

Bearsden Academy

**Anti Bullying Policy**

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| **Version control** | |
| **1/3/2023** | **Initial draft completed** |
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**Rationale**

This document replaces Bearsden Academy’s previous Anti-Bullying policy and replaces the guidance from East Dunbartonshire Council’s Procedure Manual 3/34: Education Service Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance (2015). It takes into account national guidance Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People (2017). East Dunbartonshire Council wholly subscribes to the Scottish Government’s national approach to anti- bullying for Scotland’s children and young people.

‘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.

**Bearsden Academy’s Vision and Values**

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Bearsden Academy's vision of learning is to have our pupils at the centre. Despite many changes to how we learn in the last few years, this will always be our priority. Our school community supports high achievement and superb opportunities for our pupils and through this, we have a strong and powerful platform for learning for our learners.

Our values (above) reflect what we feel is important, as a community. Using these values, the following report gives you some insight into what we do to live up to those values every day.

**Policy Overview**

* Policy aims
* Defining bullying
* Response to bullying:
* Highlighting the effective work within our school to provide a preventative, positive ethos
* Additional Information

**Policy Aims**

Bullying behaviour is never acceptable in our school community. Bullying behaviour is not, and should never be, an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up.

The success of any anti-bullying policy requires a clear response for schools and guidance on how to prevent, respond to and reduce bullying behaviours. Current research has shown that bullying is a likely cause of stress for children and young people and has a direct correlation with poor mental health.

Learning only takes places in a nurturing environment, and as a Rights Respecting School, we are focused on the rights of each individual in our school, focused on the United Nations Conventions or Rights of the Child, the UNCRC, most notably Articles 3,12,13,19,28,29 and 39. More information on the UNCRC can be found at the Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland website <http://www.cypcs.org.uk/> . Further information on the legal framework around this is included in Appendix A.

**Defining Bullying**

The following definition is in line with EDC and the Scottish Government’s understanding of

what constitutes 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 does not need to follow a pattern – rather we must consider the impact on individuals of any bullying incident. All parties involved in a bullying incident must be supported – including the perpetrator – to ensure that the school community benefits from changed behaviour and reassurance for those who suffer bullying.

These behaviours can take place in schools, children's services, residential services, at home and in the community, at youth groups and out of school care and can come from children, young people and adults.

Significantly, although online bullying has become much more prevalent in recent years and is taken as seriously as any other form of bullying, face to face bullying is still the most common. Online bullying 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.](http://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

With this in mind, vulnerable children and young people may be particularly at risk of experiencing bullying. Descriptions of prejudice-based bullying are included in Appendix B.

Bullying behaviours include:

* verbal abuse, including name calling and use of prejudiced language
* Intimidating and threatening others verbally or physically
* Any form of physical violence
* Taking or damaging others’ property
* Spreading rumours
* Isolating young people from their peers
* Sending abusive communications including social media
* Creating fear that young people will be targeted by bullies
* Influencing peers to target others

Any action that could impact on the wellbeing of others may constitute bullying – it is important that our school community consider wellbeing first in all that we do to support a positive ethos.

It is also important to consider that, as young people learn to interact socially, they can make errors of judgement, and say or do things that are not intended to cause hurt. With guidance from families, teachers, peers and the rest of our school community, is it possible to avoid these behaviours turning into bullying behaviour. A supportive and positive ethos can help reduce and prevent bullying.

**Responding to Bullying**

The issue of bullying is one that concerns all members of the school community. Staff, students and parents and carers should all be familiar with the following expectations and responsibilities regarding responding to bullying and should consider their response within the context of the UNCRC’s ‘Four General Principles’. They should consider and be mindful of what is in the student’s best interest, listening to their views and adopting an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach.

**Everyone in our school community**

* Model the school values – these allow us to act in a preventative and supportive way towards each other.
* Be part of the positive environment of the school.

**Students**

* If you see bullying, act on it – do not wait. Help to stop bullying for others.
* Report incidents to a teacher, parents or carers. They can always help.
* Support and encourage others to act appropriately in response to bullying.
* Do not judge or isolate any parties involved in bullying. Show understanding and compassion for their situation.
* We are a Rights Respecting School. You have the right to pursue your ambitions in an environment where you feel safe, valued and respected.

**Staff**

* Be aware of East Dunbartonshire’s Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance for Education Establishments
* Be aware that the teaching environment is crucial to success and that students have a right to access education in a supportive environment.
* Staff must take all reports of bullying seriously and action a response in the relevant way.
* Refer to relevant Guidance teacher(s) or Year Group Head via SEEMIS or email.
* Guidance teachers will work with students involved and their families to achieve restoration and prevent further related incidents. See Appendix C - Examples of Good Practice
* All incidents of bullying, and the subsequent actions taken, will be logged by Guidance teachers and/or Year Group Heads in Pastoral Notes/SEEMIS Bullying Application (see Appendix D).

**Parents and Carers**

* Make sure your child shares as much as they can with you about any incident and try to establish facts – bearing in mind that there may be other parts to the story.
* Contact your child’s Guidance teacher or Year Group Head.
* Work to support your child, taking in advice and messages from all involved in the school community – working together allows us to prevent this happening in future.
* Be aware of your child’s use of social media. If you have concerns that your child may be experiencing cyber-bullying speak to them about it and contact your child’s Guidance teacher if you feel that support from school would help address your concerns.

**Highlighting the effective work within our school to provide a preventative, positive ethos**

Our school uses many opportunities to engage pupils in positive experiences to create an ethos of inclusivity and support. We plan each year focusing on our school values, and use this to ensure that we take a wellbeing-first approach to pupil welfare. This in turn supports a preventative approach to bullying.

Our school offers a variety of supports for wellbeing, including counselling, wellbeing support via the Principal Teachers of Guidance, use of our Wellbeing area of the school, group workshops to develop approaches to combatting anxiety, a focus on nurture in the classroom and in our practice, and many other areas of our work.

We use S6 and S1 buddies to build relationships across the schools, as well as a comprehensive Ambassador programme which allows learners to contribute to the learning of younger pupils across the curriculum and beyond. This includes wellbeing ambassadors, who offer opportunities to improve wellbeing across the school in social areas and through other interventions.

Year Heads will celebrate positive achievement and the school’s positive ethos every week in school assemblies.

Our Campus Police Officers will often work to have informative discussions with young people to support their wellbeing where there is a risk of a situation leading to bullying, and can help in addressing a bullying incident.

Our PSE programme has a strong focus on anti-bullying, incorporating a long-standing partnership with RespectMe, Scotland’s anti-bullying charity.

Pupils work within many other initiatives to support wellbeing across our school community, from community events organised by the PTA, to taking part in groups such as Rights Respecting Schools, Mentors in Violence Prevention and acting as wellbeing ambassadors.

The school regularly asks pupils, staff and parents about their own wellbeing, as part of an overall focus on wellbeing and a positive climate for learning. Actions are taken based on feedback from our community.

**Additional Information**

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with other school policies which promote positive behaviour and relationships. The EDC anti-bullying policy can be found on our school website and includes additional guidance and references to important legislation. This policy will be reviewed and communicated annually to staff, students and parents and carers.

**Appendix A – Legal framework for the rights of the child**

**Children's Rights and Legal Framework**

The Scottish Government is committed to supporting and promoting children's rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). All children and young people have these rights and should respect the rights of others. The UK has ratified the UNCRC and Scotland participates in reporting every five years on its implementation of the convention, including its action on anti- bullying.

There is also a strong UK and Scottish legal framework which enshrines the welfare of the child as paramount. While taking into consideration the views of the child, the framework secures an adequate and efficient provision of education which is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.

The Health and Wellbeing framework within Curriculum for Excellence complements the duty in the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 for Scottish Ministers and local authorities to endeavour to ensure that all schools are health promoting. The statements of experiences and outcomes in Health and Wellbeing reflect a holistic approach to promoting the health and wellbeing of all children and young people, and are the responsibility of all teachers. Health promoting schools will promote the mental, emotional, social and physical health and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Getting it Right for Every Child (2008) highlights eight wellbeing indicators to ensure that all children and young people are Safe, Happy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

The Equality Act (2010) aims to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. 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 Act provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on a range of 'protected characteristics'. Those characteristics which apply to education establishments are defined in

the Act as race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004, amended 2009) requires local authorities to reduce barriers to learning, which can include bullying behaviour.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is a key part of the Scottish Government's strategy for making Scotland the best place in the world for children to grow up. By facilitating a shift in public services towards the early years of a child's life, and towards early intervention whenever a family or young person needs help, the legislation encourages preventative measures, rather than crises' responses. Underpinned by the Scottish Government's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 ( UNCRC), and the national approach, Getting it Right for Every Child ( GIRFEC), the 2014 Act also establishes a new legal framework within which services are to work together in support of children, young people and families.

Education (Scotland) Act 2016 requires strategic planning to consider socio-economic barriers to learning. It includes provisions which extend the rights of children aged 12 and over with capacity under the Additional Support for Learning Act. Children who are able to can use rights on their own behalf to affect decision making about them.

Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets ambitious income targets for child poverty reduction for 2030.

Consultation on the child poverty bill identified children’s experience of poverty can lead to bullying or feelings of exclusion, as they may have fewer friends and less access to the social activities of their peers.

East Dunbartonshire Council’s Equality and Human Rights Policy (2011-2014) sets out the Council’s commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and human rights for all.

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to ensuring that anti-bullying advice and guidance is fully informed by this legal framework, in particular the ‘protected characteristics’ from the Equality Act. Bullying experiences bring a loss of opportunity for the person (s) to grow and develop and are often linked with prejudice and discrimination.

**Appendix B - Prejudiced-based Bullying**

**Homophobic Bullying**

Homophobic bullying behaviour is mainly directed towards young people who are identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) or young people who are questioning their sexuality. Bullying behaviour can also be directed at young people who are perceived to be different for not conforming to strict gender norms. Ultimately, any young person can experience homophobic bullying behaviour and any young person can display homophobic bullying behaviour if negative attitudes, language and behaviour remain unchecked.

**Racist Bullying**

Racist bullying is a term used to describe prejudicial bullying based on someone's race or ethnicity or someone's perceived race or ethnicity. Children from ethnic minorities are more likely to experience bullying behaviour. The impact of racist bullying can go far beyond the individual person. This bullying behaviour can impact on their family and others perceived to be from the same or similar group. For example, children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller communities frequently report racial bullying behaviour. Racist bullying can take a variety of forms. Verbal abuse includes name calling, offensive mimicry of accent and/or pretending not to understand what is said. Mockery and mimicry may extend to dress, religious observance, diet and country of origin or perceived country of origin.

Non-direct bullying behaviour may include graffiti, vandalism of property, flaunting of racist badges, slogans, leaflets etc.

**Disablist Bullying**

Disablist Bullying is the term used to describe the bullying behaviour of someone based on their physical, mental or learning disabilities or perceived disability. Nearly all children and young people with a learning disability are bullied.

People who display bullying behaviour may see children and young people with disabilities as being less able to defend themselves and less able to tell an adult about the bullying behaviour.

Some children and young people may also experience mockery of their specific disability or disabilities: mockery of their contribution to work or play and refusal by other children to work, play or interact with them.

Low self-esteem often found in children and young people with disabilities can lead them to make friends with people who exploit them, and who, in reality, aren't really ‘friends' at all. This lack of confidence may also mean that they get hurt more easily and are less resilient in relationships with other children. In turn, there is a risk that the outward signs of bullying – a change in behaviour, low mood, dishevelled clothing or bruises - may not be picked up by adults as an indicator of bullying behaviour.

**Bullying and Body Image**

Bullying behaviour on the grounds of body image/size/obesity is one of the most prevalent forms of prejudice-based bullying. Recently, the level of such bullying has been exacerbated by national concerns about rising levels of obesity. The media's constant reinforcement of concerns about body image/size/obesity and the trivialisation of these issues is a key factor related to this problem.

Body image is hugely important to children and young people and bullying because of body image can have a real negative impact. The impacts of bullying behaviour on the grounds of body image can manifest in the development of poor eating habits and eating disorders.

**Bullying and Religion and Belief**

Bullying based on religion is directed against individuals and groups because of their actual or perceived religious belief or their connection with a particular religion or belief. For example, someone may be targeted because of the religion of a friend or family member, or because they are wrongly assumed to belong to a particular faith community, due to their appearance. As well as religious intolerance and bullying behaviour between one faith against another, bullying behaviour can also occur because of differences (or perceived differences) between different denominations or sects within the same faith, e.g. between Catholic and Protestant Christians. Sectarianism and religious intolerance put children and young people at greater risk of bullying directly and indirectly.

**Bullying and Sexism and Gender**

Gender stereotyping based on the notion of acceptable and unacceptable male and female behaviour can leave children and young people who do not conform to these notions vulnerable to indirect and direct bullying. Personality traits that do not fit into the unwritten rules of ‘appropriate' male and female behaviour can make children and young people a target for their perceived difference. For example, boys portraying compassionate and sensitive characteristics and girls who are seen as being assertive and loud can lead to bullying, questioning and targeting of their gender.

**Bullying and Looked after and Accommodated Children and Young People**

Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated (LAAC) by the local authority are vulnerable to bullying behaviour for a number of reasons. This can be due to regular changes in schools or care placements 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 and a heightened sense of the need to preserve privacy.

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. This can take a more serious turn if the child or young person lives in the same house or unit as the person responsible for the bullying behaviour.

The experience of being with the person who is bullying you 24 hours a day would be an extremely stressful one and very difficult to manage.

**Bullying and Young Carers**

The lives of young carers can be significantly affected by their responsibility to care for a family member. Young carers may find themselves being bullied because of the differences or perceived differences in their family circumstances.

**Bullying and Socio-Economic Group**

Several studies have linked socio-economic group and inequality with experiences of bullying and inequality with experiences of bullying. The Department for Children, Schools and Families in the UK released a report that stated that pupils who were among a minority eligible for free school meals in schools could be ‘derided or shunned’, due to being perceived as poor (2010). This was reflected in Green et al’s research showing that pupils in schools with higher proportions of free school meals were less likely to say they had been bullied (2010). This suggests that it is not only the existence of poverty that places individuals at risk of being bullied, but also being in a minority in a system of wider social stratification.

Prejudiced-Based bullying in Scottish Schools: A Research Report, Brandi Lee Lough Dennelll and Caitlin Logan; LGBT Youth Scotland and respectme. 2015

**Appendix C – Good Practice**

When children and young people experience bullying behaviour, they should receive appropriate and timely support.

This can include:

* Accommodation within the school to be able to discuss bullying
* Ensuring pupils are listened to carefully and details are taken
* That all views around the incident are considered
* That the incident is recorded and the situation is monitored over time.

The Senior Leadership Team must consider the appropriate action for young people displaying bullying behaviour. This may involve parents, other pupils and staff members.

Good practice includes:

* Ensuring the young person is listened to and their views heard
* Addressing the behaviour, and focus on resolution
* Interventions to support and prevent this behaviour in future
* Using supports such as small groups, restorative approaches and involvement of partners such as community police and educational psychologists.

The Senior Leadership Team should take any incident that has a detrimental effect on the order of the school or the educational wellbeing of young people seriously, and use sanctions, up to and including exclusion, when necessary.

**Appendix D – Guidance Teams and Senior Leaders**

1. Ensure Year Head and Guidance teacher are involved and informed.
2. Meet to discuss appropriate course of action, and log on the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module (Application - > Management - > Bullying and Equalities -> Maintain Incident )
3. Investigate in line with current paperwork from East Dunbartonshire Council.
4. Inform the parents/carers of the investigation and the timeline for the investigation.
5. Inform all parties of the outcome of the investigationand establish any necessary sanctions.
6. Monitor the interactions between pupils over the session.
7. Record the incident in pastoral notes, and sign off the incident within the bullying module on SEEMIS.

In relation to bullet point 4, an example where it may not be appropriate to inform parents could include a transgender young person. The young person may not have told their family about their gender identity and inadvertent disclosure could cause needless stress for them or put them at risk. Confidentiality and privacy should be respected and disclosing information to parents or carers should only be done with consent of the young person. Further guidance can be accessed in the following link: <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1344/supporting-transgender-youngpeople.pdf>

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.