



St Helen's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy & 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.

Rationale

These Anti-Bullying Guidelines provide guidance to pupils, staff, parents and carers of St Helen’s Primary 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 St Helen’s Primary’s Guidelines are to:

- Encourage happy, confident, assertive and resilient pupils who can learn in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.
- Prevent bullying behaviours by promoting a positive ethos where young people treat others with respect and consideration.
- Provide pupils, parents and carers and staff with a clear understanding of what bullying behaviour is and the action which will be taken when it is witnessed or reported.
- Support children, young people and their parents and carers who are affected by bullying.
- Provide support for pupils who are accused of displaying bullying behaviours, who may be experiencing problems of their own.

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.

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.

St Helen’s Primary 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.

Bullying behaviours can include:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse – name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.
- Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or groups in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, video and e-mail.
- Racist comments
- Sexist comments
- Sectarianism
- Homophobic name calling
- Sexualised Comments
- Making fun of someone’s appearance – height, weight, clothing etc
- Complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone.

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. **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. As Adults-Parents, teachers and other adults- we need to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion and responsibility.

Prevention of Bullying

St Helen’s will work to create a supportive and positive ethos reflecting the Gospel values. We aim to develop a culture of mutual respect where opinions are valued and the differences are celebrated. Through this we aim to develop a culture where bullying behaviour is not accepted or tolerated. St Helen’s will use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through:

- Regular school assemblies
- Display of school values and aims in every classroom.
- Implementation of our Values Board throughout the school in line with our Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy and practice
- H&W programme – promoting positive, prosocial behaviours and highlighting consequences of negative behaviours.
- Health & Wellbeing programmes-PATHS, Bounceback and RERC-This is our Faith, God’s Loving Plan.
- Drama activities which enable children to role-play scenarios.

- Pupil voice - ensuring pupils contribute to the formation of school/class rules and policies through participation in Committees.
- Creating an ethos of mutual respect by acknowledging and promoting respectful relationships and behaviour.
- Pupil Council meetings.
- Worry box - where pupils can express their concerns confidentially if they feel they cannot talk about the problem.
- External agencies and groups e.g. Police to discuss internet safety, theatre groups.

Action

The member of staff to whom the incident is first reported, or who has witnessed the incident, 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 appropriate member of the School Leadership Team should be notified.

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 in an impartial and non-judgmental way.
- The member of staff should confirm that bullying is never acceptable; they deserve to feel safe.
- The allegations should be thoroughly investigated
- The member of staff should inform parents of the incident and take appropriate action, if it is judged to be appropriate
- The child or young person should be reassured and supported to help rebuild their self esteem.

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

Examples of good practice include:

- The child or young person is listened to.
- They should be encouraged to talk and the incident should be fully investigated
- Time should be taken to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour.
- The individual or group should not be labelled as 'bullies', but should know that their behaviour has been unacceptable.
- Addressing what is happening behind the behaviour – what is the cause.
- Continue to monitor behaviour

Consideration should be given to the consequences 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 with relevant pupils.
- Solution orientated approaches.
- Sanctions within the school.
- Involvement of Educational Psychologists or Campus Police.

Sanctions suggested through whole school pupil consultation include:

- A warning and advice on how to change their behaviour.
- Time out from playground/breaks to be spent inside.
- A reflective task to be completed at home.
- Write a letter of apology, if appropriate.
- A task that will benefit the school, such as buddying, play leading, litter picking.

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.

St Helen’s 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.

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 St Helen’s Primary we will:

- Highlight bullying behaviours with pupils. (*assemblies, class based activities, poster competitions and visits from theatre groups*)
- Establish an ethos of mutual respect and promote positive relationships and behaviour through our Catholic values, RERC curriculum and the use of PATHs mental and emotional health programme throughout the school.
- Encourage the effective communication of any bullying incidents from pupils, parents and staff. (*worry boxes placed in classes and in areas that are accessible to pupils on a daily basis [e.g. outside toilets, not offices and checked on a regular basis]*)
- Confirm that we will deal with bullying behaviour quickly and seriously.

Existing School Committees, such as Pupil Council, Health Promotion and Justice and Peace, will work in conjunction with school staff to:

- Lead school assemblies
- Create leaflets, posters and display information on school notice board.
- Contribute to staff in-service programmes.
- Implement Anti Bullying Initiatives e.g. National anti-bullying week.
- Raise awareness through the wider curriculum.

- Regularly update policy.
- Raise awareness through the school website/twitter.
- Provide a nurturing and supportive group for pupils who have experienced bullying behaviours and support those who have displayed bullying behaviours- where appropriate.

It is essential that everyone takes responsibility in creating a safe and supportive environment within St Helen's Primary and we aim to achieve this by:

- Encouraging pupils and staff to take action if they see bullying behaviours.
- Through our H&W programmes.
- Effective playground supervision.
- Promoting inclusive games in the playground
- Providing worry boxes – where pupils can express their concerns confidentially if they feel they cannot talk about the problem.
- Ensuring that pupils are aware of the actions which will be taken to address bullying behaviour.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

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!

Steps you can take include:

- Report any incident to a member of staff, class teacher or member of SLT
- Tell a friend, parent or family member who can report it.
- Use the worry box, Bubble Time

What will we do when you tell us?

Steps we will take will include:

- Listen and reassure you that the problem will be addressed
- Investigate fully by talking to all parties involved
- Take appropriate course of action in a timely fashion.
- Review outcome of action

We will encourage mediation which will involve:

- Discussing what happened using restorative practices where appropriate.
- Encourage dialogue and empower participants to take ownership of problems
- Establishing any wrong doing and the need to change
- Facilitating a resolution for moving forward.
- Engaging with parents or guardians to support their child and help change the attitude and behaviour of their child

Recording and Monitoring

Accurate recording of incidents of bullying using the SEEMIS electronic system allows St Helen's Primary to ensure that appropriate response and follow-up has been carried out, in line with the local authority's equality duty to monitor incidents of bullying. It also helps St Helen's Primary to monitor the effectiveness of its guidelines and practice and identify any need for training.

Review of Guidelines

Anti-bullying guidelines will be reviewed during session 2023-24