

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that George Watson's College ("the School") is consistent and fair in how it identifies and addresses bullying behaviours, establishing an effective, accountable and transparent framework for managing the School's approach to anti-bullying and also ensures compliance with national policies.

This policy outlines the School's commitment to promoting and developing a respectful, equitable and inclusive culture and ethos where all children and young people are provided with a safe, secure and supportive environment.

In Scotland there is no single legal definition of 'bullying'. *'Respect for All: National approach to anti-bullying'* provides the framework for anti-bullying work in Scotland and defines bullying as "both behaviour and impact: the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face-to-face and online." (*Respect for All, 2017*). Although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions, looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions or the fear of these.

The Scottish Government has developed a vision of anti-bullying for children and young people in Scotland so that:

*"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."*¹

Aim and Scope of Policy

- a. To demonstrate the School's commitment to challenging all types of prejudice-based bullying and language and to do everything possible to prevent bullying by making clear the School's intolerance of bullying
- b. To make the unacceptable nature of bullying clear to all pupils and their parents
- c. To provide opportunity for discussion by pupils and staff within the School's programme of HWB/PSD education across the School from Nursery to S6
- d. To ensure that there is a clear procedure to follow which deals with incidents or allegations of bullying
- e. To recognise that bullying behaviour is often itself an indicator of other issues and to avoid, as much as possible, the use of the term 'bully' as much as the term 'victim'
- f. To seek the support of parents in preventing and tackling incidents of bullying
- g. To raise and maintain awareness amongst staff, alerting them to indicators which may suggest bullying and to equip them with ways of responding to it
- h. To maintain a system of recording incidents of bullying and collecting survey data so that analysis of patterns can inform policy and practice
- i. To use a variety of strategies to address bullying behaviour beginning with an assumption of a 'no fault' approach but using sanctions up to and including permanent exclusion from the School where necessary.

¹ A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (Part 5); Scottish Government; November 2010

What is Bullying?

It is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, manipulative and verbal, obvious or subtle. In all cases, the bully is seeking to exercise power over a fellow human being.

It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour.

It is often repeated, sometimes over a period of time.

It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

What is NOT Bullying

Children and young people will often fall out and disagree with each other as they grow up. Sometimes thoughtless and unkind things will be said with no malicious intent. This is not bullying.

At the other extreme, children and young people are sometimes unfortunately subject to serious physical threats and assault, to robbery or sexual exploitation and violence. This should not be described as bullying as such acts are serious criminal offences.

Nature and Extent of Bullying

Bullying frequently focuses on individual differences or anything that is implied to be different from the majority. In this respect, it undermines the School's work in promoting equal opportunities and teaching social and moral principles. Bullying may seize upon academic performance (either good or bad), aspects of body shape or appearance or focus on parental, cultural or ethnically-based lifestyles. It may dwell upon race, religion or nationality or may involve misogyny, homophobia or transphobia and may exploit insecurity or embarrassment about such matters.

Types of Bullying

Verbal Bullying

- Involve name calling
- Make use of written notes, electronic communications or mobile telephone messages
- Include threats of physical violence

Physical Bullying

- Often consists of deliberate jostling, bumping, tripping or pushing. Those responsible may easily maintain that it is accidental when detected for the first time;
- Is a criminal offence where it involves assault, actual bodily harm or wounding;
- May involve theft or damage to property (accompanied by the threat of violence) – not all theft or damage is bullying, but it is where the intention is to create fear and use power improperly.

Manipulative Bullying

- Manipulates social networks with the intention of excluding, ostracising or marginalising individuals from their friends and normal relationships
- Spreads rumours or malicious accusations

Cyber Bullying

- Includes the use of social media to harass, threaten or embarrass and can have a sexual content.
- The sending of malicious or sexual content by any form of electronic communication will often be a criminal offence. For further information on Cyber bullying, see the Computer System Acceptable Use Policy.

Challenging Bullying Behaviour

A culture of intolerance towards bullying is established and reinforced by all means possible, appropriate to the age and stage of the child/young person, for example:

- The behaviour of staff and senior pupils

- Participation in National Anti-Bullying Week
- Talks in Assemblies
- Work in PSD Classes
- The use of Peer Mentors to provide support for victims and potential victims.

Pupils are encouraged to support victims of bullying and to report bullies to a member of staff or senior pupil of, if necessary, in confidence to Childline or another person outside the School.

Roles and Responsibilities

Expectations and Responsibilities of staff, children and young people and parents

Tackling bullying is the responsibility of all school staff and partners. Adults should provide an environment which is safe, secure and in which children and young people feel they can discuss sensitive issues and are listened to.

George Watson's College is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school upholds the Rights of the Child
- Creating the Anti-Bullying Policy and communicating it to staff, children and young people, parents and carers
- Supporting this policy through training and monitoring
- Consulting with stakeholders about the effectiveness and further development of the policy
- Sharing good practice
- Ensuring staff development activities are available
- Working with partner agencies to support the prevention and reduction of bullying

Senior Leaders in the Junior School and Senior School are responsible for:

- Promoting a positive, ethos and culture and role modelling respectful relationships across the school community
- Dealing effectively with any instances of bullying which are brought to their attention by implementing school procedures
- Recording bullying incidents in line with school policy
- Ensuring that staff create a climate of respect, responsibility and positive relationships and a culture where bullying is unacceptable
- Ensuring that children and young people are aware of the procedure for reporting instances of bullying and have a trusted person to whom they can report their concerns
- Referring any incident through Child Protection procedures or to the police if necessary
- Ensuring that all staff, parents and carers are aware of, and comply with, the school's Anti-Bullying Policy
- Regularly reviewing policy to take into account new developments in technology or legislation at a minimum of every 3 years

All other staff are responsible for:

- Promoting positive attitudes, behaviours and relationships
- Dealing promptly and effectively with all allegations of bullying
- Being fully aware of the school policy and related procedures
- Supporting children and young people in understanding bullying and its effects and consequences
Through the curriculum and related activities, building the capacity of children and young people to challenge bullying behaviour
- Helping children and young people, parents and carers understand the difference between bullying and other behaviours

Children and Young People are responsible for:

- Promoting positive attitudes, behaviours and relationships which treat each other with respect and kindness
- Having positive relationships and attitudes and challenging bullying behaviour if they feel able to do so

- Telling a trusted person if they have any worries about bullying
- Keeping themselves and others safe with support from adults
- Understanding the difference between bullying and other behaviours
- Engaging in safe, responsible use of mobile technology

Parents and Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring and promoting their children's health, welfare and development
- Encouraging safe and responsible use of mobile technology
- Recognising the school's commitment and approach to anti-bullying
- Communicating concerns to a relevant member of school staff as early as possible, and working in partnership with them to resolve these concerns

Ongoing Recording and Monitoring of Bullying

The recording and monitoring of instances of bullying behaviour and prejudice-based bullying is essential to enable the School to:

1. Monitor incident response and follow-up action
2. Identify any recurrence of incidents and patterns of behaviour
3. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy
4. Identify future training needs.

All instances of bullying, regardless of the nature, extent and seriousness must be recorded in the pupil's pastoral record and in the appropriate central incident logs overseen by the Heads of the Junior School and Senior School.

In recording bullying our records must be entered digitally into:

- A pupil's Pastoral Record in 3Sys Pastoral/Behaviour
- The Record Reason must identify the type of bullying which has taken place.

Entries into 3Sys, the school's digital recording system, must adhere to Data Protection principles.

Incidents need to be reported timeously, within three days of the investigation being completed being a reasonable timescale.

As important as the recording of the incidents themselves is, a recording of the action taken is also important so all parties can be confident that procedures and practices have been correctly followed.

Additional information or greater detail may be included in 3Sys Pastoral Notes. Staff should exercise professional judgement on the validity of a reported incident, but attention must be given to the feelings of the person experiencing bullying behaviour. The perception of the child must be taken into account during the process of investigation. If, after investigation by a promoted member of staff, an incident is substantiated, then it must be reported on 3Sys Pastoral.

In recording bullying our records must include information on:

- The children and young people involved, as well as staff or other adults
- Where and when bullying has taken place
- The type of bullying experiences, e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats etc.
- Any underlying prejudice including detailed of any protected characteristic(s)
- Consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns
- Actions taken, including resolution at an individual or organisational level
- Of particular note is the requirement to specifically record prejudice-based bullying incidents which relate to protected characteristics.

The following 'Record Reasons' are available in 3Sys Pastoral/Behaviour:

- Bullying
- Bullying - Cyber
- Bullying - Excluding
- Bullying - Gossiping/Rumours
- Bullying - Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT)
- Bullying - Physical
- Bullying - Prejudice based
- Bullying - Protected characteristics
- Bullying - Sexual
- Bullying - Verbal
- Bullying - Victim

Of particular note is the need to specifically record prejudice-based bullying incidents which relate to protected characteristics as outlined in *The Equality Act 2010* which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'protected characteristic'. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Sex
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Monitoring strategies

Numbers and details of recorded incidents will be requested monthly and a report of all incidents entered by the Junior School and Senior School will be captured at the end of each term. This will give the School a wide perspective of incidents, which will inform any subsequent interventions and assist in developing training opportunities. Collated information will be reviewed within the school on a regular basis.

Procedures In Response to Bullying Behaviour

Stage 1

Bullying behaviour may come to light through the observation of the interaction between pupils or as a result of a disclosure by a pupil or a complaint by a parent or other adult. An investigation should take place by the appropriate member staff in line with the School policy.

In the first instance, staff should assess the nature, extent and seriousness of the bullying. If all parties recognise the nature of what has happened and are committed to improving the situation it can be dealt with by the teacher without need for further referral, however, a record must still be made in the pupils' records and in the appropriate central incident log maintained by the Heads of Junior School and Senior School.

The member of staff concerned will determine whether or not to contact parents bearing in mind the age and other circumstances of the pupil's concerns.

If there are no aggravating factors, including the existence of a previous record of bullying behaviour, and with the agreement of all involved, a restorative, 'no fault' approach to addressing the issue will be initially used as an alternative to a punitive approach. Pupils' help can be engaged in supporting those involved.

Stage 2

Where the bullying behaviour has been serious or prolonged or has persisted after earlier interventions, the matter will be referred to the appropriate Depute who may impose sanctions in accordance with the school's standards and expectations. Evidence of a racist, sexual, homophobic or transphobic element to the bullying will accelerate

any report of bullying to this stage and may be considered an aggravating factor in determining an appropriate sanction. It will also generally be appropriate to deal with any bullying of younger pupils by significantly older pupils at Stage 2.

Reports may be made to external agencies including the police, especially (but not exclusively) where a criminal offence may have been committed.

The circumstances of a bullying incident will be reviewed after an appropriate period of time to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken.

Stage 3

Any further repetition of bullying or where, in the opinion of the Depute, the seriousness of the bullying warrants it, the matter will be referred to the Head of Junior School or Head of Senior School who may impose sanctions including suspension from the School or may recommend permanent exclusion from the School to the Principal.

Advice to Staff

While the Principal and Heads of Senior and Junior School have ultimate responsibility for the exercise of all discipline, any and every member of staff, teaching and non teaching, should feel they have an important part to play in protecting pupils from harm, especially in counteracting bullying. If you suspect a pupil is being bullied or have an incident reported to you:

- Listen carefully
- Talk about it
- Offer support
- Do not promise confidentiality
- DO NOT IGNORE IT – TO DO SO IS TO CONDONE BULLYING

Report the matter to the pupil's class teacher or Head of Year even if you have to deal with the immediate issue yourself.

Always make it clear bullying is unacceptable and that there are no excuses for bullying. Do not make light of bullying in any way.

Make it clear to pupils who feel they are being bullied that the School will help and support. Reassure them that:

- It is NOT the child/young person's fault,
- They are right to tell you,
- If someone gets into trouble it is the child/young person's responsibility, not the fault of the person who raised the concern.

Continue to monitor the situation closely. Do not assume the bullying has stopped.

Advice to Pupils

You have the right to enjoy your education at George Watson's College and no one has the right to deprive you of that enjoyment. Any bullying, wherever it takes place and whoever is doing the bullying is always wrong.

Do not suffer in silence. Speak out if you are being bullied. Ideally, to any adult that you trust: tell your parents, a class teacher or a member of staff. If you don't feel you can do that, tell another pupil – perhaps someone a bit older than you.

If you have been bullied it is never your fault and don't let anyone (including anyone bullying you) that it is.

Approval and review details

This policy will be scrutinised and approved by the Governing Council. Implementation will be overseen by SSLT and JSLT. The policy will be reviewed in March 2024.

Relevant Documents

Appendix 1: Anti- Bullying Response Flow Chart

This response flow chart provides a general guide for those responding to a bullying incident.

1. Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the child/young person, parent or adult tells you.

- What was the behaviour?
- What impact did it have?



2. Collect additional information

- What attitudes, prejudices or other factors have influenced the behaviour?



3. Notify appropriate personnel

- The class teacher or department should deal with the issue but they must notify the relevant personnel, eg, DHT Pastoral (JS), YH, PT Guidance, DHT Wellbeing (SS).



4. Contact the parent/guardian about the incident and the plan of action



5. Discuss a plan of action with the child/young person

- What does the child or young person want to happen?
- What do I need to do about it?

In planning actions bear in mind children and young people who are exhibiting bullying behaviour will need help and support to:

- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people
- Repair relationships.



5. Provide suggestions about what to do if the bullying occurs again



6. Set a date for follow up review/s



7. Record the incident in School's data management system



8. Follow up with pupils over the next several weeks and months

Appendix 2

Support, Guidance and Documentation

Other support, advice and guidance can be found in the Scottish Government document: *A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0>)

Legislative Framework

- Children and Young People Act (2014)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Additional Support for Learning Act
- Equality Act 2010 Schools (Scotland) Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 2006

Associated Documentation

Curriculum for Excellence GIRFEC Child Protection Procedures Complaints Procedure

[A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0)
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0>)

Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Technology in School

Links

[UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools](#)

[RESPECTme: Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service http://www.respectme.org.uk/](http://www.respectme.org.uk/)

Health and Wellbeing in Curriculum for Excellence:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-dri vers/cfe-building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5/curriculum-areas/health-and-wellbeing/>

[Getting it Right for Every Child:](#)

www.360safeScotland.org.uk
