



Anti-Bullying Policy

This document is based on East Dunbartonshire Council's Procedure Manual 3/34: *Education Service Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance* (2022)

Rationale:

'Respect for All has a fundamental role to play in helping us realise our vision for all children and young people. It provides a holistic framework for all adults working with children and young people to address all aspects of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Respect for All reflects Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and recognises that bullying impacts on wellbeing. In order to thrive and achieve their full potential, children and young people need learning environments which are safe, nurturing, respectful and free from fear, abuse and discrimination'.

Respect for All:
A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People
Scottish Government (2017)

Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and others' cultures and the environment.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 29

Aims:

In Balmuirdy Primary School we aim to ensure that:

- Children come to school safe, happy and ready to learn
- Positive relationships are developed which are mutually respectful and promote emotional wellbeing
- Staff, pupils and parents have a shared understanding of what bullying is and work together to build capacity, resilience and skills to prevent and deal with it through a range of approaches
- A culture is promoted where bullying is recognised as being unacceptable and bullying behaviour is challenged whenever it is seen or heard
- Reported allegations of bullying are dealt with promptly and effective support is provided for children and families who are affected by bullying.

Introduction

At Balmuildy Primary School we believe that relationships are key to our school community working well together within a positive ethos. We work hard to:

- Promote equality and equity
- Nurture a sense of identity and belonging for all
- Encourage achievement and celebrate success in its widest sense
- Have high expectations for learning and behaviour
- Encourage the active participation of pupils in decision making and school life
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community.

We have embarked on our journey to become a Rights Respecting School. A rights respecting school models rights and respect in all its relationships, whether between pupils, between adults and pupils or between adults. Rights based charters are developed by every class.

The purpose of the Anti-Bullying Policy is to provide guidance to pupils, staff, parents and carers of Balmuildy Primary School on preventing, responding to and reducing bullying behaviour in line with East Dunbartonshire's Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance for Education Establishments (2022).

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is a combination of behaviours and impacts that can affect someone's ability to feel in control of themselves. It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be kept up over time, by actions, looks, messages, confrontations, hitting or hurting or the fear of these.

Bullying also occurs in the virtual world which children and young people access through the Internet, via social networking (eg Instagram, Tik Tok and Snapchat), computers and mobile phones. As communication can happen anywhere and at any time, often unsupervised, on-line bullying can be very pervasive and difficult to handle. However, in essence, the behaviour is the same and requires similar prevention methods. *Bullying – A Guide for Parents and Carers*, which includes guidance on on-line bullying, is available from 'respectme' – Scotland's Anti-bullying Service on their website - www.respectme.org.uk.

Bullying behaviour may be related to prejudice-based attitudes and behaviours which may compound other differences or difficulties in a child or young person's life. These include:

- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- homophobic bullying
- racist bullying
- disablist bullying
- body image
- religion and belief
- sexism and gender
- looked after children and young people
- young carers
- socio-economic group

When talking about bullying, it is important not to label children and young people as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Labels can stick for life and can isolate a child, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour. All children and young people need help to understand why bullying behaviour is wrong in order that they can change it. Balmuildy Primary School is committed to current definitions that take account of the context in which the event took place and the impact on the person who feels harm has been done to them. It is considered unhelpful to define bullying purely in terms of behaviours alone.

It is important to have clarity about these significant events and be able to recognise and acknowledge bullying behaviours when they happen.

Bullying behaviours can include:

- name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening and intimidating by making prejudiced-based remarks
- hitting, tripping, pushing, kicking
- taking and damaging belongings
- ignoring, excluding, spreading rumours
- sending abusive messages electronically, eg via text, emails or social networking sites
- making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied
- targeting someone because of who they are or who they are perceived to be

This list is not an exhaustive list and there may be other behaviours that could impact negatively on a child's wellbeing.

It is crucial to take into account the impact that bullying behaviour has on a child or young person. **The impact an incident has on a child or young person is more important than whether it is classified as bullying.** Actions can affect people in different ways and this should be taken into consideration. The person who has experienced harm may have experienced just one event. **The impact determines the definition of bullying.** One incident is sufficient to alert adults to take supportive action.

Not every unkind behaviour constitutes bullying. Children and young people are still learning how to get along with others. They will tease each other, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and disagree about what they like and don't like. These are examples of ordinary conflict, perhaps thoughtlessness and possibly insensitive behaviour and should be viewed as a normal part of growing up. However, if left unchecked, these behaviours can lead to bullying, making those being bullied feeling afraid, uncomfortable or unsafe in their environment. They should be viewed as an opportunity to help children and young people learn about resolving conflict and getting along with others. Parents, teachers and other adults need to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion and responsibility.

Prevention of Bullying

Balmuildy Primary School will work to create a positive and supportive ethos. A culture that encourages respect, values opinions, celebrates differences and promotes positive relationships will make it difficult for bullying behaviour to occur or be tolerated. This may include particular approaches such as:

- use of Rights Respecting Schools approaches (e.g. charters)
- buddying or mentoring
- creative and motivational ways to engage pupils and raise awareness of bullying
- involvement of the Pupil Council
- anti-bullying campaigns, posters, assemblies
- encouraging pupils to report bullying incidents
- areas of special focus eg prevention of name calling, respect
- an understanding of the impact and legal consequences of on-line bullying, supported by campus police, for the whole school community through the curriculum, assemblies and events for parents and carers.

Reporting Bullying Incidents

Allegations of bullying can be made to any member of staff by a child, parent/carer or member of staff. When an allegation has been made, the designated member of the senior management team should log it on the SEEMIS Bullying & Equalities module as soon as possible. An investigation into the incident should follow and SEEMIS should be updated throughout this process. Once concluded, the incident should be closed off.

Where the allegation is unfounded, recording of the pupil's name alleged to have been displaying bullying behaviour should be entered in the bottom box headed 'other person' within the 'person displaying' section on SEEMIS. This will ensure that the allegation will not show on the pupil's SEEMIS record.

Where an incident is found to be bullying, the designated member of staff should ensure that appropriate supports/interventions are in place to address any underlying prejudice. It is important to ensure that notes taken during the investigation or discussions with children and young people, parents and carers are recorded on SEEMIS pastoral notes to provide a chronology of events and actions taken, as soon after the event as possible.

Actions, Roles and Responsibilities

The member of staff to whom an incident is first reported, or who has witnessed it, should take the incident seriously. They must use their professional judgement in deciding upon appropriate action based on the impact of the bullying behaviour on the child or young person.

The child or young person who has **experienced bullying behaviour** will receive appropriate support and protection. This may be from a member of the Senior Management Team or it may be another member of staff who will be released to have time to talk with the child.

Examples of good practice include:

- the child or young person is taken to a comfortable place with no distractions
- the child or young person is listened to
- the member of staff should confirm that bullying is never acceptable and they deserve to feel safe
- they should be gently encouraged to talk, to find out what happened, who was involved, where and when – and notes taken
- they should be involved in deciding what should happen next
- the child or young person should be kept up to date with progress

- details of the bullying behaviour and actions taken is recorded in the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module
- the member of staff should inform parents of the incident and action taken, if it is judged to be appropriate

When a child or young person has **displayed bullying behaviour**, a member of the management team should, based on their professional judgement, endeavour to manage the resolution of the bullying incident within the school. Parents should be involved when their active support is needed to implement a resolution of the bullying incident.

Examples of good practice include:

- time should be taken to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour
- the individual or group should not be labelled as 'bullies'
- staff should be prepared for a strong reaction from parents and carers, children and young people
- staff should be prepared to address prejudicial attitudes that may be behind the bullying behaviour
- addressing what is happening behind the behaviour, even when the bullying has stopped

Consideration should be given to the sanctions and support given to the young person displaying bullying behaviour to ensure that interventions are intended to improve behaviour.

Such approaches might include:

- positive behaviour strategies with an appropriate member of staff, as agreed
- restorative approaches
- solution orientated approaches
- involvement of educational psychologists and campus police

However, it should be noted that "where it is considered that in all circumstances to allow the child or young person to continue attendance at school would be seriously detrimental to order and discipline or the educational wellbeing of the pupils there" (from the national guidance on the prevention and management of exclusions, *Included, Engaged and Involved-Part 2-June 2017*) senior managers have the power to exclude as a last resort.

It is essential that everyone takes responsibility in creating a safe and supportive environment within Balmuirdy Primary School and we aim to achieve this by:

- maintaining a focus on rights based learning and using class and school charters to help the whole school community respect the rights of everyone
- nurturing a positive ethos of respect for all
- promoting work on personal safety and bullying as part of the PSE curriculum
- encouraging the development of a learning environment in which children and young people can feel free of bullying and can thrive
- providing support in individual circumstances.

Review of Policy and Guidelines

Anti-Bullying Guidelines will be reviewed during session 2023/24