



# Gartconner Primary School

## Anti-Bullying Guidelines and Procedures

*'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.**

**Our Rights Respecting Steering Group have led the development of this policy , alongside the senior leadership team at Gartconner Primary School.**

### Rationale

These Anti-Bullying Guidelines provide guidance to pupils, staff, parents and carers of Gartconner Primary and EYC on preventing, responding to and reducing bullying behaviour in line with East Dunbartonshire's Anti- Bullying Policy and Guidance for Education Establishments. This replaces any other versions of the policy which was revised in Feb 2020.

There is very little that can compare to the feeling of helplessness that parents/carers experience when their child is anxious or worried about what has happened at school. More than anything, as a school community, we want parents and children to know that good communication is vital. Letting us know your concerns will be the best way to minimise any upset or harm for your child or for any other child involved in these behaviours.

### Aims

As keeping with the vision, values and aims of Gartconner these guidelines seek to ensure:

- that all children and young people are provided with a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which to learn
- children and young people, parents and carers and staff have a robust understanding of what bullying behaviour is and the action which will be taken when it is witnessed or reported
- a culture is promoted where bullying is recognised as being unacceptable
- the prevention of bullying of children and young people through a range of approaches
- effective support for children and young people and their parents and carers who are affected by bullying

(UNCRC Articles 22, 24 & 27)

## Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is a combination of behaviours and impacts.

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.

It is also important to be aware that bullying can also occur virtually through apps and sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram as well as text. In this growing technological time, communication can happen anywhere and at any time, often unsupervised. On-line bullying can be very pervasive and difficult to handle. However, the behaviour is still unacceptable. At Gartconner, we aim to tackle virtual bullying through our Rights education program and similar prevention methods to the behaviours mentioned in the previous paragraph.

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:

- homophobic bullying
- racist bullying
- disablist bullying
- body image
- religion and belief
- sexism and gender
- looked after children and young people
- young carers • socio-economic group
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity

(UNCRC Articles 2, 24, 29, 30)

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 1**.

Gartconner uses 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
- taking and damaging belongings
- ignoring, excluding, spreading rumours
- sending abusive messages electronically, e.g., 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. Sensitivity is shown to all people involved in the process as all behaviour is communication and building relationships with all parties will ensure that we understand what is being communicated to us by all children involved and help us to find a long term solution. 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.

Not every unkind behaviour constitutes bullying. Children and young people are still learning how to get along with others. They will tease each other, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and disagree about what they like and don't like. These are examples of ordinary conflict, perhaps thoughtlessness and possibly insensitive behaviour and should be viewed as a normal part of growing up. However, if left unchecked, these behaviours can lead to bullying, making those being bullied feeling afraid, uncomfortable or unsafe in their environment. They should be viewed as an opportunity to help children and young people learn about resolving conflict and getting along with others.

Parents, teachers and other adults need to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion and responsibility. It is expected that parents and carers should model respectful relationships with members of the school community. They should not encourage their child to take matters into their own hands or become directly involved in any way that causes the issues to escalate or cause conflict between members of the wider community.

## **Prevention of Bullying**

Gartconner Primary School and EYC 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
- using the Risk Matrix, PSG, Friendship Surveys or other system to identify vulnerable pupils and takes steps to remedy this
  - creative motivational ways to engage pupils and raise awareness of bullying with theatre groups, speakers, film footage, interactive ICT resources, music, and the like
  - involvement of the Junior Management Team/school committee
  - anti-bullying campaigns, posters, assemblies
  - encouraging pupils to report bullying incidents to trusted adults
  - areas of special focus such as understanding of different religious and cultural practices or through the use of literature to understand issues relevant to children such as sectarianism and its link to behaviour in the community
  - an understanding of the impact and legal consequences of on-line bullying, supported by police
  - Teaching through UNCRC Rights

(UNCRC 2, 4, 19, 14, 30, 42)

## 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. This may be from a member of the Senior Management Team or it may be another member of staff who will be released to have time to talk with the child.

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 action taken is recorded in the SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module
- the member of staff should inform parents of the incident and action taken, if it is judged to be appropriate

(UNCRC Articles 2, 13, 29)

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:

- 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. Such approaches might include:

- positive behaviour strategies with an appropriate member of staff, as agreed
- restorative approaches
- solution orientated approaches
- involvement of educational psychologists and community 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 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. It is essential that everyone takes responsibility in creating a safe and supportive environment and within Gartconner we aim to achieve this by:

At Gartconner we will:

- maintain a focus on rights and responsibilities to help the whole school community respect the rights of everyone.
- support anti-bullying projects and nurturing a positive ethos of respect for all
- encourage pupils, parents and staff to raise any concerns and work with everyone to resolve these
- promote work on personal safety and bullying as part of the PSE curriculum
- encourage the development of environments in which children and young people can feel free of bullying and can thrive
- provide support in individual circumstances

(UNCRC Articles 14, 28, 29, 31)

**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:

- Pupils can speak to any member of staff or tell a trusted adult at home who can report it for them
- Pupils can tell a friend who can report it on their behalf
- Pupils can write down their concerns and share with any trusted adult
- Parents/ Carers/ Any other adults witnessing bullying should speak to a member of the school senior management team (HT or DHT) to make them aware of the concerns

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

Steps we will take will include:

- Speaking to any pupils involved including those who may have witnessed the behaviours as well as those involved
- Informing parents about any incidents, as appropriate
- Reassuring children that they should let us know their concerns and that they deserve to feel safe.
- Recording the incident/ concerns on our school system (Seemis)
- Keeping those involved informed about progress
- Reviewing and monitoring to ensure there has been an effective resolution
- Exploring any reasons behind the bullying behaviour and addressing this
- Adapting the curriculum, if appropriate, to provide further opportunities to explore prejudice.

We will encourage mediation which will involve:

- Restorative conversations between pupils
- Involving pupils (and parents as appropriate) in seeking ways forward
- Ensuring respectful and supportive behaviours for all involved

Table used to structure restorative conversations within Gartconner

Conflict / falling out	Rude / Bad mannered	Mean / Nasty	Bullying
Occasional	Occasional	Occasional	Dependent on impact
Not planned/in the heat of the moment	Unplanned/often unintentional behaviour	Intentional behaviour	Is often planned and done on purpose
Everyone involved is upset	Can upset and cause hurt feelings	Can hurt deeply	Can cause serious, life-long emotional damage
Everyone involved wants to work it out	Often based on the person not thinking kindly or showing bad manners	Often done in anger; thoughtless cruelty	The bully is trying to gain power or control over the target
Everyone will accept responsibility	Rude person should accept responsibility	Behaviour is often regretted	The bully often blames the target
An effort is made by everyone to solve the problem	Rude person says sorry	Apology is sufficient	The target wants the bully's behaviour to stop
Can usually be resolved by talking it out	Social skill building could be of benefit	Teacher/adult must speak with person this behaviour cannot be ignored	Cannot be resolved by talking it out

### Review of Guidelines

These guidelines were last updated in December 2023 to incorporate the latest advice from EDC. Further review will be in session 2025 unless required by changes in legislation or procedure.