

Tighnabruaich Primary School & Pre-5 Unit

Anti-bullying Policy

AIMS OF THE POLICY

We aim to create an environment where pupils can grow and flourish without fear. Each pupil has the right to be safe in and out of school and to be protected when he or she is feeling vulnerable.

We aim:

- To ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied.
- To prevent instances of bullying behaviour becoming incidents of bullying.
- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in all school activities.
- To support everyone to identify and protect those who might be bullied.
- To clarify for all pupils and staff that bullying is wholly and always unacceptable.
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is paramount.
- To promote an environment where children feel they can trust and tell adults if they are being bullied or know about any bullying.
- To promote positive attitudes and resilience in pupils (including conflict management strategies).
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their duty of care over those in their charge and the need to be alert to signs of bullying.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of procedures through regular discussion.

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WHAT IS BULLYING (including definition, roles, styles, signs and symptoms)

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take a number of forms, such as:

Verbal	Name calling, making fun of someone, threatening. intimidating. racist. homophobic/sexist/sectarian remarks
Physical	Pushing, tripping, hitting, fighting, intimidating
Social & Emotional	Leaving someone out, spreading rumours, writing nasty notes, being intentionally unfriendly, tormenting looks, telling other people to hit or bully someone, the 'look', threats and extortion, intimidation and rude gestures, telling tales with the express purpose of causing trouble
Material	Wilfully damaging another person's belongings, taking another's belongings, hiding another's property
Cyber	Misusing mobile phones or computers, nasty texts, silent phone calls, nasty comments on web pages, hate sites, happy slapping, nasty instant messages, vandalising photos. There are specific criminal offences related to acts of cyber-bullying in some instances.

Roles within Bullying

Different roles within bullying have been identified:

- Those relying on social power, dominating others, often with group support (ring leader).
- Others joining in and therefore afraid of ring leader (associates).
- The awareness of a silent majority that bullying is taking place, but feeling unable to do anything about it (bystanders).
- Those who try to stop bullying (defenders).

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Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- is unwilling to go to school;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens self harm;
- cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares/ bedwetting;
- regularly feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions go missing;
- has unexplained cuts and bruises;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what is wrong;
- is frightened of walking to or from school; or
- changes usual routine.

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions of potential bullying to the Head Teacher.

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THE ROLE OF PARENT COUNCIL

The Parent Council will discuss and review the effectiveness of the policy. Members of the Parent Council will encourage parents with concerns to speak directly to the Head Teacher

THE ROLE OF STAFF (duties)

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for drawing up procedures to prevent bullying amongst pupils.

The Head will:

- ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies and issues
- ensure that the Behaviour Policy complements and supports this policy;
- ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff and volunteers, parents and pupils
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies;
- refer and liaise with inter agency working groups if necessary;
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems
- ensure proper record keeping

All Staff and volunteers will:

- be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice;
 - know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.
 - be observant and talk to pupils
 - deal with incidents according to the policy
 - never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported
 - take action to reduce the risk of bullying at all times and in places where is most likely to occur
- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated and dealt with immediately by the teacher approached.
- If a racial element to the bullying is suspected the Head Teacher must be informed immediately.
- The appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying will be decided upon.
- The implementation of the strategy will be overseen by all staff.

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- Parents will be kept informed by the relevant staff as necessary.

In any incident of bullying, staff are aware of the following principles:

- It is important that children who experience bullying behaviour can be heard.
- It is important to note that people react differently to bullying behaviour and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset or hurt.
- If children feel upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a responsible adult at an appropriate time or put a note in the confidential comments box in the school.
- It must be emphasised to the children that they should NEVER take the law into their own hands and should remember that physical aggression is not acceptable.
- They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.
- Pupils will be told always to report incidents of bullying behaviour.

- All reported incidents of potential bullying will be taken seriously, investigated and appropriate action taken. It should be noted that this can have an adverse effect if young people do not tell an adult because they think it will get blown out of proportion and make matters worse. It is important to stress that members of staff are approachable and pupils can trust them. The message conveyed should be ANYONE with a concern about bullying will be listened to and their concern taken seriously.

THE CURRICULUM: HOW WE PREVENT AND TACKLE BULLYING THROUGH OUR CURRICULUM

Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum:

- The school will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through a Citizenship programme, school assemblies, the school council, and in the curriculum as appropriate.
- Changing the attitudes and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school. Children's Emotional Literacy is developed by teaching them a wide vocabulary of words for emotions. We believe that this makes them better able to express their feelings, helping them to resist attempts at bullying. We also consider that being able to understand and express emotions reduces conflict between children and makes them less inclined to misinterpret others' actions, which can be a factor in bullying.

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SUPPORTING PUPILS

Bullied Pupils: Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support.

Bullies: It is recognised that support must also be given to the perpetrator. Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

All the children concerned should be fully involved in the discussions leading up to the solution and should not be left feeling isolated. Honest group discussions that involve both bullied and bully with other children of their choice attendant and encouraged to participate, help the children to resolve the matter themselves with support and vigilance from the staff and is the most effective way. Parents will need to be kept fully informed.

SANCTIONS

Where pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions are determined by the nature of the bullying on a case to case basis. Sanctions might include:

- Writing a letter of apology or an explanation of the behaviour
- Removal from the group (in class);
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum;
- **Fixed term and permanent exclusion from school.** An exclusion would only be considered in a case of **extreme and continuing** bad behaviour, bullying, sexual harassment etc. Any exclusion for even a short period would be discussed and agreed the Local Authority's Education Department.

INVOLVING PARENTS

- Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour, and takes a positive, active approach to educating pupils to combat it. Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures.

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- Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate.

INVOLVING PUPILS

- Pupils will be involved in the positive strategies through both the school council and form groups. Pupils will have an input into the anti-bullying strategy.
- A major part of the strategy will consist of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying.
- Pupils must know to whom they should go if they are being bullied or if they are concerned about another child.

MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR APPROACH

The policy will be reviewed by pupils, staff and Parent Council annually or more frequently if required.

APPENDIX:

CYBER BULLYING

What is it?

- “Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.”

Report to the Anti-Bullying Alliance by Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Types of Cyber Bullying

There are 7 identified categories of cyber bullying:

- Text messaging bullying
- Picture/video clip bullying via mobile phone
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone
- Email bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying via websites
- Bullying through instant messaging

Combating cyber bullying

- Protection from Harassment Act '97
- Malicious Communications 1988

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- Telecommunications Act 1984
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School Policy on Cyber Bullying

No pupil mobile phones are allowed in school. However the school recognises that many pupils have mobile phones outside school and to that end:

- the school arranges for the community police officer to come into school to talk about safe use of the net and mobile phones.
- parent workshops are arranged to ensure that parents & carers that they, as well as their children, understand how to use technology safely and are familiar with the risks and consequences of mobile phone use.
- staff have a duty to make sure that they are familiar with their role in dealing with cyber bullying.
- victims should keep emails and text as evidence for tracing and possible police action.
- the school has a code of conduct for use of the net and access is screened by a variety of blocks which are updated regularly.
- Teachers must teach safe internet use and strictly apply all school policies.

Parental support and understanding in safe use of the net is an essential component in managing cyber bullying. The use of the web is an essential part of modern life and the young are the pioneers. They use the web in a very different way.

They upload → we download

They create → we consume

They use converged media → we use separate media

They are truly interactive → we are static

Balance and perspective are essential as is a whole community approach to ensuring safe use of the internet. The responsibility for this is both the school's in educating their pupils for safe use on the net, and the parents' in understanding that they need to monitor and manage their children's use of the net.

Useful websites for community use:

<http://ceop.police.uk/>

www.childnet.com

www.digizen.org

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

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Children should understand that they must tell an adult if they are being bullied in these ways, that they should not delete any bullying messages or texts, but they should never respond to these.