



# 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 Machan'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 Machan's Primary's Guidelines are to:

- Prevent bullying behaviours by promoting a positive ethos where young people treat others with tolerance, respect and consideration.
- Encourage happy, confident, assertive and resilient pupils.
- Highlight what bullying behaviours actually are.
- 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 Machan'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.
- Homophobic name calling
- Racist comments
- Sexist comments
- 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.

## **Prevention of Bullying**

In St Machan's we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through:

- Regular school assemblies
- Use of the Gospel Values within our everyday lives
- PSHE programme (PATHS)– promoting positive and highlighting consequences of negative behaviours.
- Emotion Coaching approach to managing discussions with pupils
- Drama activities which enable children to role-play scenarios of bullying.
- Pupil voice - ensuring pupils have the opportunity to write school/class rules.
- Creating an ethos of mutual respect by acknowledging and rewarding kind/polite behaviour.
- Pupil council meetings
- Worry box - where pupils can express their concerns confidentially if they feel they cannot talk about the problem.
- External visitors 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 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.
- 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 action, if it is judged to be appropriate.
- The child or young person should be reassured and supported to help rebuild their self esteem.

- Details of the bullying behaviour and actions taken is recorded in the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module

When a child or young person has displayed bullying behaviour, a member of the management team should, based on their professional judgement, endeavour to manage the resolution of the bullying incident within the school. Parents should be involved when 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'.
- Addressing what is happening behind the behaviour
- Continue to monitor behaviour

Such approaches might include:

- Positive behaviour strategies with an appropriate member of staff, as agreed.
- Restorative approaches.
- Reflection sheets
- Supervised breaks or time away from areas of conflict
- Solution orientated approaches.
- Classroom lessons and discussion on anti bullying. Use of 'Respect Me' resources.
- Involvement of Educational Psychologist or Campus Police.
- Agreed behaviour contract signed by pupils and parents

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.

### **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 Machan's Primary we will:

- Highlight anti-bullying behaviours with pupils.
- Establish an ethos of mutual respect through reinforcing expectations of good behaviour.
- Encourage the effective communication of any bullying incidents
- Confirm that we will deal with bullying behaviour quickly and seriously

To help raise awareness there will be the establishment of a pupil voice anti-bullying committee who will work with the pupil council group to:

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

- Raise awareness through the school website.
- Provide a nurture group for pupils who have experienced bullying behaviours.

It is essential that everyone takes responsibility in creating a safe and supportive environment within St Machan's Primary and we aim to achieve in the following ways:

- Encouraging pupils and staff to take action if they see bullying behaviours.
- Through our PSHE 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. – These boxes should be placed in an area that pupils pass regularly and can use in a private manner
- Ensuring that pupils are aware of the consequences of bullying,

## **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 SMT
- Tell a friend, parent or family member.
- Use the worry box

## **What will we do when you tell us?**

Steps we will take will include:

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

We will encourage mediation which will involve:

- Discussing what happened using restorative practices where appropriate.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change
- Offering a resolution for moving forward
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child

## **Review of Guidelines:**

Anti-bullying guidelines will be reviewed during session 2024-25