

# St Ninian's High School

## School Policy No. 5



## Anti-Bullying Guidelines

*'Every child and young person in Scotland will grow up free from bullying and will develop respectful, responsible and confident relationships with other children, young people and adults. Children and young people, and their parents or carers, will have the skills and resilience to prevent or respond to bullying. All children will expect help and know who can help them; while those adults working with them will follow a consistent and effective approach in dealing with and preventing bullying from early years onwards'.*

**Scottish Government (2010) – 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 Ninian's high school on preventing, responding to and reducing bullying behaviour in line with East Dunbartonshire's Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance for Education Establishments (2015).

## **Aims**

St Ninian's High School is a Christian community which invites all its members to live out the values of the Gospel in their daily lives. We are committed to ensuring that all our pupils are happy and safe within the school. We aim to create a climate in which everyone is respected, feels secure and is able to seek advice. The responsibility for achieving this aim lies with every member of the school community, i.e. all staff, pupils and parents. We have to create a partnership with everyone working together to achieve a safe school.

## **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.

Bullying also 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](http://www.respectme.org.uk).

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:

- racist bullying;
- socio-economic group;
- disablist bullying;
- body image;
- religion and belief;
- sexism and gender;
- looked after children and young people;
- young carers;
- homophobic bullying.

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 Ninian's High 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.

It is important to have clarity about these significant events and be able to recognise and acknowledge bullying behaviours when they happen.

Bullying behaviours can include:

- name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening and intimidating by making prejudiced-based remarks;
- hitting, tripping, pushing, kicking;
- stealing and damaging belongings;
- ignoring, excluding, spreading rumours;
- sending abusive messages electronically, eg via text, emails or social networking sites;
- making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied;
- targeting someone because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

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**

St Ninian's High will work to create a positive and supportive ethos. A culture that encourages respect, values opinions, celebrates differences and promotes positive relationships will make it difficult for bullying behaviour to occur or be tolerated. This may include particular approaches such as:

- buddying or mentoring;
- peer mediation;
- systems which identifies vulnerable pupils and takes steps to remedy this;
- creative and motivational ways to engage pupils and raise awareness of bullying with theatre groups, speakers, film footage and music;
- involvement of the Pupil Council;
- anti-bullying campaigns, posters, assemblies;
- encouraging pupils to report bullying incidents using 'worry' boxes and the school Intranet;
- areas of special focus eg prevention of name calling;
- an understanding of the impact and legal consequences of on-line bullying, supported by campus police, for the whole school community through the curriculum, assemblies and events for parents and carers;
- Continually reviewing processes and approaches within the school.

## 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;
- they should be gently encouraged to talk, to find out what happened, who was involved, where and when – and notes taken;
- they should be asked what they want to see happen next;
- the child or young person should be kept up to date with progress;
- details of the bullying behaviour and actions taken is recorded in the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module by a promoted member of staff;
- the promoted member of staff should inform parents of the incident and action taken, if it is judged to be appropriate.

When a child or young person has **displayed bullying behaviour**, a member of the establishment's 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:

- time should be taken to understand the reasons for the bullying behaviour;
- the individual or group should not be labelled as 'bullies', name the behaviour;
- staff should be prepared for a strong reaction from parents and carers, children and young people;
- staff should be prepared to address prejudicial attitudes that may be behind the bullying behaviour;
- addressing what is happening behind the behaviour, even when the bullying has stopped.

Consideration should be given to the sanctions and support given to the young person displaying bullying behaviour to ensure that interventions are intended to improve behaviour.

Approaches used at St Ninian's High include:

- positive behaviour strategies with an appropriate member of staff, as agreed;
- restorative approaches;
- solution orientated approaches;
- involvement of educational psychologists and campus police.

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 for Schools and Local Authorities in Managing School Exclusions, 2011*), 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 Ninian's High school we will:

- in consultation with pupils, parents and staff, regularly review, update and publish the school anti bullying policy on our website;
- ensure areas in the school display at least one anti bullying poster;
- regularly highlight this issue through assemblies, programmes of work, newsletters etc;
- Operate structures to ensure any incidents identified are addressed quickly;
- Operate a buddying system to minimise and resolve disputes;
- Regularly communicate with parents to keep them abreast of our work.

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

- supporting anti-bullying projects and nurturing a positive ethos of respect for all;
- promoting work on personal safety and bullying as part of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum;
- encourage the development of environments in which children feel free of bullying and can thrive;
- providing support in individual circumstances.

## **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

- Speak to a staff member

What will we do when you tell us?

Bullying and harassment are wrong and we will always listen to any concerns or comments, but that doesn't mean the people who do it are "bad" people. It doesn't excuse the behaviour, but it does mean that it is possible to help them change the way they behave.

Steps we will take will include:

- Discussing (restorative dialogue) incidents with pupil(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour;
- Discussing (restorative dialogue) incidents with pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour;
- Conducting a restorative meeting with both parties if appropriate;
- Taking other appropriate action;
- Inform parents if appropriate.

We will encourage mediation which will involve:

- creating an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility;
- demonstrating impartiality and being non judgemental;
- actively listening while encouraging collaboration and emotional self expression;
- facilitating dialogue and problem solving;
- listening to and expressing emotion;
- Empowering others to take ownership of problems.



# ST NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

## ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENT REFERRAL FORM

Pupil's name : (person on the receiving end of bullying behaviour)

Incident Reported by (enter staff member/pupil name)

Details (give reasons for referral including key dates/timings and names of other pupils involved)

Referral passed to (member of SMT/Pupil support)

Date and time

Signature