



Meadowburn Primary School

Anti-Bullying Guidelines

'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.'

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

Updated September 2023

Rationale

These Anti-Bullying Guidelines provide guidance to pupils, staff, parents and carers of Meadowburn Primary School on preventing, responding to and reducing bullying behaviour in line with East Dunbartonshire's Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance for Education Establishments (2015, updated 2019).

Aims

The aims of Meadowburn Primary School's Guidelines are to ensure:

- that all children and young people are provided with a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which to learn;
- children and young people, parents and carers and staff have a robust understanding of what bullying behaviour is and the action which will be taken when it is witnessed or reported.
- a culture is promoted where all forms of bullying are recognised as being unacceptable;
- the prevention of bullying of children and young people through a range of approaches;
- effective support for children and young people and their parents and carers who are affected by bullying.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as 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. This behaviour happens face to face and online (*Respect Me*, 2015).

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. FaceBook, Twitter 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/resources/publications.

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 & maternity
- racist bullying
- religion and belief
- homophobic bullying
- disablist bullying
- body image
- 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.

Meadowburn 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; 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 and their wellbeing. **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

Meadowburn 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. class charters;
- buddying systems – this may include older pupils, supportive peers or identified members of staff where appropriate;
- playground interventions such as – Fun Friends, Friendship Benches, Lunch Time Clubs;
- systems that identify vulnerable pupils and takes steps to remedy this e.g. Risk Matrix, Pastoral Notes, local knowledge;
- creative and motivational ways to engage pupils and raise awareness of bullying with theatre groups, speakers, outside agencies, film footage and music;
- use of school website and Twitter page to share information and raise awareness of Anti-Bullying approaches;
- involvement of the Pupil Council;
- raising awareness through participation in Anti-Bullying Week on a yearly basis that will include aspects of the 'Bounceback Programme' and RespectMe resources within the classroom environment. The PAtHs programme will also be used across the year within every classroom;
- Anti-Bullying and Respect themed assemblies throughout the year;

- regular reinforcement of the school values throughout the school community e.g. assemblies, class lessons, art work, drama, VIP (Values in Practice) nominations
- encouraging pupils to report bullying incidents including the use of class 'worry' boxes and circle time;
- ensuring all children have a clear understanding of the impact and potential consequences that bullying behaviour will have;
- 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 e.g. Health Weeks.
- Staff Training on a yearly basis to ensure all staff are fully aware of policy, the importance of consistent practice and have a clear awareness of potential behaviours that may be displayed e.g. facial expressions, acting differently.

Action

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

It is important to ensure that all parties feel they have been listened to and take appropriate time and care to ensure that a full investigation takes place.

The child or young person who has **experienced bullying behaviour** will receive appropriate support and protection.

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, taking the form of restorative practice if appropriate;
- the member of staff will confirm that bullying is never acceptable; they deserve to feel safe;
- they will be gently encouraged to talk, to find out what happened, who was involved, where and when – and notes taken;
- they will be asked what they want to see happen next;
- the child or young person will be kept up to date with progress;
- details of the bullying behaviour and actions taken is recorded in the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module and information shared with all relevant staff;
- the member of staff will inform parents of the incident and action taken;
- careful monitoring of situation, even when the incident has been resolved, to ensure there are no underlying or on-going issues.

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

Examples of good practice include:

- time will be taken to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour;
- the individual or group will not be labelled as ‘bullies’, name the behaviour e.g. unacceptable, inappropriate, disrespectful;
- 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.
- careful monitoring of situation even when the incident has been resolved to ensure there are no underlying or on-going issues.

Consideration will be given to the sanctions and support given to the young person displaying bullying behaviour to ensure that interventions are effective and result in improved behaviour.

Such approaches might include:

- positive behaviour strategies with an appropriate member of staff, as agreed;
- restorative approaches to help the child displaying the bullying behaviour to understand the impact it has on others;
- solution orientated approaches;
- involvement of educational psychologists and campus police;

However, ‘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’ (*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.

Communicating Awareness

In order to tackle the issue of bullying it is essential that **everyone within the community** is aware that **bullying is never acceptable** and what action should be taken if they are subject to, or witness, what might be a bullying incident.

At Meadowburn Primary we will:

- establish and maintain an active Pupil School Improvement Committee, members of which will undertake any promotion of competitions or additional activities that involve anti-bullying themes and regularly discussing ways to improve our practice on dealing with bullying behaviours e.g. visiting other schools, use of Anti-Bullying toolkit (RespectMe);
- maintain focus on rights (Rights Respecting Schools) through class charter and the school's Values to help maintain that the whole school community respect the rights of everyone;
- in consultation with pupils, parents and staff, regularly review, update and publish the school anti-bullying policy on our website;
- ensure that the school permanently displays classwork or posters that showcase at least one of our values e.g. respect, kindness.
- display relevant information, in a prominent position, close to the main entrance to the school;
- regularly communicate with parents to keep them abreast of our work through Twitter and school website.

To help raise awareness Meadowburn Primary School will:

- take part in Anti-bullying week on a yearly basis;
- provide information through assemblies and class lessons on how to deal with bullying behaviours;
- run afterschool and lunchtime activity clubs to encourage further social interaction.

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

- consistent implementation of Anti Bullying Guidelines;
- supporting anti-bullying projects and maintaining nurturing school approaches to encourage a positive ethos of respect for all;
- promoting work on personal safety and bullying as part of our Health and Wellbeing programme;
- encouraging the development of environments in which children and young people can feel free of bullying and can thrive;
- providing support in individual circumstances.

Zero Tolerance

We recognise how difficult it can be for pupils and parents to take action on bullying and how bullying can thrive on fear and secrecy. However, if you are being bullied or witness someone else being bullied it is **very important that you take action**: ignoring it can often mean it will get worse!

The key messages for pupils are:

- **if you are being bullied tell someone, don't suffer in silence;**
- **if you see someone being bullied, tell an adult immediately;**
- **don't think that it's OK to be a bystander, this can give the impression that bullying is acceptable when it never is.**

Children will be encouraged to report incidents to any adults in the school setting. They may use their class Worry Box, talk to their teacher or to a member of the Leadership team, tell an older pupil or have a quiet chat with a member of the Support Staff.

What will we do when you tell us?

Bullying and harassment are wrong and we will always listen to any concerns or comments, but that doesn't mean the people who do it are 'bad' people. It doesn't excuse the bullying behaviour, but it does mean that it is possible to help them change the way they behave.

Steps we will take will include:

- maintaining confidence where appropriate;
- discussing incidents with pupil(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour;
- discussing incidents with pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour;
- taking appropriate action.

We will encourage mediation which will involve:

- creating an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility;
- demonstrating impartiality and being non-judgemental;
- active listening, encourage collaboration & emotional self-expression
- facilitating dialogue and problem-solving;
- listening to and expressing emotion;
- empowering others to take ownership of problems.

Bullying in the wider community

Meadowburn Primary School cannot be held responsible for bullying behaviour which takes place off school premises and outside of school activities. However, if a pupil's emotional and physical wellbeing has been compromised, as a duty of care to that child, it may be appropriate for the Head Teacher to play some part in resolving incidents that involve a pupil from their school.

Parents/Carers Role

We appreciate for parents that hearing that your child is being bullied evokes an understandably emotional response and for everyone involved in the incident it can be a difficult time. If you have any concerns, please contact us and arrange to see your child's teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We will discuss what has happened and how we can proceed together to resolve the situation and reach a satisfactory outcome.

You can also find advice from "Respect Me" – Scotland's Anti-Bully Service on their website. <http://www.respectme.org.uk/resources/publications>

Review of Guidelines

Anti-Bullying Guidelines will be reviewed during session 2025-2026