



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR
Roinn an Fhoghlaim
Department of Education

Ag Amas air Adhartas - Aiming for Advancement

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

October 2007

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1 Policy Leader: Head of Service for Inclusion

2 Rationale

2.1 All children, whatever their race, sex, beliefs, and physical and mental abilities, have the right to grow up unharmed, to have the opportunity to develop fully and to have their basic needs met. They should be respected in body and mind, their safety and well-being ensured, and their personal dignity guaranteed.

2.2 **The responsibility to protect the rights of children rests with all of us and this is particularly so in respect of bullying, where an approach which involves the whole school is essential.**

3 National Context

3.1 In the national context, the sentiments above are reflected in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.

3.2 The problems associated with bullying amongst children and young people have received much attention in recent years. Research bears out the conclusion that in every school, be it large or small, there is the potential for some pupils to engage in cruel practices and negative behaviour towards their peers.

3.3 The fact that incidents of bullying have not been reported to staff does not mean they are not happening. Furthermore, a bullied child may have additional support needs within the Educational (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. It is therefore the duty of every member of staff to remain vigilant and to ensure that learning takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and positive for all children.

4 Aims

4.1 The purpose of promoting, supporting and maintaining this policy is to guarantee that children feel safe, secure, confident and happy within the school environment and understand that any concerns they have are being addressed with care and consideration. **Denying that bullying occurs in a school only makes it harder for children to tell that there is a problem.**

4.2 The school community is therefore committed to:

- **Prevention** - sending out a clear message that negative behaviour is anti-social, unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the school. Promoting a positive ethos within the school, which fosters the development of skills and self esteem of young people, will therefore be the goal.
- **Raising Awareness** – by making pupils, staff and parents aware of the different forms of bullying, and having clear statements of responsibility for pupil care and welfare.

- **Sharing Information** – by encouraging pupils to confide in staff and/or parents/carers and by having clear procedures for dealing with matters of concern.
- **Developing Procedures** – by having clear lines of communication and referral for incidents and information, and for referring the matter to relevant staff.
- **Monitoring the Situation** – by ensuring that all staff are vigilant and that the policy is reviewed on a regular basis, and by responding in an appropriate manner to all concerns that are raised.
- **Support** – providing young people who have experienced bullying with the support they need.

5 What is bullying?

- 5.1 Evidence from different sources confirms that bullying can occur at any time during a child's school career.
- 5.2 Some types of bullying can have a racist or discriminatory motivation. Racism can adversely affect the lives of many black, minority ethnic, gypsy, traveller and non Scottish children and families.
- 5.3 Children may be targeted for somehow appearing to be different or for not conforming to an unwritten code of ethics or image. Often this can revolve around ethnicity, culture, class, religion and disability factors. However, this is not always the case and it is sometimes unclear why some children experience harassment.
- 5.4 Bullying can be defined as – *a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a child's life or a series of such incidents (Anti-bullying Campaign).*
- 5.5 Either an individual child or a group can inflict the distress or hurt. Bullying behaviour can take many forms, including the following:
- **Emotional Hurt** – children are repeatedly excluded (ignored), tormented (unpleasant gestures, looks), humiliated or ridiculed.
 - **Verbal Hurt** – sarcasm, spreading malicious rumours, persistent teasing, threats and name calling.
 - **Physical Hurt** – kicking, punching, pushing, spitting, biting and any other forms of violence or assault.
 - **Sexual Bullying** – unwanted physical contact or suggestive remarks.
 - **Material Hurt** – having possessions damaged, stolen or removed.

- **Cyber Bullying** – The digital age has seen the development of new ways in which to bully and abuse, with the result that bullying can now take place by e mail, text message, camera phone or in internet chat rooms.
- 5.6 Verbal and emotional practices are perhaps still the most common ways of devaluing an individual. However, **all** are equally serious and there is no hierarchy of most-to-least. Each individual involved will experience profound distress, regardless of how the bullying is carried out.
- 5.7 Some of the outcomes of bullying that an individual can experience include physical and psychological abuse of their persons, isolation and loneliness, insecurity, anxiety and fear. This can often, predictably, have a negative effect on academic achievement.
- 5.8 Studies also suggest that long term effects of being bullied can occur, leading to difficulties in personal relationships and low self esteem in adult life.
- 5.9 However, bullying affects **everyone** – not simply the victims and the instigators. It also has an influence on other children who may witness violence, aggression and the distress of the victim. It may damage the atmosphere of a class and even the school environment. What is more, less aggressive pupils may be drawn in to the negative behaviour through peer group pressure.

6 Whole school approach

- 6.1 All members of the school community have a responsibility for preventing and addressing bullying. As a school community, we will attempt to eliminate this problem by:
- Developing an appropriate ethos – **Bully proofing our school.**
- 6.2 It is acknowledged that a poor educational environment and school ethos can have a detrimental influence on behaviour.
- 6.3 Staff will endeavour to ensure there is an emphasis on promoting positive behaviour, creating a culture of praise, social awareness and a healthy work ethic in the school. We will seek to do this by:
- creating good order conducive to learning in all classes.
 - providing, in all subjects, courses suitable to the needs of all pupils.
 - creating interest by adopting a variety of teaching methods and sound, meaningful assessment of achievements, always emphasising the positive.
 - promoting co-operative learning and group work – sharing out responsibilities equally.
 - providing throughout the school year, social, cultural and sporting activities, which encourage pupil motivation and enhance well-being.
 - minimising comparisons between children on things such as sport and academic skills and valuing other skills.
 - organising the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying.
 - promoting the virtues of individuality, tolerance, social responsibility and consideration for others.

- good communication with parents and others.
 - promoting care of younger pupils by older ones.
 - fostering a sense of belonging.
- 6.4 The School's Guidance/Personal and Social Education Programme stresses the importance of respect, both self respect and respect for others. It emphasises the development of interpersonal skills and demonstrates how being assertive is much more effective than being aggressive.
- 6.5 In all classes, teachers will seek to establish and develop an atmosphere of openness and trust in partnership with pupils, which will make it possible to explore and discuss issues with confidence
- 6.6 The school will also:
- conduct pupil surveys of where bullying incidents are most likely to take place, identifying prevalence and high risk places and times.
 - monitor the effectiveness of the policy and procedures by giving pupils a confidential questionnaire to fill in.
- 6.7 All school staff, teaching and non-teaching, will watch out for and challenge bullying behaviour where it is seen. Effective, active supervision is one of the most important strategies in the prevention of bullying.
- 6.8 Increased supervision at problem times such as intervals, checking cloakrooms and toilets etc will be used where appropriate.
- 6.9 The school will continually review its general practices in order to identify any aspects which might allow or encourage bullying.

7 Encouraging the reporting of bullying incidents

- 7.1 The school will ensure that pupils know how important it is to report bullying they have witnessed or suffered.
- 7.2 Leaflets, advice sheets and information regarding bullying will be distributed at certain key times to parents and children when pupils may be at greater risk of experiencing difficulties such as, for example, starting school, moving to a new school or at the beginning of each school session.
- 7.3 Pupils will also be assured that their concerns will be responded to with sensitivity and dealt with rapidly. All reports will be **taken seriously**, and those who bully, or threaten to bully, will be subject to the disciplinary measures detailed in this policy. Confidentiality for anyone who shares information will be respected.
- 7.4 Lines of communication and referral will be clear and efficient. Opportunities for pupils to communicate concerns about bullying will also be provided such as circle time, pupil surveys, suggestion boxes and pupil councils.

8 Dealing with bullying

- 8.1 Pupils, parents and school staff all have responsibilities in tackling this problem. The occurrence of bullying will hopefully be minimised if staff, pupils and parents work in partnership to fulfil the recommendations of this policy.
- 8.2 Possible alert signals to look out for, which can sometimes suggest bullying is taking place, include:
- poor attendance, truancy.
 - spending a particular day at home sick.
 - turning up late for class.
 - loss of pens, books, jotters, school bags, clothes, dinner money.
 - unexplained bruises, scratches, torn clothes.
 - child becoming withdrawn, anxious/nervous.
 - mood swings.
 - tantrums or loss of control when bullied.
 - fear of travelling to or from school, either on foot or by bus.
 - fear of being around the school at break times and lunch times.
 - underachievement, deterioration in work - progressively or suddenly.
 - defacing of work.
- 8.3 This list is not exhaustive, and it must be recognised that these signs may be indicative of problems other than bullying. Sometimes there are no overt signs of bullying and all parties concerned are required to remain alert on to any unusual happenings around them.

9 Advice to pupils – What can you do if you are being bullied?

- 9.1 Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.
- **DO NOT** suffer in silence. Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is **WRONG**. **DO NOT** tolerate any form of bullying, even if it seems to be minor. If you feel you are being bullied by e mail, text or on line, talk to someone about it.
 - Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
 - Try not to show that you are upset, and ignore comments/teasing where possible. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
 - Stay with a group of people/friends. Bullies usually pick on pupils who are on their own.
 - Be **ASSERTIVE** – make the bully aware of the fact that their behaviour is unacceptable. Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher/member of staff and **TELL WHAT HAS HAPPENED**.
 - **DON'T** react or fight back – this can make matters worse. It is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support. If you feel you are unable to do this, then approach a friend or parent. Contact Childline if all else fails (tel: 0800 1111).
- 9.2 Your complaint will be taken seriously when the school become aware of it, and the bully will be dealt with in such a way that will put an end to the bullying and will not make matters worse for you.

10 Advice to pupils – If you know someone is being bullied

- **TAKE ACTION.** Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and alone.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with bullying without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

11 Advice and guidance for parents

11.1 Advice and guidance for parents includes:

- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has been, who they have spent time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- Inform the school **IMMEDIATELY** if you suspect that your child or another is being bullied. Ask for an appointment with the headteacher. Your complaint will be treated seriously, and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back, as this is a breach of the school's behaviour rules and may make matters worse. Such behaviour may be contrary to your child's nature. More positively encourage your child to recruit friends. A child who has friends is less likely to be bullied. Work **WITH** the school so the child gets a consistent message.
- Offer immediate support and tell your child that there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not their fault that they are being bullied.
- Keep a written record. This will be painful, but it will provide supportive evidence regarding who, what, when and where.
- Contact the Department of Education if you are not satisfied with how the school is handling a particular incident.
- As part of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar's policy regarding bullying, the Department of Education has set up a free phone number (tel: 0800 389 8437). This report line is not intended as a substitute for raising issues of bullying directly with the school. It is intended for use by parents or children where, for whatever reason, they feel unable to raise the matter with school management and they wish education staff to act as a point of contact with the school.

11.2 If parents suspect their child of bullying, the school encourages them to

- remain calm, setting a good example.
- try to find out why their child is doing it.
- ask for help. The school can put parents in touch with expert help.
- set realistic, firm guidelines and rules to help the child control their behaviour.
- ensure the child apologises, either in person or in writing to the bullied child.

- help the child find something he/she can do well. Children who bully tend to need to achieve some success to make them feel good about themselves and change their behaviour.

12 Advice and guidance for teachers and adults working in/with the school

12.1 Non – teaching Staff

Non-teaching staff should not attempt to deal with a bullying problem. They should however, as a matter of course, actively discourage negative behaviour where they find it, and offer support to the child who is the focus for the bullying. They should take note of the circumstances and information received, and refer the matter directly to the class teacher or headteacher at the earliest opportunity.

12.2 Teaching Staff

No exact formula can be given as it depends on the incident and how the teacher becomes aware of it. However, the following general points should apply in most instances:

- remain alert to early signs of distress, and high risk periods when bullying may be more likely to occur.
- be accessible to pupils if they wish to discuss problems.
- respond to reports of bullying in a sensitive manner by listening carefully and making written notes of information received.
- offer practical support and exercise professional judgement on how to respond promptly to situations.
- alert the headteacher to whom all known instances of bullying should be referred.

12.3 Headteacher, Depute Headteacher or Designated Member of Staff should:

- regularly highlight the school bullying procedures.
- establish the facts of each case.
- ensure the appropriate disciplinary sanction is used in accordance with the school's discipline policy.
- record incidents in an appropriate manner.
- follow up, monitor incidents and provide appropriate feedback.
- contact and keep all parties appropriately informed of developments, for example, parents, teachers, guidance teachers, senior management team, Social Work Department, psychological services, Reporter, and police.

13 Action to be taken in dealing with negative behaviour

13.1 Procedure

The process is objective and the NO BLAME approach is adopted where the school aims to correct bullying behaviour by working with the bullies and victims.

13.2 Staff should explain clearly to all parties what is happening. Thereafter, staff should endeavour to monitor and support both the bully and the victim.

- Victim is interviewed.
- Witnesses are interviewed.
- Bully / Bullies are interviewed:
 - 1 Problem is explained as fact, not accusation.
 - 2 The bully's responsibility to change is stressed.
 - 3 The bully is asked for solutions / suggestions.
 - 4 A review meeting is arranged for the following week.
- A review meeting is held with the bully.

13.3 This process will be initiated as quickly as possible to resolve the problem speedily, and reduce the anxiety of all parties concerned.

13.4 Where possible, staff will aim to effect reconciliation between those involved. This has been shown to be an enduring solution in such situations. In doing this, all parties will be encouraged to see the matter from each other's perspective. Help and advice will be given to all concerned.

13.5 Incidents of a less serious nature can be addressed using circle time activities or discussed in class as a topic, without naming anyone, to find out how the pupils think the problem can be solved.

13.6 If the bullying is significant or continues, then the following sanctions may be imposed. The nature/seriousness of the bullying will determine which sanctions will be employed. The school prides itself on being firm, but fair, regarding sanctions.

13.7 Sanctions/Disciplinary Measures

- **DETENTION** - Pupil is supervised during breaks and given work to complete. This should involve reflection on the bully's own behaviour, and consequences, rather than on lines or copying. If behaviour does not improve the headteacher will take the next step.
- **INFORM PARENTS** – parents are informed in writing or by telephone.
- **MEETING WITH PARENTS** – If bullying persists, parents are invited to the school to discuss future action.

- **INVOLVING OUTSIDE AGENCIES** - This is an extremely serious step and further action may be considered necessary, such as the involvement of a behavioural support teacher, psychological services, Social Work Department and/or police.
- **TEMPORARY EXCLUSION** – Pupil is excluded for a set period.
- **PERMANENT EXCLUSION** – Pupil is permanently excluded from school.

13.8 Loss of privileges, behaviour monitoring via the drawing up of school contracts or behaviour timetables may be used with pupils who have been bullying or suspected of this. This procedure can enable schools to monitor behaviour in class, and can also enable parents to keep in touch and make comments. It should be used as a means of encouraging good behaviour and rewards can be built into the process.

14 Quality assurance

14.1 Implementation

The school is fully committed to combating and eradicating bullying in all its many forms. Positive behaviour will be promoted in all relevant school communications and through the publication of this policy and related leaflet and poster campaigns. The whole school community will be made aware of its duties and responsibilities with regard to meeting this aim effectively and efficiently.

14.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Promoted staff have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. Specific responsibility will lie with the named person at the start of this policy.

14.3 Review of the Policy

Review will take place according to the priorities within the school development plan.

15 Resources

The Scottish Anti Bullying Network, respectme, (www.respectme.org.uk) is an excellent source of information, resources, advice and useful links. Its use is highly recommended.

Signed: _____

Date : _____

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