

# Strathesk Primary School

## Anti-Bullying Guidelines November 2014



### Definition

*Bullying is an imbalance or abuse of power between two groups/ individuals that is used to intimidate and harass one of the groups/ individuals.*

*Bullying is not having a single argument or fight with someone equal to you. It isn't saying something bad to someone once you are angry. Bullying is a deliberate action that can happen on one occasion or over a period of time.*

*Creating Confident Kids, CEDC 2008*

*People who are bullied are likely to be seriously upset by something someone else has done or said to them. They may fear this will happen again and they may feel powerless to stop it happening.*

*City of Edinburgh Council 2009*

### How does bullying differ from banter?

- *There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.*
- *There is an unequal power balance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.*
- *It is usually persistent or systematic*

*It helps to consider one fight or argument between two people of equal power – this is NOT usually seen as bullying. Although many bullying episodes begin when friends fall out, we usually judge it to be bullying when one person or a group deliberately singles out others as a target and sets out to repeatedly humiliate or threaten them: a systematic abuse of power.*

*BIG Award 2014 (online)*

### So what is bullying behaviour?

- *Being called names, teased, put down or threatened (verbal abuse)*
- *Being hit, tripped or kicked (physical abuse)*
- *Having your belongings stolen or damaged*
- *Being ignored, left out or having rumours and gossip spread about you (emotional abuse)*
- *Receiving nasty text messages or emails (cyberbullying)*
- *Being bullied because of who you are, for example because of your religion, sexuality, disability, race, gender or appearance*
- *Being bullied because of who people think you are*

[www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk) 2014

## Prevention of bullying

Strathesk Primary School is currently pulling together new ways to ensure there are preventative actions taken to stop bullying happening. We are working towards the BIG Award and looking to gain accreditation for the work that we do in the prevention of bullying.

<http://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/>

We have listened to the views and opinions of parents and pupils and are now working towards introducing new programmes of work to raise awareness of bullying and the actions that should be taken. We are also refreshing some of the good work we already do to make it more current and up to date.

Each year we will celebrate Anti-Bullying week where we can have specific foci on the prevention of bullying using role play and scenarios as a means to help our pupils understand the options they have when they encounter a bullying situation.

Cool in School is a programme that helps children develop their communication skills and reinforces ways to be assertive with others in response to unkind comments or actions. We currently use this programme in P1, P4 and P7 but look to extend this throughout every year group and update staff training to ensure that there is a common school vocabulary and expectation.

Last year we updated our Keeping Myself Safe programme in P7 to look at the dangers of cyberbullying and invited our local ICT expert, Tommy Lawson, to come in to school and work with our P5 – P7 pupils and to deliver a session to parents on the risks of cyberbullying.

We are working towards introducing a new House System that will encourage the children to work together to gain awards and responsibilities. As this will run throughout the whole school, our older pupils will have the opportunity to lead, nurture and encourage our younger children.

Strathesk has a well established custom of having Primary 7 buddies who support our Primary 1 pupils on their entry to school. We also boost our older children by allowing them the opportunity to become school prefects, where they take on the roles and responsibilities required to help support the day to day running of the school.

We have a well embedded positive behaviour policy that explains the various ways in which we praise and reward our children for the positive and encouraging things they do. This is currently under review in light of the introduction of the House system, but the underlying principles it follows will remain the same.

We are presently resourcing the playground with games to keep our children occupied during their break times. We will introduce playground game supervisors who will work with the teachers and learning assistants to ensure the playing outside is constructive and fun, keeping our children busy and active at all times, and to encourage children to make friends with others.

Staff are receiving training on active listening and regular CAT sessions throughout the year from the Educational Psychologist to look at increasing pupil resilience and how to develop a peer support group in school.

Children will be issued with a child friendly version of the anti-bullying policy and guidelines for their reference and to share at home with their parents and families.

Our school website is being recreated to allow us to share our policies and procedures about anti-bullying online so that everyone has access to this information if required.

### **Reporting, recording and responding to incidents of bullying**

How the staff at Strathesk Primary School respond to bullying may vary from case to case. The basic principles are always the same but follow-up action is determined by a number of considerations.

#### **Staff need to consider:**

- The context of the situation
- Any previous incidents
- The effectiveness of previous strategies
- The level of risk in the situation
- Child protection procedures
- Witness statements
- The health, wellbeing and learning needs of all involved
- Opinion and evidence from specialist staff
- Involvement of other agencies e.g. police, social work team
- Local authority policy and procedure
- Police advice and/or advice from the Children and Families Team

When all aspects have been considered, action will be taken and discussed with all involved parties. A degree of trust is required between school staff and parents/carers as it is not always possible to share consequences and forward plans for individual children due to authority confidentiality procedures. In this sense it is vital we build positive, trusting relationships with our children and families.

Initially all children who feel they are being bullied should try their best to report this to a member of staff. This may be difficult for some children but with their early warning of this type of behaviour we can intervene and make it stop quicker. Once the child has reported an incident to an adult then the adult should record the incident on the form attached – see appendix 1. This form should then be shared with someone from the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Pupils can also play a strong part in helping those who feel vulnerable by intervening and getting an adult's support and help straight away. They should also help by using some of the assertive comments used in the Cool in School Programme. They should try their best to stand up to bullies and report the incident immediately.

The school will follow the following steps to help understand what has taken place:

- The school must hear all sides of the story - other young people may have different views about what is going on. The school will try to be **fair**. Timing may be of an issue, but parents can be assured that if the incident has been reported then it will be investigated thoroughly.
- The school should treat all of the pupils involved with **respect** and dignity. Every child will have the opportunity to speak and be listened to.
- The school will try to **engage** the pupils and parents in solving the problem. Pupils may have the opportunity to make suggestions as to how improvements could be made, or the staff may develop restorative practice strategies to help the children involved develop a mutual working respect for each other.

- The school has a responsibility to ensure all pupils are **safe** while at the school. We take great care in ensuring that no child is left in a vulnerable situation and will put measures in place to ensure every child is safe, whatever the circumstances.
- The school should discuss openly and **honestly** any bullying or other problems with parents of the pupils involved. Parents will be contacted as soon as the investigation has taken place, there may also be a phone call to advise parents that the school is aware of an incident and the investigation will take place when it is timely and appropriate.

It is worth remembering that staff at Strathesk will not share with other families any information about your child nor disclose the resulting consequence if the perpetrator is found to be guilty of bullying. It is also important to remember that all children are at different stages of development, with varying needs, and may not fully understand why they act the way they do or be able to fully explain their feelings. We must respect the confidentiality of all families and pupils. We expect, and hope, that our parents will trust and support the school in dealing with all incidents fairly, following the procedures we and the Local Authority have in place to deal with varying degrees of severity.

Once an investigation has taken place the Senior Management Team may need to issue children with disciplinary warning letters, or even go straight to exclusion, however usually these measures are only necessary if previous incidents have occurred or the incident has been extremely serious, e.g. a severe assault or a racist comment made.

**Red Letter:** A red letter is issued to parents when an incident has occurred in school which requires parental attention.

**Disciplinary Warning Letter:** These are issued in the event of a serious incident such as racist or homophobic bullying or some forms of physical bullying. A disciplinary letter can lead to an exclusion should the offence be repeated within a certain timescale.

**Exclusion:** Exclusions can vary depending on the severity of an incident. Authority policy dictates when exclusion should be used and length of time a child should be excluded. Exclusions are always followed up with a meeting, often with other professionals, to create a plan to prevent further issues.

Further support may be available to address specific issues with the behaviour support teacher, or tackle any issues within the classroom context. Various strategies, sanctions and plans are used depending on the nature of the incident and the individual child, age and stage. Examples include:

- Restricted prefect jobs or P7 privileges
- Loss of golden time
- Responsibility jobs
- Missing a trip or activity
- Use of social stories/books/resources to teach appropriate behaviour
- Help from an older or same age 'buddy'
- Teacher support
- Apology letter
- Restorative meetings
- Communication book

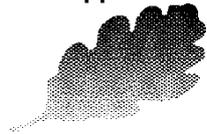
Strathesk staff should always look at the need behind the behaviour of the person displaying the bully-type behaviour and try to support that child to manage their feelings and emotions without resorting to unkind measures.

Prejudice-driven or discriminatory bullying is treated very seriously at Strathesk Primary school. Guidelines as to what constitutes this type of incident is laid out in the school *Multicultural and Anti-Racist Policy* and the school *Inclusion Policy*.

Strathesk staff will be as responsive as possible in light of any bullying incidents, or community concerns that arise, and act where necessary to help improve situations and support our pupils e.g. inviting a specialist into school to talk about the dangers of cyber-bullying.

If any adult feels they are being bullied they should contact their line manager, or another, to help mediate and monitor the situation.

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Reported by: ..... to .....

Date: .....

**When did the alleged incident take place?**

Before School		Interval		Lunchtime	
In Class		Between classes		After school	

**Where did the alleged incident occur?**

In the playground		In school building		On way to/from school	
Both on and outside of school premises		On school transport		Other	
Online					

**People involved – including witnesses:**

**Type of alleged incident**

Verbal		Isolation	
Written		Incitement	
Physical		Using Technology	
Socio-economic		Body Image	
LAC child			
Damage to property		Other	

**Outcome:**

**Copy to class teacher**

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