

Invergordon Academy

Safe

Healthy

Included

Achieving

Responsible

Nurtured

Respected

Active



Positive Ethos, Obvious Pupil-centred Learning Environment

Tackling Bullying
Together

1. Introduction

The emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people is at the heart of achieving the outcomes that our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. This involves building the four capacities of becoming:

successful learners confident individuals effective contributors responsible citizens

The eight indicators of wellbeing in children and young people are that they are **safe, healthy achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included**.

Bullying behaviour has a negative impact on all those indicators for both the child participating in bullying behaviour and those experiencing it.

Research and practice experience over time have led to an emerging understanding of bullying as a complex behaviour. Bullying can be understood as behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated.

The Policy includes specific reference to equality and discrimination based bullying, including hate crime and cyber bullying.

Staff, pupils and parents all have duties in relation to bullying, indicated in:

- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Curriculum for Excellence Health & Wellbeing Framework
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Young People Act 2014
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Standards in Scotland's Schools (Scotland) Act 2000
- Corporate Parenting Policy (Highland Council 2007)
- Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use Of Mobile Technology In Schools (Scottish Government 2013)

2. Aims

Invergordon Academy's policy on bullying aims to:

- create and maintain an ethos throughout the school **and it's community** where bullying is recognised as unacceptable
- encourage and support pupils to tell someone about bullying
- promote and reinforce the idea that there are no innocent bystanders for everyone has responsibilities: pupils, parents, staff and others
- provide clear and unambiguous information to parents/carers
- ensure that incidents of bullying are dealt with timeously
- ensure that incidents of bullying are recorded and monitored
- support victims of bullying to increase their self-confidence and well-being
- support and encourage the bully to see the situation from the victim's point of view and in so doing improve their well-being too
- Use restorative practice to seek reconciliation between the two parties

3. Definition of bullying at Invergordon Academy

The definition of bullying at Invergordon Academy is:

“a repeated and deliberate attack of a physical, psychological, social, verbal or technological nature by an individual or individuals able to exert control over a victim or victims”

Bullying can occur for no apparent reason or it can be based on prejudices. It can be subtle or it can be overt. It can cause short-term suffering for the pupil who experiences bullying behaviour or it can have long-term effects.

“Bullying behaviours are always damaging and must always be taken seriously”

One-off incidents are not deemed to be bullying but nonetheless require to be dealt with sensitively and effectively.

Bullying does also not include children falling out or having differences of opinion. We accept, however, that one off incidents can be equally harmful in terms of impact.

Bullying can take many forms. It can include physical aggression, intimidation, threatening, extorting, pressurising, name-calling or teasing. Less obvious behaviours, such as ignoring or excluding someone, are also regarded as bullying and their possible effects should not be disregarded.

Cyber bullying is the term used to define bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through emails, instant messaging and social networking websites such as Facebook. It includes - sent or posted - texts, messages or images which hurt, intimidate or embarrass another person (*respectme, Scotland's Anti-bullying service, 2009*). Cyber bullying is not carried out face to face and people often don't know the identity of the person targeting them.

Bullying may be based on prejudice because of difference or perceived difference, on the perceived characteristics of the child or a group to which the child is perceived to belong such as:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Prejudice based bullying, which relates to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act (2010) such as race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and disability may also be classified as a 'hate crime'.

The impact of bullying behaviour may lead to:

- ✓ health issues
- ✓ reduced self confidence
- ✓ poor or non-attendance at school
- ✓ withdrawal from normal activities
- ✓ loneliness
- ✓ anxiety and depression
- ✓ tearfulness
- ✓ humiliation
- ✓ feeling unsafe and fearful
- ✓ changes to behaviour and/or physical appearance
- ✓ aggression
- ✓ demonstrating bullying behaviour towards others
- ✓ eating disorders
- ✓ self-harm and suicidal thoughts

4 Prevention

There are a number of benefits to using preventative and restorative practices including improved:

- safety for young people
- emotional well-being
- relationships
- empathic understanding
- standards of behaviour
- understanding of individual responsibility and shared accountability
- academic performance
- self-esteem and motivation
- attendance
- partnerships, communication and trust among all parties
- social competence for life

The ethos of the school, through its aims, values and vision, is one which promotes individuals to feel supported. Young people (and staff) feel safe, supported and confident to report bullying.

The school has a number of initiatives in place within the curriculum to emphasise a zero tolerance approach to bullying.

The Behaviour Management Policy promotes the use of restorative approaches in dealing with a breakdown in relationships. A restorative approach consists of asking the following key questions:

- What has happened?
- Who has been affected?
- How can we involve everyone who has been affected in finding a way forward?
- How can everyone do things differently in the future?

5 Dealing with bullying

Incidents will be dealt with according to Highland Council policy and guidance.

Reporting

Where a member of staff **witnesses** an incident of bullying they should intervene, reassure the victim and notify SMT or the relevant Support Manager.

Where a member of staff **suspects** that a child is experiencing bullying behaviours they should notify SMT or the relevant Support Manager at the earliest opportunity.

Where a child **reports** that they are being bullied to a member of staff, the member of staff should reassure the child that something will be done and report the incident to SMT or the relevant Support Manager immediately.

Recording

All incidents will be recorded on SEEMiS, regardless of the outcome.

Action and/or Investigate

The decision to share information should be informed by the child or child who has experienced bullying behaviour(s) in an age appropriate way. There are many situations where the child may not want matters shared any further. It is important that information holders and the Named Person consider the views of the child before reaching a decision to share further.

If at any time there is any concern that the child or young person may be at risk of significant harm, it is essential that Child Protection Procedures are followed immediately.

Decide if immediate remedial action can be taken to resolve the situation. If yes implement action and record in child's individual record. If this is not possible consider if a wider investigation is required.

The level of investigation required should be proportionate to the incident – professional judgement should be exercised – but the following questions provide a possible framework for any investigation:

- When the alleged incident was first reported? Who reported it and to whom?
- What happened?
- Are there any witnesses and how do they perceive the alleged incident?
- Who was/is involved?
- Ages of pupil(s) alleged to display bullying behaviour and those experiencing it?
- Where/when did/does it take place?
- Has the pupil who is experiencing the distress been subjected to repeated incidents of unacceptable behaviour? If 'yes' over what time period has the behaviour been occurring?

- Is there evidence that the behaviour is planned/pre-meditated?
- Does the incident(s) indicate that bullying was taking place?
- Is it prejudice-based bullying?
- If not prejudice based, what is the nature of the difficulty?
- Is there a trigger or background to the difficulty?
- What is required to try to resolve the difficulty now and in the future?

Involving parents/carers

It is usually normal to involve parents when dealing with incidences of bullying. Parents should be spoken to before any letters etc. are sent out. Where a decision has been taken not to notify parents - e.g. at the request of the child or when Child Protection procedures demand this - a note should be made of the reason(s) why. A record of any communications with parents should be maintained on the pupil's pastoral log.

Involving other agencies

Decide if liaison with other agencies is required in order to meet the needs of the child/people.

Action

Implement agreed action(s) ensuring that they will not make the situation worse. Record details in SEEMiS.

Wider School Interventions

Consider what could be done at whole-school level to ensure that there is not a recurrence of the behaviour(s).

Further Action

The Area Education Manager will be consulted where the issue cannot be resolved or where parents exercise their right to take further a complaint or incident.

Police must be notified where it is thought that a crime has taken place.

Pupils involved in bullying behaviours may be excluded from school.

Appendix 1

Cyberbullying

Seven categories of cyberbullying have been identified:

- **Text message bullying** involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort
- **Picture/video-clip bullying** via mobile phone cameras is used to make the person experiencing the bullying behaviour feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. “Happy slapping” involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
- **Phone call bullying** via mobile phones uses silent or abusive messages. Sometimes the phone of the person experiencing the bullying is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, those displaying bullying behaviour often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else’s phone to avoid being identified.
- **Email bullying** uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else’s name to pin the blame on them.
- **Chat room bullying** involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
- **Bullying through instant messaging (IM)** is an internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
- **Bullying via websites** includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. Social networking sites for young people, such as Facebook, also provide opportunities for cyberbullying. Witnesses should be encouraged to report website bullying.

Appendix 2 Legislation

LEGISLATION

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) consolidates and harmonises a range of equality legislation, replacing familiar laws such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, The Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Equality Act provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on a range of “protected characteristics.” These characteristics are defined in the Act as:

- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

**Age and marriage and civil partnership are not protected characteristics for the schools provision. However, in general, the Act applies across all the protected characteristics in a consistent way.*

In addition to the *Protected Characteristics* covered by the Act, there is an expectation that other groups will be considered, for example:

- Looked after children;
- Young carers;
- Children and young people living in deprivation;
- Body image issues.

The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was ratified by the UK in 1991. It aims to recognise the rights of all children up to age 18 and ensure that children grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Bill was agreed in February 2014. It introduces new duties for Ministers and public sector to promote children's rights.

Under the UNCRC, all children and young people have the right not to be discriminated against or treated unfairly; to be treated in their best interests and to have their rights respected, protected and fulfilled. Children and young people have the right to say what they think and have their opinions taken into account; to get and share information; and to think and believe what they want, as long as this is not damaging to others. Children and young people have a right to meet together and join groups as long as they do not stop others, respect their rights, freedoms and reputations. They should have a right to privacy and protection from attacks against their way of life, good name, families and homes; and they have the right to be protected from being hurt, mistreated, physically and mentally. Children and young people have a right to an education which encourages children to respect others; human rights; and, their own and other cultures.

For pupils over the age of 16 The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 may be relevant. It aims to protect 'Adults at risk'. This might include people over 16 who: find it difficult to keep themselves or their property safe; might be harmed by other people; might be more vulnerable because of a disability, illness or mental disorder (this could include young people with mental health problems, physical or learning disabilities).

Appendix 3

Prejudice Based Bullying and Protected Characteristics (PC) under the Equality Act 2010

Age (PC)

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability (PC)

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Pupils with Additional Support Needs may be at greater risk of being bullied. Their Additional Support Need may involve obvious physical differences from other pupils, difficulties in understanding and contributing to social interactions, delay in or reduced academic progress, all of which may be used as a basis for bullying behaviour by other young people they encounter.

Some pupils with Additional Support Needs may not be able to communicate experiences as well as other children.

There is also increasing evidence that more able children may be targeted because of their levels of achievement and/ or their involvement in out-of-school initiatives.

Race (PC)

Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are protected under this category.

Racist bullying can range from name calling and verbal taunts to physical attacks and involves the aggressive targeting of an individual/ individuals on the grounds of their perceived racial culture and national or religious identity. Not only is this behaviour unacceptable within a school context is also unlawful.

Religion and belief (PC)

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sectarianism is distinct from prejudice between different religions. This should be recognised in all relevant policies in relation to equality and diversity. A denomination or 'sect' is a division or grouping within a faith, for example, Protestants and Catholics within Christianity, Sunni and Shia within Islam, and Orthodox and Reform within Judaism. Denominations within one faith share the same basic (fundamental) elements of the faith but they have differing practices or differing interpretations of specific elements of the faith.

Some children are brought up with the example that sectarian attitudes are acceptable; however, open discussion about sectarian language and symbols can help to challenge many of the historical and cultural myths which encourage sectarian attitudes and behaviour. Such attitudes and behaviours must be constantly challenged. Listening to their children and young people's experiences and highlighting potential consequences can encourage a positive change in behaviour.

Sex (PC)

Being a man or a woman or a boy or a girl. Gender bullying is widespread and impacts on both females and males. The proliferation of particular gender stereotypes and the experiences some children have of relationships between adults of both genders, including those that might be abusive, can contribute to gender bullying. Behaviour associated specifically with gender bullying may also include:

- ❑ abusive name calling
- ❑ use of sexual innuendo and unwanted propositioning
- ❑ graffiti with sexual content
- ❑ spreading rumours questioning sexual reputation

Sexual orientation (PC)

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. Homophobic bullying targets a victim on account of his/her actual/perceived sexual orientation. Children and young people may also be the victims of bullying behaviours as a result of their parent's or carer's perceived or actual sexual orientation.

Homophobic bullying may involve physical, non-physical, direct and indirect bullying behaviours. Unwitting behaviours also contribute to a climate in which homophobic bullying occurs. Homophobic bullying may also include the regular use of consciously offensive and discriminatory language e.g. calling someone 'gay', spreading rumours that cause an individual's perceived sexual orientation to be ridiculed, questioned or insulted.

Gender reassignment (PC)

Is the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Body Image

Bullying on the grounds of body image is becoming more prevalent. Children and young people who have a condition, injury or illness that makes them look 'different' can be especially vulnerable to appearance-related remarks and bullying behaviour.

Presentation of issues about body image in the mass media exacerbates to this problem. A child or young person who is noticeably over or underweight may find themselves particularly vulnerable to bullying behaviour which can take a variety of forms including name-calling, mimicry of eating habits or perceived eating habits, demeanour or physical agility, nasty comments about clothes and general appearance and/or covert photos being taken when changing for PE. Children and young people can develop poor eating habits and eating disorders as a result.

Looked After Children

Looked after and accommodated children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying behaviour. In many cases there will not be a stable support network to help them deal with the problem. School staff have a major part to play in ensuring that children in care are healthy, happy, safe and successful.

Looked after and accommodated children and young people may have very similar experiences of bullying behaviour to other young people, but often the bullying behaviour will focus directly on the fact that they are looked after, as well as another number of reasons:

- regular changes in schools where they are placed which can make forming friendships difficult
- poor relationships skills stemming from attachment difficulties
- inappropriate reactions to situations as a result of learned behaviours
- a reluctance to make friends
- low self-esteem
- lack of role models
- a heightened sense of privacy.

Like anyone who is seen as 'different' at school, children and young people who are looked after and accommodated may receive unwelcome attention stemming from their circumstances. Sometimes the behaviour of other pupils is the result of curiosity expressed inappropriately. On other occasions these situations can become more unpleasant, and could develop into bullying behaviour. Children who are looked after away from their home authority but continuing to attend school in their home authority may not be able to access after school clubs and social events easily and this could result in further isolation.

Children and young people react differently in these situations, depending on how they feel at the time, or what personal resources or skills they have to draw on. They might ignore taunts, or else stand up to people, or they might get angry and lash out. Some children and young people describe experiences of reacting physically to bullying behaviour, as a result of frustration at lack of support in the school, and finding the situation has escalated to such an extent that it leads to exclusion or truanting.

Children and young people who are looked after may be reluctant to tell anyone they are experiencing bullying behaviour for a number of reasons. They may not trust adults or may have a distrust of authority. Previous experience may make them feel that they will not be believed or that no action will be taken. They could be concerned that they will be seen as the perpetrator. As with other forms of bullying behaviour, children and young people may be exhibiting behaviour which they feel is indicating that they are being bullied but the adults around them may not pick up on this. Changes in behaviour may be put down to stress about reviews or other events in the life of a looked after and accommodated child or young person. They may not wish to highlight their looked after situation or 'rock the boat' especially at the start of a new placement or during a successful placement. Their previous life experience may have given them a heightened sense of self-reliance and independence so that they do not ask for help.

Social and Economic Status

Bullying due to social and economic status can take place in any group no matter how homogeneous. Even small differences in perceived class/family income/ family living arrangements/social circumstances or values can be seized upon by some young people and used as a basis for bullying behaviours, Including: 37

- Name calling (of pupil or family members)
- Rumour spreading
- Graffiti regarding pupil or family members
- Shunning
- References to lack of or over attention to personal hygiene (real or imagined)
- Mockery of speech patterns /belongings/clothes/ felt to reflect differing social economic status.

Such behaviours can be low key and insidious and become widespread through those considering themselves to be in the dominant social economic group or class. It is important to remember that this form of bullying can equally be of a pupil from a social economic group perceived as higher earning / believing it socially superior to the majority.