child and young person.

Context

This guidance is underpinned and informed by a range of current national legislation, policy and third sector partner guidelines:

National legislation and policy:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)
- Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014
- Building the Ambition; National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare (2014)
- The Equality Act 2010
- Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour (2013)
- Building the Ambition', National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare
- National Improvement Framework
- Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy
- Getting It Right For Looked After Children and Young People Strategy 2015-2020
- National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (as amended)
- Mental Health Strategy 2017
- Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Act (Scotland) 2007
- Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education (2014)
- Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016)
- National Action Plan on Internet Safety
- Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Technology in Schools

Local Authority Guidance:

- Promoting Positive Relationships
- Staged Intervention
- Nurture Strategy
- Safe Guarding and Child Protection
- GIRFEC Forth Valley

What do we mean by Bullying Behaviours?

A Definition

'Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. 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

Bullying behaviour has a detrimental impact on children and young people physically and emotionally. **An incident may only happen once** but if the **impact** is that it leaves a child/young person fearful, threatened and/or where it causes perceived loss of control or worthlessness, this is bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour can include (amongst others):

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened face to face/online.
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked.
- Having belongings taken or damaged.
- Being ignored, left out/having rumours spread about you (face to face and/or online).
- Abusive messages/pictures/images on social media/gaming platforms/phone.
- Controlling behaviours which make people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives (face to face and/or online), e.g. intimidation, playing on someone's self-esteem, coercion, etc.
- Labelling, e.g. name calling, etc.
- Targeting because of who you are or who you are perceived to be (face to face and/or online), e.g. homophobia, sexism, racism, etc.

Sometimes, bullying behaviour has no observable or actual impact on a child/young person. Indeed, the intended recipient may be completely unaffected by the behaviour. However, where the intention is to bully, the behaviour is not ignored, and will be challenged and recorded appropriately. For example, the use of homophobic or other derogatory language may have no impact on the child/young person it is aimed at, but will still be challenged as the language itself is unacceptable and could impact on other people.

Prejudice-based Bullying

Bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice that relates to perceived or actual differences. This can lead to behaviour and language that could manifest in different ways. In the Scottish legal system, these are referred to as 'hate incidents' and if a crime is then committed, 'hate crimes'. Schools are responsible for ensuring that curricula are designed to include education about all protected characteristics, ensuring that children and young people have the language, understanding and confidence to respond to prejudice-based bullying effectively. For older children/young people, schools actively facilitate young people's understanding of responsible citizenship and ensure that they are aware of the seriousness and consequences of hate crime.

Prejudice-based bullying includes incidents which have been motivated by one or more of the *protected characteristics* (below), as well as including other prejudices which are not listed in the Equality Act 2010.

All council services working with children and young people will have awareness of the protected characteristics and other prejudices and will take these into consideration in their work with children and young people.

The protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 are:

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

Other prejudices not listed in the Equality Act 2010:

- Additional Support Needs
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Body Image and Physical Appearance
- Gender Identity
- Gypsy/Travellers
- Intersectionality
- Looked After/Care Experienced Children and Young People
- Sectarianism
- Socio-Economic Prejudice
- Young Carers

In educational establishments, in addition to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying behaviour on the Bullying and Equalities module on SEEMiS, any incidents of prejudiced-based bullying must be recorded on the [Corporate Incident Form](#) and forwarded to the ASN and Wellbeing team.

For a child young person experiencing **online bullying**, given that it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night, they may feel that there is no escape. Online bullying behaviour is treated with the same gravity as any other bullying behaviour. Online bullying and the promotion of safe and responsible use of mobile devices is more effectively addressed when it is as part of a cohesive anti-bullying approach, not as a separate area of work or policy.

When it is not bullying behaviour?

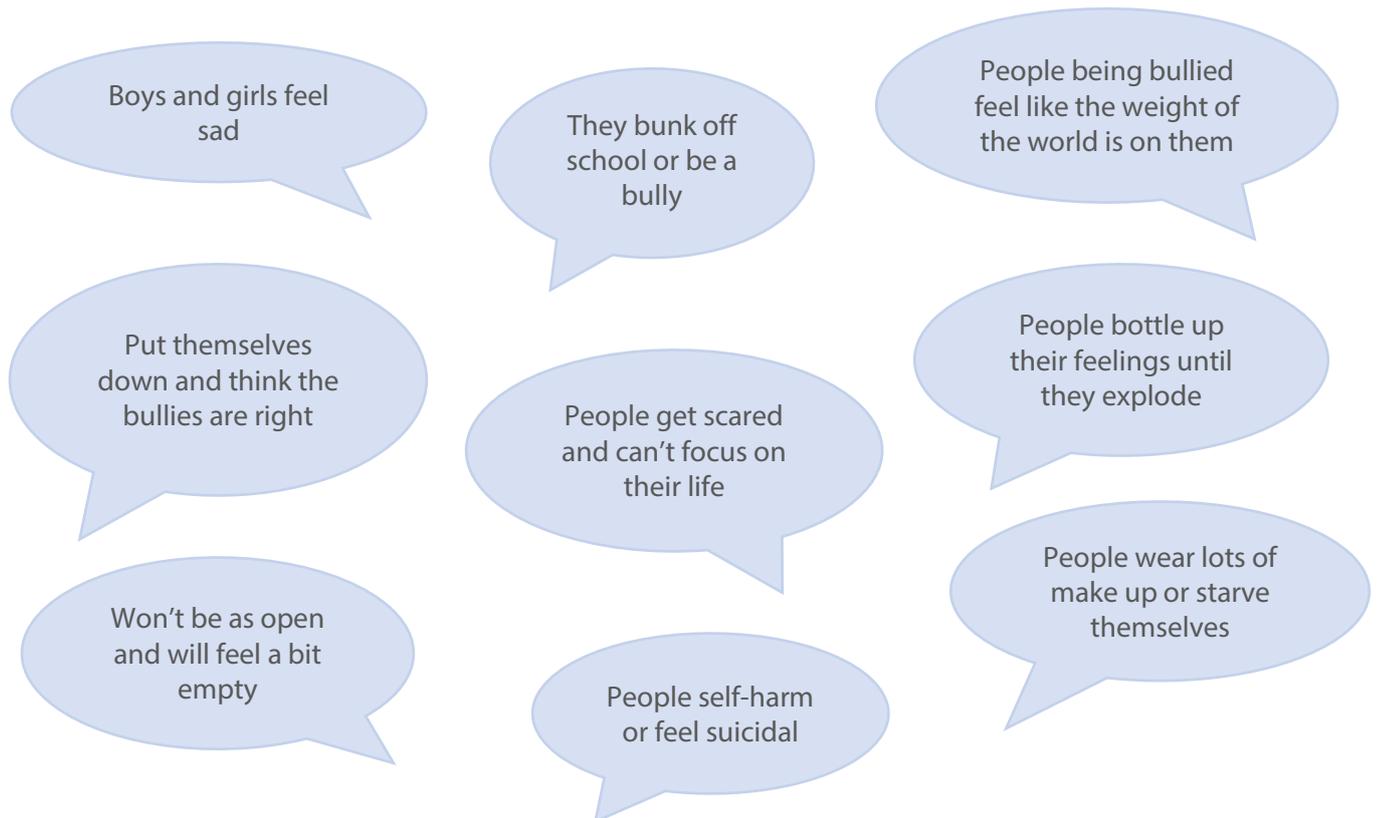
Children and young people fall out and disagree with each other as a normal part of growing up. Providing children and young people opportunities to discuss how they feel, helps them develop resilience in managing their relationships. As adults, we have a responsibility to support children and young people to talk about their experiences and challenges, without us leading their thinking and potentially mis-labelling the behaviour. This could escalate a simple fall out to something perceived to be a bullying incident, and adults use a common-sense approach to manage such conversations supportively and sensibly.



Impact of Bullying on Children, Young People and Families

Bullying can have both long and short-term effects on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Being bullied is traumatic for the individual and is likely to lead to a range of coping mechanisms and reactive behaviours.

Stirling's children and young people were consulted on their views of what these coping mechanisms and reactive behaviours are:



Additionally, the impact of bullying behaviour can extend beyond the individuals involved. Bullying can affect a child/young person's school and family life, as well as affecting family members and peers. People can experience feelings of powerlessness, struggle with feelings of failure about parenting abilities and can become excessively fearful about the child/young person's safety:

"I had no idea that other boys in his year were sending him these messages on Whatsapp. He told me that in the beginning he tried to laugh it off as banter but he became so self-conscious about his weight that he didn't want to take part in PE and was giving his teacher all sorts of excuses. He stopped eating lunch to try to lose weight and I only found out about all of this when his PE teacher phoned me. I couldn't believe my son was going through this and I didn't know a thing".

Similarly, being a witness of bullying behaviour can affect health and wellbeing and may include feelings of guilt, fear and anxiety.

Failure to prevent and address bullying behaviours can have a detrimental impact on long term physical and mental health and wellbeing, and upon life chances.

Protecting our Children and Young People from Bullying Behaviours

'Children and young people have a right to be protected from bullying behaviour – a protection that all adults in their lives, regardless of their roles, share a responsibility to provide.'

Respectme, 2018

The rights of children and young people are unconditional. Adults are duty-bearers of these rights which are not dependent upon a responsibility and cannot be taken away, earned or used as a reward. All adults in Stirling Council will be mindful of their duty-bearer responsibilities in protecting children and young people from bullying behaviours. To support this, all children's services are encouraged to develop anti-bullying guidelines in the context of their service.

While children and young people can access a range of children's services in Stirling, this guidance recognises that Stirling's educational establishments are likely to be most involved in a child and young person's life. Therefore, expectations with regards to protecting our children and young people from bullying behaviours in educational establishments are specifically noted.

What a child/young person can expect from all children's services in Stirling Council:

- That they be treated with respect and that their rights are protected and fulfilled.
- To be listened to, and to have concerns taken seriously.
- That the services they are accessing subscribe to a culture and practice where bullying does not thrive and is not tolerated.
- To be included and involved in developing/refreshing guidelines and approaches to preventing and responding to bullying.
- That adults across children's services know how to prevent, respond and report bullying behaviours.
- To be confident that an adult can help/signpost appropriate help (including concerns around any individual or protected characteristic).

Additional Support Needs

Children and young people are a diverse population with a wide range of very different needs. This includes children and young people with complex health needs; learning disabilities; sensory impairments and social and behavioural needs. Children and young people with additional support needs have the same right to be safe and protected from bullying behaviours.

Children and young people with additional support needs may:

- be adversely affected by negative attitudes to disability and perceptions of difference
- be more isolated, not have many friends
- not understand that what is happening is bullying
- have difficulties telling people about bullying.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended) provides a comprehensive legal framework for the provision of additional, targeted support for children and young people who face barriers to learning. Children and young people with additional support needs may experience bullying differently and may be targeted because of their additional support need. In addition, social emotional or behavioural needs which can arise from bullying, may be considered an additional support need if the bullying is having an impact on the child or young person's learning, including those children and young people who are demonstrating bullying behaviour.

What parents and carers can expect from Stirling Council:

- That their child will be treated with respect and their rights are protected and fulfilled.
- To be listened to and have concerns taken seriously and to be treated with respect.
- To be included and involved in developing guidelines and approaches to preventing and responding to bullying.
- To be confident that professionals are knowledgeable of and can help/signpost appropriate supports (including concerns around any individual or protected characteristic).
- Where appropriate, be made aware of how to make a complaint, and to be supported to do so if necessary.

What children, young people and their families can expect from educational establishments:

- Every establishment will refresh/develop and maintain their own anti-bullying policy based on this guidance and the Scottish Government's 'Respect for All'. This will be refreshed/developed and maintained in consultation with children and young people, parents and carers.
- There will be a proactive, nurturing culture and ethos where bullying behaviours are not tolerated.
- That children and young people can talk in confidence about any concerns they have.
- That incidents of bullying behaviour will be resolved proactively, using a respectful approach that takes into account the wellbeing needs of both the person experiencing the bullying behaviour and those demonstrating bullying behaviour.
- That reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded responsibly and accurately to help identify recurring patterns thereby encouraging early intervention and support for children and young people.

Creating the Right Environment: Promoting Respectful Relationships

Bullying behaviour thrives in environments where respectful relationships are not the norm. Promoting respectful relationships and ensuring we respond to all forms of prejudice helps to create a nurturing and safe climate for our children and young people.

In Stirling's *'Promoting Positive Relationships'* guidance, a nurturing, relationship-based approach is recommended as best practice in fostering a culture where positive, respectful relationships are central to learning, participation and wellbeing. It recognises that all adults interacting with children and young people have a role to play in establishing positive relationships that promote healthy social and emotional development and that these relationships should be reliable, predictable and consistent where possible.

All Stirling Council services interacting with children and young people will consider the protected characteristics when evaluating their approach to positive relationships and in developing strategies for a respectful, equitable and inclusive culture and ethos.

Enabling children and young people to develop their learning and thinking around friendships, relationships and the potential breakdown of these should be an integral part of learning and teaching in all educational establishments.

Respectme, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service suggests the following actions to engage children and young people's learning and thinking around bullying behaviours and further strengthen organisational messages to service users that bullying behaviours will not be tolerated.

'Ground rules'	Can be devised by children and young people focusing on how they interact with each other and what they will do if they experience bullying. These will differ depending on the ages of the children involved, but may include statements such as: "We will respect each other and our differences." and "When we see someone being bullied we will try to help." These can usefully be prominently displayed for all to see and if bullying behaviour occurs or relationships are negative, the behaviour can be checked by reminding children and young people of the statements.
Activities such as role-play, art work, drama and literature	Can provide further reinforcement that bullying is wrong and provide an empathetic approach to those who have been bullied or those who witness bullying.
Visual reminders	Such as posters and badges also provide reinforcement. These can be displayed around the organisation and also be on school or organisational websites if possible. A clear visual commitment to equality and diversity gives a clear message.
Discussion	Around themes such as <i>what is bullying, who would you tell</i> and the <i>impacts of bullying</i> can help to develop attitudes and create an environment where bullying is unacceptable. Examples can be taken from the media or put forward by the children and young people themselves. Get young people to discuss how bullying is perceived in popular culture either using art, drama, as part of presentations or class themes. They can also explore issues such as prejudice, racism and homophobia.

Peer Mediation	Is a problem solving approach to bullying led by young people. They are trained to provide guidance and mediation to other children and young people when bullying occurs. This can provide a helpful environment where there is no imbalance of power. Peer mediation will only be suitable to deal with certain types of bullying behaviour. Children and young people who are being picked on or teased, being called names or being put down, being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about them may benefit from this process. However it is not suitable in all cases. For example, violent incidents, incidents based on difference or perceived difference and unlawful practices would require the support and intervention of adults. It is important to make these distinctions clear to all children and young people who are providing mediation and ensure that support is available for all concerned. It is important to be mindful of the impact that being exposed to bullying and other serious behaviours can have on children and young people. Any peer support systems will have robust and clear adult guidance and support to be effective.
Role-modelling	And self-awareness amongst adults is also important. The relationship between adults and children and young people will also mirror these values. Children will model their behaviour on what they are witnessing and adults will aim to always be mindful of this. Lead by example. If you judge and criticise, children and young people will think this behaviour is acceptable and will follow your lead. Let children know that bullying is never acceptable and explain why. Talk to children and young people and, most importantly, listen to them. Show children respect and they are more likely to respect others.



Recording and Monitoring Bullying Incidents

Accurate recording of bullying incidents helps to ensure that an appropriate response has taken place. Recording will also support us to monitor the effectiveness of our anti-bullying guidance and practice and support us to review and update as appropriate.

Monitoring helps services identify recurring patterns thereby encouraging early intervention. Recording systems will include information on:

- The children and young people involved, as well as staff or other adults
- Where and when bullying has taken place
- The type of bullying experienced, e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats etc.
- Any underlying prejudice including details of any protected characteristic(s)
- Consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns and
- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.

It is likely that educational establishments will be most involved in the recording and monitoring of incidents; in line with current national expectations, the Bullying & Equalities module on SEEMiS will be used to record information as an alternative to any other recording formats used at school level. Schools will be supported to implement this updating of their current recording approaches in the 2018-19 session. A procedural guidance document, the SEEMiS training video and the SEEMiS module handbook are available to support schools and nurseries. SEEMiS Business Intelligence (BI) reports allow establishments and the ASN and Wellbeing team to draw down monitoring data from information recorded in the module, to inform improvement activity.



Supporting Self-Evaluation of Policy and Practice

'An anti-bullying policy provides consistency in process, action and practice. Any member of staff, parent, child or young person should be able to read a policy and know what they can expect and also what is expected of them. Policy development is a journey, a values based journey to create environments where bullying does not thrive.'
Respectme, 2018

These guidelines emphasise the need for council services who have contact with children and young people to create and maintain contextualised policies that reflect both local and national messages around respect and positive relationships. Schools and nurseries can use the advice below to support their review of anti-bullying guidance.

To begin this process, the following questions can be asked:

- Does the service have a current bullying behaviours policy which reflects messages in this guidance and the national policy, 'Respect for All – A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People'?
- How well could relevant stakeholders be involved in the policy development?
- To what extent does the service – including children, young people and their families – have ownership of the vision, aims and values of the policy?
- What is the plan and timescale for developing/refreshing the policy?

In developing the policy, consideration can be given to self-evaluation of:

- Whole-service training/involvement.
- Culture and practice.
- Parental/family engagement.
- Recording, monitoring, continuous improvement and learning.
- Response, support and the voice of children and young people.

The '[Policy through to Practice](#)' booklet provided by Respectme guides educational establishments through self-evaluation and the refreshing/creation/maintenance of policy. Other council services are encouraged to adapt and contextualise the support provided by Respectme in the booklet in order to create and maintain policy relevant to their service.

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Support, Resources and Information

Respectme

Children 1st

Parentline

Childline

Education Scotland

LGBT Youth Scotland

Stonewall Scotland

SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health)

Zero Tolerance

Enquire

Enable Scotland

Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)

Changing Faces

Show Racism the Red Card

CSREC (Central Scotland Regional Equality Council)

**Stirling's Approach to Respect for All:
Preventing and Challenging Bullying Behaviour**

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