

Approaches to Anti-Bullying for Children and Young People

Introduction

Midlothian Council is committed to protecting all children and young people from any forms of bullying by other children and young people. Any form of bullying is unacceptable, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying. A consistent approach to dealing with bullying through guidelines and procedures is attached.

A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (Scottish Government 2010) states that bullying can be understood as behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated. Bullying behaviours **may** include:

- Verbal Abuse e.g. Name-calling, ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours
- Physical Abuse e.g. Hitting, tripping, kicking, pushing
- Cyber-Bullying e.g. using mobile phone or internet (for example Facebook/Twitter) to send or post text or images which may be seen as intimidating, malicious, humiliating or insulting / continually sending messages after being asked not to / posting rumours or gossip and instigating others to dislike or gang up on a child
- Stealing and damaging belongings
- Making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied
- Targeting someone because of who they are or are perceived to be

Bullying is also a breach of children's rights under several articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All procedures must be in compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Policy Statement

Midlothian Council expects that all staff, parents and carers will work together to prevent and reduce bullying and prejudice amongst children and young people by:

- Developing positive relationships amongst children, young people and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting
- Building capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people, and parents and carers to prevent and deal with bullying
- Preventing bullying of children and young people through a range of strategies and approaches
- Supporting children, young people and their parents and carers who are affected by bullying

Helpful approaches are:

- Education and awareness of rights
- Developing a climate of respect, responsibility and positive relationships and a culture where bullying is unacceptable
- Pupil involvement and engagement

- Circle time, peer mediation, buddying, mentoring, playground pals and playground supervision
- Mental, emotional and social health and wellbeing programmes and activities
- Restorative approaches
- Nurturing approaches and principles
- Personal support
- Supporting and enabling parents and carers

Responsibilities

Tackling bullying is the responsibility of all school staff and partners. Adults should provide an environment which is safe, secure and in which children and young people feel they can discuss sensitive issues and are listened to.

Local Authority Education staff is responsible for:

- Supporting schools to create their own Anti-Bullying Policy and communicating it to staff, children and young people, parents and carers
- Supporting this policy through training and monitoring and ensuring schools include the promotion of digital citizenship as an integral part of existing positive relationships and behaviour policies
- Consulting with stakeholders about the effectiveness and further development of the policy
- Sharing good practice
- Ensuring staff development activities are available
- Providing advice to school staff
- Working with partner agencies to support the prevention and reduction of bullying

Head Teachers are responsible for:

- Dealing effectively with any instances of bullying which are brought to their attention by implementing school and council procedures
- Recording bullying incidents in line with Council policy
- Ensuring that staff create a climate of respect, responsibility and positive relationships and a culture where bullying is unacceptable
- Ensuring that children and young people are aware of the procedure for reporting instances of bullying and have a trusted person to whom they can report their concerns
- Referring the incident through Child Protection procedures or to the police if necessary
- Developing digital citizenship as an integral part of existing positive relationships and behaviour policies
- Detailing within the school's Positive Discipline Policy or within a separate Anti-Bullying Policy how bullying incidents will be dealt with, recorded and monitored
- Ensuring that all staff, parents and carers are aware of, and comply with, the school's Anti-Bullying Policy
- Regularly reviewing policy to take into account new developments in technology or legislation at a minimum of every 3 years

All other Education staff is responsible for:

- Promoting positive attitudes, behaviours and relationships
- Dealing promptly and effectively with all allegations of bullying
- Being fully aware of this policy and related procedures
- Supporting children and young people in understanding bullying and its effects and consequences

- Through the curriculum and related activities, building the capacity of children and young people to challenge bullying behaviour
- Helping children and young people, parents and carers understand the difference between bullying and other behaviours

Children and Young People are responsible for:

- Having positive relationships and attitudes and challenging bullying behaviour if they feel able to do so
- Telling a trusted person if they have any worries about bullying
- Keeping themselves and others safe with support from adults
- Understanding the difference between bullying and other behaviours
- Engaging in safe, responsible use of mobile technology

Parents and Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring and promoting their children's health, welfare and development
- Encourage safe and responsible use of mobile technology
- Communicating concerns to a relevant member of school staff in the first instance, and working in partnership with them to resolve these concerns

Recording and Monitoring

Recording and monitoring of instances of bullying are essential to allow schools to ensure that appropriate responses and follow-up actions are taken. This also allows the school to monitor the effectiveness of its policy and can help to identify training needs. Recurring patterns can also be identified.

Schools should have appropriate systems and procedures for recording bullying incidents, including the use of Seemis Incident Manager. An example is attached, though there is much existing good practice. In each establishment, a member of staff should be identified who will be responsible for the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents and for the coordination of the policy. All incidents should be recorded and kept as this information will be requested when required.

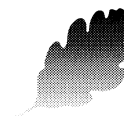
Other support, advice and guidance can be found in the Scottish Government document *A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0>)

Legislative Framework

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 Additional Support for Learning Act
 Equality Act 2010
 Schools (Scotland) Act 2010
 Disability Discrimination Act 2006

Associated Documentation

Curriculum for Excellence
 GIRFEC
 Child Protection Procedures
 Complaints Procedure
 A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People
 (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0>)
 Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Technology in School

BULLYING CONCERN – initial referral form

Reported by: **to**

Date:

When did the alleged incident take place?

Before School		Interval		Lunchtime	
In Class		Between classes		After school	

Where did the alleged incident occur?

In the playground		In school building		On way to/from school	
Both on and outside of school premises		On school transport		Other	
Online					

People involved – including witnesses:

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Type of alleged incident

Verbal		Isolation	
Written		Incitement	
Physical		Using Technology	
Socio-economic		Body Image	
LAC child			
Damage to property		Other	

Outcome:

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Copy to class teacher

DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

A successful Anti-Bullying policy needs a whole school approach where the issue of bullying is brought out into the open and the school gives a clear lead in how to deal with bullying behaviour, on or off line. Involving the whole school community in the production and review of the policy gives a sense of ownership, raising awareness of the responsibility of the whole school community in maintaining a safe school. Children should be consulted through, for example the school's Pupil Council, with comments or quotes kept as evidence and referred to in the school's policy document where possible.

School Anti-Bullying Policies should include the following key elements:

- A statement opposing bullying – linked to the values of the school.
- A definition of bullying – a common understanding of what bullying behaviour is - this statement should be agreed with pupils/staff/parents/carers and be in line with National Approach. This is a key feature of a successful anti-bullying initiative and is essential for whole school commitment.
- Systems for ensuring awareness of policy and procedures and for ensuring all staff, parents and pupils have opportunities to develop a clear understanding of bullying issues. There should be a clear statement outlining the school anti-bullying policy and procedures in the School Handbook. Schools should ensure information on bullying is available for pupils in age-friendly formats, and can be provided in other languages.
- Responsibilities of staff and parents/carers clearly outlined.
- Include strategies which contribute to creating a positive environment/ethos and link with positive behaviour policies.
- Use the curriculum to encourage personal development and personal achievement to broaden experience and develop the four capacities- successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- Reporting Incidents - clear guidelines on referral procedures, reporting and recording methods for teaching/support staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Dealing with incidents - an agreed approach for dealing with incidents clearly stated, including guidelines for listening to children experiencing bullying behaviour, witnesses and those who are displaying bullying behaviour.
- Ensure children know procedures for getting help systems of support for all involved in bullying behaviours.
- Involving parents - be clear when will they be contacted and who will be responsible for making contact? NB be aware of the delicate nature of information and the views of the child.
- Recording/Monitoring - identify member of staff responsible for monitoring incidents and co-ordination of policy (including review of policy).

TEMPLATE OF CONTENT FOR CHILDREN'S ANTI-BULLYING BOOKLETS

Each school's booklet for children must be age appropriate and in child friendly language. Children should be consulted regarding its content and design, and it should be reviewed regularly.

The booklet should include:

- A statement opposing bullying – linked to the values of the school.
- A definition of bullying – clear outline of types of abuse (e.g. verbal, physical, emotional, cyber).
- What children can do if they are being bullied – children should know how to get help/what types of help are available (e.g. school worry box, buddy stop, member of staff) and what will happen next.
- What children can do if they see someone being bullied – how to report incidents and what will happen next.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY GUIDELINES

Guidance points taken from 'Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Technology in School', Scottish Government 2013.

Mobile technology is an integral part of the lives of children and young people across Scotland, with many bringing their own mobile devices into school. It is unreasonable and impractical to attempt to impose a ban on mobile devices in schools. An approach is required which promotes the safe and responsible use of mobile devices and a robust and measured response to the consequences of their inappropriate use.

A policy should be designed to protect staff and children from harassment and abuse which can arise from the misuse of such technology. Historically, 'acceptable use' policies have had a focus on managing and controlling online behaviour. More recently, there has been a move towards the promotion of positive relationships and behaviour in a digital context. This shift recognises the important role of educators in preparing young people to become 'digital citizens'.

Policies on mobile technology must be rooted within existing positive relationships and behaviour policies, which will set out how incidents will be dealt with. Policies must be consistent with IT codes of conduct and must reference health and safety for staff and children.

The **key principles** of digital citizenship that have an impact on use of mobile devices in school include:

- Digital etiquette (standards of conduct when using mobile devices);
- Digital rights and responsibilities (what people can do if they feel uncomfortable with digital communication and how they report misuse); and
- Digital security (precautions that can be taken to ensure digital safety)

Key themes that may form a framework for whole school community discussion and inclusion within a policy include:

- Guidance on restrictions on use of personal mobile within school grounds within the school day, at social events and school outings, e.g. mobile phones should be switched off and out of sight during lesson times.
- Clear guidelines on the appropriate use of mobile technology for learning and teaching purposes
- Emphasis on the need for safe and responsible use of mobile technology by children and staff outwith formal learning and teaching purposes.
- Clear guidelines on the need to respect privacy, which should include instructions that camera and filming functions must not be used without the prior consent of subjects (children/staff) and special permission of school management.
- Clear guidelines that images or recordings obtained by use of mobile phones should not be uploaded on social networking or other websites without the express permission of the subjects.
- Agreed consequences for the misuse of mobile phones that are integrated with school's existing policies and approaches to managing relationships and behaviour.

- Clear procedures for confiscation and return of mobile devices
- Clear protocols on reporting misuse within the school, and the support available in school for staff and children who are the subject of harassment.
- Consideration of situations where mobile phones may be used by children with particular needs, e.g. a young carer who is worried about the health of their parent
- Clearly-stated responsibility/liability for personal mobile devices in terms of loss, theft or breakage
- The range of ways that the policy will be shared with children, parents and staff, e.g. school handbook, school website.

Policies must be reviewed regularly to ensure the commitment of new staff, parents and children to the policy and to take into account any new developments in technology.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

GIRFEC - Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) Getting it right for every child is the national approach to helping children and young people in Scotland. It enables children to get the help they need when they need it and supports a positive shift in culture, systems and practice. It promotes working together to make things better, a shared approach that builds solutions with and around children and families.

Circle-Time - Many primary schools use Circle Time. Pupils sit in a circle and play games or do fun activities for a short time. Then they can discuss matters as a group, including bullying. This is a way for everyone in class to take part in a structured way. This involves listening to the person making the points without making remarks or laughing. Sometimes classes may use a toy or emblem, representing the opportunity to talk uninterrupted for the person who is holding it. Lots of care is taken to ensure children feel safe and well supported when talking about sensitive issues.

Restorative approaches – Restorative Practices is an approach which fosters relationships, encourages responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and their impact on others. The aim is to encourage members of the school community to effectively resolve and learn from conflict in a way which maintains relationships in a consistent, structured way.

LINKS FOR SCHOOLS

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools

RESPECTme: Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service <http://www.respectme.org.uk/>

Health and Wellbeing in Curriculum for Excellence:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/curriculumareas/healthandwellbeing/index.asp

Getting it Right for Every Child: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright

List of legislation relevant to all aspects of online safety:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi/behaviour

360degree safe: an online, interactive self review tool which allows schools to review their e-safety policy and practice www.360safeScotland.org.uk