Anti-Bullying

As a community we grow

RAISE THE BARR

Rationale

Barrhead High has adopted the national definition of bullying as outlined in "Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People" (RfA). Our commitment to fostering an inclusive and positive environment for all is guided by our RESPECT values and a strong partnership with all stakeholders.

"We want all children and young people to feel safe, secure, and able to build positive relationships with peers and adults. Respect for All aims to encourage a proactive and inclusive approach to anti-bullying and supports all adults working with, or caring for, children and young people to create inclusive environments where bullying cannot thrive." (Scottish Government, 2025)

Bullying violates children's rights under several articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Aims

- Create a safe, respectful, nurturing, and bullying-free environment
- Respond to bullying behaviour as unacceptable and intolerable
- Maximise opportunities for all by addressing bullying behaviour promptly and effectively
- Work in partnership to prevent and respond effectively to all forms of bullying, racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

At the heart of this policy is the recognition of the need for open communication and the involvement of the entire school community in addressing bullying behaviour. The Parent Council and staff members provided feedback to inform this policy. Consultation workshops were held with young people to develop this policy and explore how they wanted our school to manage bullying situations and what support they needed from staff and parents.

Promoting Equality and Rights

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including partners, visitors, and students on placement), and young people. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People
- ERC Standard Circulars, including (8a) Bullying and Anti-Bullying, (12) Inclusion, and Safe Use of Technology (69)

The Equality Act (2010) prohibits discrimination against individuals with the following characteristics:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also do not accept bullying behaviour against individuals for the following reasons, in line with Respect for All:

- Additional support needs
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Body image and physical appearance
- Care-experienced young people
- Sectarianism
- Socio-economic prejudice
- Young carers

What do we mean by bullying behaviour?

"Bullying is face-to-face and/or online behaviour that impacts a person's sense of physical and emotional safety, their ability to feel in control of their life, and their capacity to respond effectively to their situation. The behaviour does not need to be repeated or intended to cause harm for it to have an impact. Bullying behaviour can be physical, emotional, or verbal and can make individuals feel hurt, threatened, frightened, or excluded." (Scottish Government, 2025)

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, such as:

- Being called names, teased, put down, or threatened (face-to-face or online).
- Being hit, tripped, pushed, or kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out, or having rumours spread about you (face-to-face or online)
- Sending abusive messages, pictures, or images via social media, online gaming platforms, or phones/tablets
- Behaviour that makes individuals feel out of control (face-to-face or online).
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be (face-to-face or online)
- Expanding the reach and impact of bullying or prejudice by involving a wider group.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

Bullying behaviour may stem from treating people differently based on perceived differences. This is known as prejudice, which can manifest in bullying language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, or discriminatory toward disability or faith. There is a need to address the root causes of prejudice and effectively respond to incidents as they arise.

Online Bullying

Online bullying, or cyberbullying, is a significant concern affecting young people in Scotland. This form of bullying utilises digital technologies. Despite improved digital literacy and awareness of internet safety among youth, the complex nature of online spaces requires increased adult vigilance and robust safeguarding measures. (Scottish Government, 2024)

Several legal provisions protect individuals from online harassment, abuse, and harm:

1. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics, encompassing certain forms of online bullying
2. The Communications Act 2003 criminalises sending grossly offensive, obscene, or menacing messages through public electronic communications networks
3. The Malicious Communications Act 1988 addresses sending materials intended to cause distress or anxiety, including online communications
4. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 protects against harassment, including repeated online bullying incidents
5. The Defamation and Malicious Publication (Scotland) Act 2021 allows individuals to seek redress for harm caused by false and damaging online statements
6. The Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016 criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images
7. The Online Safety Act 2023 creates new offenses, including encouraging serious self-harm, cyberflashing, sending false information intended to cause non-trivial harm, and intimate image abuse.

These legal provisions empower individuals to take action against online bullying. Understanding these laws helps adults working with young people recognise when behaviour crosses legal boundaries and take appropriate steps to protect them.

When is it not bullying behaviour?

Disagreements among young people are a normal part of growing up and building relationships. Accidental bumps and expressing unpleasant thoughts or feelings can be painful but do not constitute bullying. It is essential to provide opportunities for discussing feelings and developing resilience in managing relationships. Early intervention

and prevention, including whole-school relational approaches, are critical to ensuring we support all young people effectively.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Young people are expected to:

- Share their voice regarding our anti-bullying policy
- Know they can speak to an adult about their concerns
- Understand that bullying behaviour violates children's rights
- Treat everyone with respect
- Challenge bullying behaviour, where safe to do so, using skills gained from interventions such as Mentors in Violence Prevention and Humanutopia.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Listen to and take children and young people's concerns seriously
- Be aware of anti-bullying policies and practices
- Share any concerns about a young person as early as possible with an adult at their child's education establishment
- Monitor social media use and online interactions
- Role model respect and promote safe, positive, supportive, and respectful relationships for young people.

Staff are expected to:

- Be aware of and adhere to the Anti-Bullying policy
- Listen to and take young people seriously
- Share concerns appropriately and seek support as needed
- Ensure young people are aware of how to recognise and report bullying incidents
- Be aware of their responsibility to prevent and respond to prejudice-based bullying
- Embed the promotion of equality, diversity, and children's rights in their professional practice
- Role model respect and promote safe, positive, supportive, and respectful relationships.

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

We embed anti-bullying interventions within a positive ethos and culture rooted in respectful, equitable, and inclusive practices. All stakeholders are encouraged to live out our RESPECT values.

Promoting healthy relationships and responding to all forms of prejudice helps create a bullying-free environment. Relational approaches that support improved behaviour, promote equality, and enhance emotional well-being include:

- Promoting Rights Respecting Schools, LGBT Charter, and Vision School Scotland
- Peer support programmes including Mentors for the Prevention of Violence and Heroes
- Restorative and nurturing approaches
- Pupil voice and participative approaches, including celebrating our values events, Committees, and Ambassador roles
- PSHE curriculum
- Staff supervision during breaks
- Access to professional learning for staff, including training on MVP, restorative and nurturing approaches, and PSHE curriculum delivery
- Promotion of policy and anti-bullying commitment at assemblies and with Pastoral Representatives.

Responding to Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

The dangers of labelling people are well-known. Labelling young people as 'bullies,' 'victims,' or 'perpetrators' can be disempowering and may hinder behavioural change. It is essential to focus on the behaviour and its impact rather than applying labels. This helps young people understand their behaviour and its consequences, promoting resolution.

An allegation of bullying will be investigated by gathering evidence, primarily through conversations with the individuals involved.

Pastoral/SLT Responsibilities:

- Investigate and assess the behaviour
- Determine the impact of the behaviour
- Understand what the young person desires as an outcome
- Identify any child protection concerns
- Recognise any attitudes, prejudices, or factors that may have influenced the behaviour.

The incident will be logged in the Bullying and Equalities screen on SEEMIS; the report will describe the incident and actions taken. Incidents logged as "Being Addressed," "Not Resolved," or "Resolved" will be confirmed incidents, while those marked as "unfounded" will be unconfirmed. At the end of each term, ERC will compile recorded incidents for statistical purposes without naming children.

The findings of any investigation should be communicated to the young person and their parent/carer, and strategies for a positive resolution should be agreed upon.

Young people may be directed to wellbeing resources and/or the school counsellor if required. Their wellbeing should be monitored and recorded in pastoral notes.

Young people exhibiting bullying behaviour will also receive support to:

- Identify feelings that lead to such behaviour
- Develop alternative responses to these feelings
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on others
- Restore relationships.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

This policy was developed in accordance with the revised guidance published by the Scottish Government in 2025. It will be reviewed annually by the Equality Coordinator, with all stakeholders included in the consultation process.