



**‘Ready, Respectful, Safe’**

## **Anti-bullying Policy**

**January 2021**

## **School Philosophy and Ethos**

The wellbeing of every person in our school is important to us and we aim to provide a happy environment where everyone is respected and feels safe.

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else by physical or emotional intimidation. It may be defined as the unjustified display of aggressive or physical behaviour on the part of one individual or group towards another. Consequently, as part of the school's responsibility for the personal and social welfare of our pupils, we would hope to ensure as far as possible that no-one is being bullied.

Children and young people can experience bullying for a variety of reasons; where they live, their sexual orientations, gender, disability, the colour of their skin, what clothes they wear or what team they support. The one thing that these have in common is difference or perceived difference – some children and young people do not see or understand diversity, they still only see difference. Difference, or perceived difference, can be a catalyst for children and young people being bullied. If you would like to find out more about the different types of prejudice-based bullying listed below, visit our useful links, resources and supports (see appendix 1):

Asylum Seekers and Refugees	Body Image
Disablist Bullying	Gender-based bullying
Homophobic bullying	Looked After Children
Race and Ethnicity	Religion and Belief
Sectarianism	Sexism and Gender
Social and Economic Prejudice	Transgender
Young Carers	

## **Positive Relationship and Behaviour Management**

The school lays down expected standards of behaviour and specific school rules which are intended to be the basis for the operation of a well-ordered and caring school. These standards of behaviour, whole school expectations and the school's Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy appear each year in the school prospectus.

## **Religious and Moral Education and Personal and Social Education**

Throughout S1 to S6, pupils follow a programme of Religious and Moral Education as well as Personal and Social Education. Within these two programmes emphasis is placed on the importance of caring for others in thought and action and encouraging an appreciation of the community, the environment, and a concern for people in other parts of the world. Pupils are encouraged to tolerate, understand, appreciate, and value the spiritual, moral, and cultural beliefs of others.

## **Aspects of Social Behaviour**

Aspects of social behaviour are dealt with across a wide range of subjects. We hold regular Year Group and House Assemblies led by the Senior Leadership Team where we reinforce the school vision "aspire to be outstanding" and inspire pupils to adopt our core values, and be determined, creative, encouraging, responsible and successful.

## **Cyber Bullying**

Northfield Academy actively supports pupils in their learning by providing them with opportunities to learn in new innovative ways using ICT. We also recognise that pupils, teachers, and parents/guardians may need some help to know how to stay safe while using ICT, when using Social Networking sites such as Snapchat, Tik-Tok and Facebook. Social Networking sites can be very useful for pupils to keep in touch, share ideas and collaborate on projects. However, increasingly they are being used for online bullying and harassment. Smartphones and tablets allow pupils access to seemingly anonymous methods of bullying such as sending malicious text messages and posting embarrassing photos on the Internet. Cyber-bullying can spread rumours and lies to a very large audience at the touch of a button. As with other forms of bullying, the victim may not be in any physical danger but can still feel very upset, afraid, or depressed.

Northfield Academy takes all forms of bullying very seriously and cyber-bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. In cyber-bullying cases, where threats have been posted on the internet and may amount to criminal activity, parents and pupils should download the evidence and report it to the police who have various existing acts to allow prosecution:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence to send a communication with the intention of causing distress or anxiety.
- Under section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 it is an offence to send an electronic message that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 covers threatening behaviour or harassment, including online and offline stalking.

Parents are advised not to add to posts where cyber-bullying has taken place. This can also lead to parents being involved in prosecution.

## **School Based Police Officer**

School Based Officers have a variety of roles in schools all aimed at promoting good citizenship both in school and in the wider community. They are here to build positive relationships and work with our young people to help them become effective contributors to society both during their time at school and beyond. Our School Based Officer, PC Mackenzie is based in school, working closely with Guidance Teachers and will carry out inputs in Personal and Social Education relating to citizenship, bullying and cyber bullying, personal and online safety, road safety and substance misuse to name a few. She will also involve herself in extracurricular activities with various groups, including the school's Mentors in Violence Prevention programme.

PC Mackenzie operates an open-door policy at her office in school, situated beside the Guidance Office, where pupils and staff can come to her for advice, assistance or to discuss any concerns.

## **Key Elements in Action Against Bullying**

To combat bullying effectively it is important that there is:

- a general belief within the school community that bullying is an issue which must be taken seriously and tackled positively.
- open discussion about what counts as bullying.
- an ethos which encourages victims and witnesses to speak up freely.
- a school and classroom ethos which promotes respect for the individual.

- a readiness to treat incidents seriously, however trivial they may seem at first glance, and take swift and positive action.
- action whenever bullying is reported or evident.
- a clear lead given in this area by the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- a sense of ownership of the policy by all members of the school community – teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and pupils.

### **Recognition of Bullies and Victims**

There is no ready-made list of specific characteristics that go to make a bully. It is important, therefore, that we should not ignore reports from pupils of alleged bullying where the bully does not fit the commonly accepted stereotype. It is accepted that bullies pick on vulnerable people, but it is not always easy to judge in advance who might be vulnerable. We should, however, be particularly vigilant in respect of those pupils who:

- are new to the class or school
- are different in appearance, speech, or background from other pupils
- suffer from low self-esteem
- are nervous or anxious
- display extreme attention-seeking behaviour
- show deterioration in their work

### **Procedures for Dealing with Bullying**

The single most important factor in the prevention of bullying is a school ethos in which pupils are encouraged to speak out about bullying. They should be regularly reminded that it is right to tell an adult about any type of bullying behaviour. To enable this to take place all staff should encourage:

- victims to tell
- witnesses to tell
- parents to tell
- open discussion

If we are to be seen to take the issue of bullying seriously then we should:

- listen to and offer support for anyone who claims to be the victim of bullying.
- never dismiss the victim of bullying as ‘weak’ or a ‘tell-tale’.
- listen to and offer appropriate support for the bully, making it clear that it is the bullying behaviour of which we disapprove and not the bully him/herself.
- put in place consequences for the bully, where this is seen to be appropriate, explaining clearly why these consequences are being given.
- help pupils to offer suggestions for dealing with bullying and to keep the situation under constant review.
- contact at an early stage the parents of an alleged victim, invite them into school to discuss the matter and offer appropriate support.
- inform at an early stage the parents of an alleged bully, invite them into school to discuss the matter and offer support agreeing, where appropriate, on a form of sanction. The school’s expected standards of behaviour and relationships policy should be referred to in this context and it should be made clear to the parents that it is the behaviour which is disapproved of and not the pupil.
- have clear in-school procedures for dealing with reported incidents of bullying.

These procedures are:

- Where a teacher is informed of an alleged act of bullying, the teacher concerned should note briefly in writing the details of the allegation and refer the matter as soon as possible to the appropriate Principal Teacher of Guidance, who will then take action as detailed above.
- Guidance staff should keep detailed records of all referrals of this nature including notes of interviews.
- Guidance staff should advise appropriate members of the Senior Leadership Team of all incidents of confirmed bullying.
- Miss Ritchie (DHT) will keep detailed records of all such confirmed incidents of bullying. Details should include – Date, People Involved, Account of Incident, Action Taken, Outcome.

### **Guidance for Parents**

As part of our whole-school approach to the problem of bullying, we would give the following advice/information to parents:

- Discuss regularly with your child how he/she is getting on at school. Discuss particularly friendships, lunchtimes, and intervals.
- Be alert to signs of distress – reluctance to go to school, sore stomachs, bruising, taking extra money.
- Watch for your child bringing home extra money or property.
- Encourage your child to speak out if he/she is being bullied and listen carefully to the information he/she may volunteer.
- If you think your child is being bullied contact the school as soon as possible and arrange to speak to his/her Guidance Teacher. It can be beneficial in some cases for the parents to contact the school without their child's knowledge so that the situation can be quietly monitored.
- Where it is confirmed that a pupil has been involved in bullying, the school will invite the parents to come into school and discuss the situation.
- Be aware that, in many instances, bullying is reported by a pupil where the "victim" him/herself has played a major role in creating the problem. In such instances, it may be necessary to provide the victim with support and guidance on how to establish better relations with others.

## **Key Legislation and Policies**

Our Anti-bullying policy has been designed through consideration and consultation of local and national legislation, policies and strategies as set out below:

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)** - is concerned with the promotion and upholding of the rights of children and young people. Several articles are relevant to this policy:

- **Article 3** – All adults should do what is best for the child. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.
- **Article 12** – Every child has the right to give their opinion, and for adults to listen and take their views seriously.
- **Article 19** – Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.
- **Article 29** – Education should help children to use and develop their personality, talents, and abilities. It should also encourage children’s respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Aberdeen City Council has a partnership with UNICEF UK to promote the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) in all our schools. This promotes the values and principles of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and supports an ethos of meaningful pupil participation, respect, and positive relationships.

**The Human Rights Act (1998)** - places a public duty on authorities to carry out their functions in a matter that is compatible with the right to life, the prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to education.

**GIRFEC - Getting It Right for Every Child (2006)** - GIRFEC promotes action to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people underpinned by shared principles and values in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is about how practitioners across all services for children and adults meet the needs of children and young people, working together where necessary to ensure they reach their full potential. It promotes a shared approach and accountability that:

- Builds solutions with and around children, young people, and families.
- Enables children and young people to get the help they need when they need it.
- Supports a positive shift in culture, systems, and practice.
- Involves working together to make things better.

The 8 wellbeing indicators consider the basic requirements for all children and young people to grow and develop and reach their full potential: *Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included*.

**Scottish Schools - Parental Involvement Act (2006)** - promotes the future involvement of parents in their children’s education and in the development plans for schools. This act puts a responsibility on schools, family, and communities to address discrimination with a duty to actively promote equality and promote children’s health, wellbeing, and development.

**The Equality Act (2010)** - places a duty on schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- The protected characteristics are:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Sex (Gender)
  - Gender reassignment (Transgender)
  - Marriage and civil partnership
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation

## **Appendix 1**

Useful links, resources and supports:

### **Childline** - [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org)

ChildLine is the UK's free, private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. They offer advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. They have a designated page for bullying issues that includes a new video about building up your confidence after bullying.

### **Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland** - [www.cypcs.org.uk](http://www.cypcs.org.uk)

This site is for children and young people in Scotland, your parents and the adults who work with you. Here, you can learn about your rights, make your voice heard and find out who can help you live a safe and happy life.

### **Direct Gov** - [www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school](http://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school)

Provides information for young people on cyberbullying, bullying on social networks, cyber and email bullying, bullying on mobile phones, bullying at school, what to do about bullying, and information and advice for people who are bullying others and want to stop.

### **EACH** - <http://each.education/homophobic-transphobic-helpline>

EACH has a freephone Helpline for children experiencing homophobic, bi-phobic or transphobic bullying or harassment.

### **Respectme** - [www.respectme.org.uk/](http://www.respectme.org.uk/)

We work with all adults involved in the lives of children and young people to give them the practical skills and confidence to deal with children who are bullied and those who bully others.

### **See Me** - <https://www.seemescotland.org/>

See Me is Scotland's programme to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. We are funded by the Scottish Government & Comic Relief and managed by SAMH & the Mental Health Foundation.

### **Stonewall** – [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Institutions have power and influence. We will reach more people and have a greater impact by transforming institutions and by embedding an inclusive and accepting culture. We will work with all organisations, including workplaces, schools, healthcare providers, sports clubs, and religious institutions, here and abroad, to ensure they offer inclusive, equal and inspiring environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

### **UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools** - [www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/)

The Rights Respecting Schools Award is a UNICEF UK programme that aims to put children's rights at the heart of schools in the UK. We work with thousands of schools across the country to embed children's rights in their ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential.