



# Respect and Positive Relationships:

## *1. Anti-bullying Policy and Rationale for Procedures*

Wallace Hall Primary School

## Rationale:

Relationships are at the heart of our approach to supporting learners at Wallace Hall Primary School. We know that ensuring positive, respectful and responsible relationships between learners, parents/carers and all staff is important in preventing bullying in our school setting.

Bullying is behaviour that leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or demeaned. At Wallace Hall Primary School, we understand that bullying is never acceptable and that it can have a significant impact on children's wellbeing, resilience, participation, confidence and attainment both in the short term and in the long term. However, while bullying is not tolerated, we acknowledge it may still happen and it is important to have a clear, consistent and effective approach to respond to bullying if it occurs. It is important for the school to work in partnership with the school community to prevent bullying and to respond to bullying concerns when they arise.

## Aims of this Policy:

- To promote a shared approach in supporting positive, kind and respectful relationships in our school
- To establish consistent and coherent approaches that reflect local and national guidelines in dealing with incidents of bullying
- To promote a shared understanding across the school community of the national definition of bullying
- To give children strategies to respond to bullying and to promote their empowerment within this process
- To outline the responsibilities of pupils, staff and parents in preventing and responding to bullying
- To provide clear information about who pupils and parents can talk to, what they can expect if bullying occurs and how bullying incidents will be resolved
- To seek to reduce and eradicate bullying at Wallace Hall Primary School and to develop an environment in which bullying cannot thrive

## Suite of anti-bullying documents:

This school has created three documents to support our Respect and Positive Relationships: Anti-bullying Approaches:

1. Policy and Rationale for Anti-bullying Procedures
2. Anti-bullying Procedures: 'At a glance' Information
3. Useful resources and information

## Policy Information:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the national 'Respect for All' policy (2017) and Dumfries and Galloway Council's 'Respect For All' Anti-Bullying Guidelines (October 2018). These policies outline the wider context that the school's guidelines are set within and provide the national adopted definition of bullying. The local policy details signs of bullying to look out for and responses to this. These policies are set within the national GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) approach to supporting children's wellbeing.

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Children's rights are embedded in Scottish legislation and the school has a responsibility to promote and protect the rights of children. Bullying violates children's rights. As a Rights Respecting School, we encourage an ethos of mutually supportive and respectful relationships. This applies to learners, all adults in the school, parents/carers and partners. In fulfilling the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should be able to develop their talents and personalities to the full at school, their voices should be heard, and their wishes respected without discrimination of any kind.



## UNCRC Articles:

- *Article 2: Non-discrimination:* The convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.
- *Article 12: Respect for the views of the child:* Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right always applies, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.
- *Article 19: Protection from violence, abuse and neglect:* Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
- *Article 28: Every child has the right to an education:* Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.
- *Article 29: Education must develop every 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 other cultures, and the environment.

## Developing a whole-school community approach:

The review of this policy has involved consultation with staff, pupils and parents and carers to promote a shared understanding and approach. As part of this review, children in the consultation asked for the policy to have a wider name to encompass a focus on kind and respectful relationships as a positive lens for the guidelines. Parents and carers involved in the online consultation emphasised the importance of a clear and transparent approach with timely communication and partnership working with parents. Parents, carers and pupils involved in the consultation were keen for children to be empowered in taking forward the anti-bullying approaches. Our school will work with parents/carers to foster a positive environment and to ensure a consistent message regarding bullying is shared between home and school. It is expected that parents will support the school's aim in developing an environment in which all pupils feel safe and respected.

## Communication Approaches:

We understand the importance of having accessible and clear communication approaches to ensure our partnership between home and school is effective. From the consultation there was agreement that starting a conversation early about conflicts arising in relationships or upsets in friendships can help as a preventative measure and that this close working relationship is even more important in responding to bullying or perceived bullying incidents. Parents told us in our consultation that it can feel like a 'grey area' in knowing when to intervene or contact the school, especially when they only have part of the jigsaw of information. By working and communicating together at an early stage, we can help to share information to make judgements about situations and how to respond.

We know that it can feel very upsetting as a parent if your child is experiencing an impact from conflict in relationships or from bullying and similarly staff members or other children may feel upset if concerned about a pupil. We would remind everyone of the importance of maintaining communications between staff, pupils and parents that are in keeping with our positive and respectful relationships approaches. We hope that parents will trust us to deal with the situation. We cannot discuss other children with parents but we will communicate all information to parents about their own child in a potential bullying situation. We ask that parents do not use social media regarding bullying concerns but rather work through the communication channels in the school.

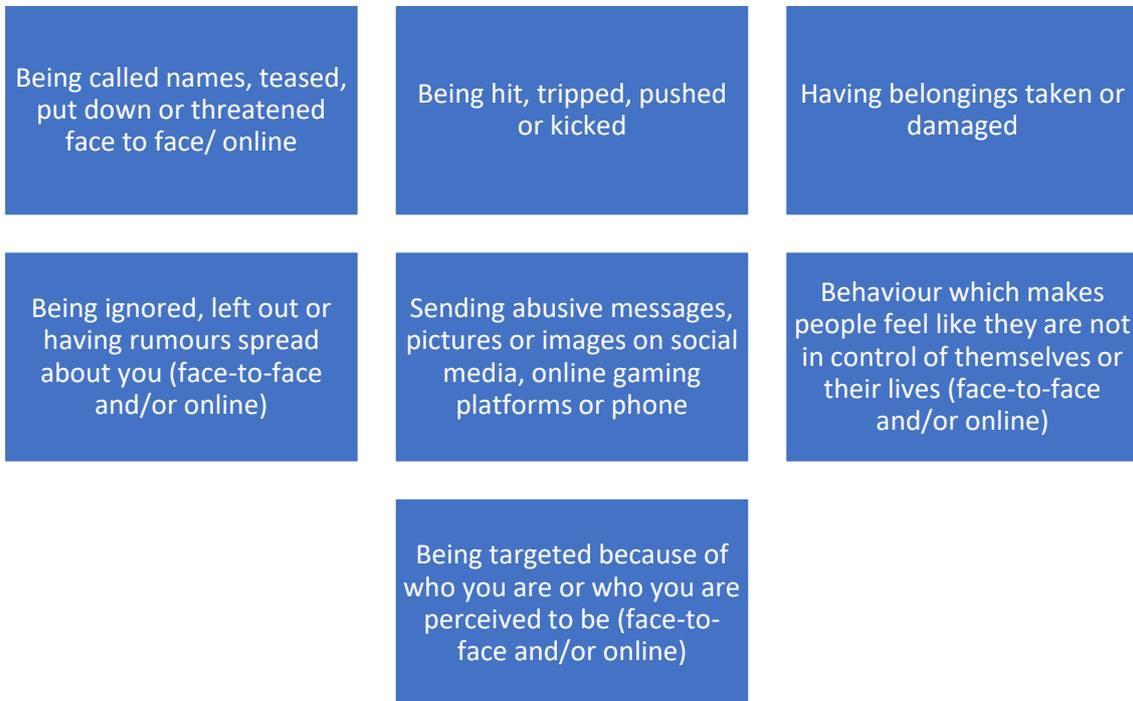
## Definition: What is bullying?

The nationally agreed definition of bullying is:

*"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. (Respectme, 2015)*

The national 'Respect for All' policy (2017) states: "This behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions, looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these."

This behaviour can include:



It is important to treat each incident on an individual basis and to take into account the impact that the behaviour has had on the person experiencing bullying. Parents at our school told us that the impact for some children of an incident may be greater than for others and what may seem insignificant to some may have a large impact for other children.

Bullying is behaviour that makes people feel upset, frightened, isolated and unable to retain control of their agency. Overly focusing on intent or persistence may distract from focusing on the impact the potential bullying behaviour is having on the child experiencing it. Looking at impact helps to retain a focus on the behaviour and how it has made the person experiencing it feel. Even though bullying is usually persistent, a single incident can have a significant impact. It is not helpful to wait to see if a pattern emerges before taking action. Therefore, adults should focus on the impact, rather than intent and persistence, when trying to determine if the behaviour is bullying in nature. Adults should look at the impact in the situation and if a child is unable to regain their control or sense of agency, they should intervene in the situation to restore this. What is done about bullying is much more important than how it is defined.

We have an explicit commitment to address prejudice-based bullying (including bullying based on the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). It is important that all incidents are treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of bullying. Further information on prejudice-based bullying is expanded on in the local authority's anti-bullying guidelines.

Bullying incidents that take place outside of school may involve a wider range of people and agencies. In some instances, parents may seek the advice of Community Police Officers. However, it is important to underline that the school will be part of a team approach where appropriate in responding to concerns outside of school that are impacting the wellbeing of learners.

Online Bullying:

We understand that the most effective way to address online bullying is to address it as part of our whole-school anti-bullying approach, rather than a separate area of practice. Throughout this policy when bullying is referred to, it is understood that this bullying may be face to face or online. Online bullying is taken as seriously as any other form of bullying and our procedures apply to all forms of bullying. Detailed information about the definition of and responses to online bullying are provided in the Dumfries and Galloway 'Respect for All: Anti-Bullying Guidelines' (2018). Prevention of online bullying is encouraged through regular talks from our Community Police Officers to P4-P7 classes, online safety campaigns and online safety learning experiences within the curriculum.

It is our policy that mobile phones are not used by pupils on school premises within the Primary School. Whilst we understand the important reasons that pupils may bring a phone to school, there is an expectation that it is put into a secure class phone storage box on entry to the classroom. This is to help to ensure that pupils do not experience bullying using phones or social media on school premises.

In the Primary School, the majority of online bullying incidents may be occurring on messaging apps and through voice or video calls in their leisure time. Spending time on mobile phones and online can come with risks. While the internet and mobile phone apps provide many positive tools for communication and learning, they also provide an opportunity for upsetting incidents and bullying to occur.

Although many online incidents may happen outside of school, children may come into school upset about incidents that have taken place and may carry this concern into their playground and class interactions. Incidents will be investigated according to our anti-bullying procedures as detailed in this policy. It can be difficult to fully investigate some incidents occurring on phones or online and we appreciate the support and cooperation of all parents and carers in monitoring their child's activity online or on their phone.

If your child does raise a concern, it is important to take a calm approach, take their concerns seriously and consult them about what they would like to happen next. In some circumstances in which the incidents occur on phones outside of school, parents may also wish to seek advice from the Community Police Officers.

When is it not bullying behaviour?

There is a distinction between bullying and conflicts in relationships and friendships. As children grow and learn, it is natural for there to be 'fall outs' or 'upsets' in their peer relationships and friendships. Such experiences can of course be upsetting for children and families; however, these do not necessarily constitute bullying. Therefore, the context of every situation needs to be examined closely to understand the nature of a reported concern and whether it is a possible bullying incident. In our consultation, parents at our school agreed that it was important to distinguish between developing resilience in relationships and dealing with conflict which are a normal part of growing up and bullying which should not be a normal part of growing up.

Dumfries and Galloway's 'Respect for All: Anti-Bullying Guidelines' (2018, p6) states: "Children will tease, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and have disagreements. This is a normal part of growing up and should be distinguished from bullying. However, in an environment where this behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying, making those being bullied feel afraid, uncomfortable and unsafe in their environment."

An important focus in preventing bullying at Wallace Hall Primary School is maintaining a culture of positive and respectful relationships between peers and ensuring that children understand the expectations of relationships within school. Early intervention in conflicts in relationships and helping children to resolve these is an important part of this prevention.

At Wallace Hall, all children and adults have rights and responsibilities:		
<p>I have a right to feel <b>Safe</b> (Article 3 &amp; 6)</p> <p><i>I have a responsibility to keep myself and others safe. My actions need to respect the safety of others.</i></p>	Citizenship	
<p>I have a right to be <b>Listened to</b>. (Article 12 &amp; 13)</p> <p><i>I have a responsibility to listen respectfully. My actions need to respect the viewpoints of others.</i></p>	Communication Compassion Collaboration	
<p>I have a right to <b>Learn</b> or do my job. (Article 28 &amp; 29)</p> <p><i>I have a responsibility to be ready for my tasks. My actions need to respect the rights of others to learn.</i></p>	Curiosity Creativity Critical Thinking	
<p>I have a right to be treated in a way that <b>Respects my rights</b> and is <b>Kind</b>. (Article 2, 13, 14 and 29)</p> <p><i>I have a responsibility to respect the rights of others and not to act in a way that harms or upsets others. I have a responsibility to act in a way that is fair towards others.</i></p>	Compassion	

Spotting the signs:

It is everyone's responsibility to promote the positive health and wellbeing of all children and to respond to changes in behaviour or children that appear withdrawn, unsettled or unhappy. Dumfries and Galloway's 'Respect for All: Anti-Bullying Guidelines' (2018, p7) outlines the signs that everyone should be aware of which may indicate that bullying is happening. Many children who experience bullying do not tell anyone and therefore it is very important that adults are aware of possible signs that they should investigate. This could include:



This list is not exhaustive and these behaviours could indicate other problems; however, bullying should be considered as a possibility.

We understand that it is important that staff are well-trained in identifying and responding to bullying. All staff in school should have the opportunity to be involved in continuing professional learning opportunities as part of school development or Inset activities as part of the calendar and should be built into the three-yearly cycle. Staff will also be signposted to additional training, e.g. online *Respectme* videos and guides, that may be helpful to participate in as part of their own continuing professional development.

#### Developing a school ethos that makes it hard for bullying to thrive:

When consulting with pupils about the policy, children talked about the importance of the name of the policy being wider than anti-bullying and they wanted to place on emphasis on developing a respectful, kind and responsive school ethos. At Wallace Hall Primary School, we seek to ensure fairness, respect, equality and inclusion in our day to day practice and this reflects the principles of GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) in which the health and wellbeing of the children in the school is at the heart of what we do. A robust anti-bullying approach and climate that does not tolerate bullying behaviour is important in creating an environment that promotes wellbeing. We learned from our consultation with staff that it is important that there are meaningful rewards for positive, respectful and kind behaviour and that consequences for bullying act to deter this behaviour.

An open climate is encouraged at Wallace Hall Primary School. Children are actively encouraged to report concerns arising in relationships and bullying concerns or incidents. Where pupils find this difficult to report, a range of strategies to approach this are discussed with children, e.g. a non-verbal or verbal signal that a member of staff and the child have agreed, worry boxes in class, peer buddies etc.

Children are encouraged to use the three steps if they are experiencing a problem with another child. This is regularly reinforced in class and in assemblies.

- Tell them to stop
- Tell them to stop and tell them that you will get an adult
- Tell them to stop and get an adult

Bullying often takes place in groups. Children are encouraged to remember that bystanders can help children experiencing bullying behaviour and can help prevent bullying behaviour. Children observing a peer experiencing conflict or bullying are encouraged to report it to a member of staff. Children sometimes are concerned about 'telling'

on a situation to an adult; however, all members of the school community need to take responsibility to ensure that children feel confident to speak out without fear or upset.

Children may sometimes not feel comfortable to talk about a concern at school but may share this at home. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to share any concern that they have about behaviour of others that is having a negative impact on their child with staff at as early a stage as possible. We operate an open climate in responding to these concerns. Where concerns are raised, they will be treated seriously and investigated by an appropriate member of staff.

#### School curriculum and awareness raising activities:

An important aspect of preventing bullying is ensuring that curriculum activities raise awareness of bullying and also teach children strategies to use as part of normal conflict within relationships as well as how to respond if bullying occurs. Parents and children that we spoke to during our consultation told us that they feel that their children are knowledgeable about bullying themes and have good opportunities to learn about bullying. The activities that take place across the school are outlined in the useful information document within this suite of anti-bullying resources.

#### Responding to incidents or concerns that bullying may be taking place:

Feedback from parents has indicated that they feel intervention should take place as soon as there is a concern and that monitoring timescales should not be unnecessarily long. Parents are keen to be involved sooner if there is a concern so that they can be involved in and informed of a timely response to bullying or perceived bullying concerns.

At Wallace Hall Primary School, we will not use the labels 'bullies' or 'victims' as this can be unhelpful in helping children to recover from and change behaviour. Instead, we will label a behaviour as 'bullying behaviour' or 'bullying in nature'. All children need to understand why bullying behaviour is wrong in order that they can change it. Any bullying behaviour must be challenged but all those involved should be treated with respect in a solution-focused manner. By labelling the behaviour rather than the child, children can be helped to understand a behaviour that was unacceptable and as such move to change this behaviour. In our consultation with staff, they felt it was important that issues were dealt with sensitively and appropriately with support provided to all children involved, whether displaying or experiencing bullying behaviours.

Whenever an incident that is either bullying or suspected bullying is observed or a concern is reported from pupils, parents or staff, an investigation by an appropriate member of staff will always take place. Depending on the nature of the concern, this may be undertaken by the Class Teacher or a member of the Senior Management Team.

In responding to incidents or a concern that bullying may be taking place, the national 'Respect for All' policy (2018, p27) states that it is important to ask:

- What is the behaviour?
- What impact did it have?
- What does the child or young person want to happen?
- What do I need to do about it?
- What attitudes, prejudices or other factors have influenced the behaviour?

It is also important to determine the support needed for the child who has potentially exhibited or exhibited bullying behaviour. According to the national 'Respect for All' policy (2018, p27), it is necessary to:

- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people
- Repair relationships

As Wallace Hall Primary School, we use the Emotion Works programme to support children to develop their language and understanding of emotions and behaviours. As part of a discussion with children that have experienced or displayed bullying behaviour, the Emotion Works cogs and approaches may be used to support a constructive discussion.



Meeting needs arising from experiencing or displaying bullying behaviours:

For the children experiencing or displaying bullying behaviours, this may present an additional support for learning or wellbeing need. Children have the right to expect appropriate support from adults to help to meet these needs and to enable them to reach their full potential.

Identifying and responding to potential bullying incidents:

There may be occasions where a child attempts to bully but there is no effect or impact from this behaviour on the person. In this case, the person has not been bullied but it is important that the behaviour is challenged and recorded.

Consultation with pupils and parents as part of our policy review highlighted the value placed on ensuring children have full participation, agency and empowerment within this policy and in the practical procedures that take place to respond to bullying. It is important for our school community that children have a voice and feel included in the process. As stated in the national 'Respect for All' policy (2018 p15), it is important to acknowledge at this point that there is not a 'one size fits all' response. Ensuring that children feel they have options and considering the most appropriate response to a bullying concern is important in moving forward. Adults can help children to make informed choices about how to respond to bullying and this will help to restore their sense of agency, develop their resilience and establish strategies they can use in future relationships. Where there are 'hotspot' areas for bullying concerns, supervision will be increased in these areas, e.g. specific times of the day, playground areas, etc.

Positive Relationships and Behaviour Approaches:

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour and this behaviour is not tolerated at Wallace Hall Primary School. It is important that we help children who have displayed this behaviour to understand the clear expectations that we have for behaviour at Wallace Hall. Our positive relationships and behaviour school overview outlines a staged approach to responding to behavioural incidents. Where behaviour in the context of relationships has been wrong or if bullying behaviour is determined to have taken place, an appropriate consequence for this behaviour will be discussed with the child. Where possible, a consequence should also help to make amends, e.g. creating a card or undertaking a helpful action for another person. The consequence needs to be proportionate to the seriousness of the incident or concern and within the context of each individual situation.

Every bullying incident needs to be looked at individually. It is also understood that the needs of some pupils may make them more vulnerable to behaving in a way that may be perceived by others as bullying or may have the impact of bullying on others. Some children may be unaware that their behaviour is bullying. Whilst an intent to bully may not be present in these circumstances, the impact on the person being bullied is still present and it must be explained to the person displaying bullying behaviour that this is unacceptable and why.

### Recording potential bullying incidents:

We use our local authority's SEEMIS system to record bullying and equalities incidents. Where an incident is not deemed to be a bullying or equalities incident but there is a need to record the behaviour, a pastoral note will be created on the SEEMIS system.

From our consultation with parents/carers, we learned that parents would like to be informed at an early stage if there is a concern that a conflict in a relationship is not resolving or if bullying behaviour is suspected. Parents told us that they would want to be informed if it was at a stage that it was being recorded centrally on our systems. Where an incident is either bullying or potentially bullying or is a prejudice-based bullying incident, it will be recorded on the SEEMIS bullying and equalities module by a member of the Senior Management Team. Part of this process involves informing both the parents of the child who has experienced bullying and the child who has potentially or allegedly displayed bullying behaviour. It will be recorded on this system whether the alleged incident is confirmed or undetermined following investigation.

If there is a concern that bullying may be taking place, whether that concern is reported by a child, parent or member of staff, it is helpful to have a key adult that all incidents are reported to and notes kept by this adult. This can help to ensure that information is not lost and that the full picture can be analysed. This person may be the Class Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, depending on the nature and seriousness of the issue. All relevant staff in the school, e.g. support staff that have contact with that group of children, playground staff and other teachers that work with that group should be informed that monitoring is taking place. Keeping a log of incidents and reported concerns will often form part of a plan if a bullying concern is raised. This is in addition to, and does not replace, recording of identified bullying and equalities incidents on SEEMIS.

## **Policy Information**

### Reviewing the policy:

This policy was created following self-evaluation of our current procedures and an assessment of our current approaches to preventing bullying and responding to bullying concerns over 2020/21. In 2021, A series of online blethers were held with parents around several themes and this coincided with focus questions on the same themes which were discussed with pupils. Staff consultation took place using a notice board ideas approach.

Following the creation of the draft policy, a questionnaire with staff and pupils was then used to gain feedback on the policy. A focus group met to discuss the policy and make amendments. This process was concluded in (date, 2021).

The anti-bullying policy and procedures, and their effectiveness, will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and as a minimum, every three years. This will involve consultation with staff, parents/carers and children. The Dumfries and Galloway Self Evaluation Tool contained within the local 'Respect for All Anti-Bullying Guidelines' (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2018) has been used in the creation of this policy and will be used to keep it under review. The review of the anti-bullying policy will be factored into the three-yearly school improvement and self-evaluation cycles.

A child-friendly version of this policy should be created to share with children and for display in prominent areas in the school.

### Concerns:

If you have a concern about how a potential bullying situation has been handled or responded to, please raise this in the first instance with the Depute Head Teacher or Head Teacher.