

WALLACE HALL ACADEMY



Together we grow, learn and achieve

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY **2024**

Review May 2027

'All children have the right to an education, and protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse. Bullying is no exception.

Bullying is a breach of Children's Rights and children need to be protected from bullying behaviour so that they can survive, develop and participate in a fulfilling life. As adults we have an important role to play to help and protect these rights, therefore, knowledge and understanding of Children's Rights is essential to good practice.' – **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

1. RATIONAL

Dumfries and Galloway is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all pupils in its educational establishments.

At Wallace Hall Academy, our values are based on being ready, respectful and responsible. Embedding these values into the school ethos we can continue to work with the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda, that all children and young people in Scotland can be confident individuals; effective contributors; successful learners; and responsible citizens. In order for these outcomes to be achieved, children should be: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible and included.

WHAC is committed to children and young people having a right to be protected from all forms of bullying and ensuring bullying does not undermine children's rights.

The following policy will identify why addressing bullying is important, define bullying, outline the law, give WHAC procedure to handling bullying and the recording, monitoring and evaluating process.

The policy has been developed in partnership with a number of key stakeholders including young people, parents and staff at WHAC. The following stakeholders have provided close guidance throughout the creation of this policy:

- **Positive Behaviour in School** – Dumfries and Galloway guidelines
- **respectme** - Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service
- **'Respect for All'** - The national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland's young people
- **GIRFEC** – Getting it Right for Every Child
- **SHANARRI** – Wellbeing indicators

This policy is intended to be an overall guide to assist staff in working in partnership with parents and other agencies to help ensure that young people are learning in a safe educational environment and are treated well by their peers.

2. DEFINING BULLYING

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of ‘agency’. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online.” (Respectme, 2015)

Bullying takes place in the context of relationships and can happen anywhere. Within the context of this policy, the critical issue is the impact the bullying behaviour has on the school environment and/or young person’s learning or health and wellbeing.

Bullying is a combination of behaviours and the impact they have. It can be a range of behaviours including:

- **Physical:** including hitting, kicking, pushing, taking or damaging someone else’s property
- **Verbal:** this may include spreading rumours, name calling, teasing or talking about people.
- **Emotional:** this may include excluding someone from the group, embarrassing someone or making them feel bad for being different
- **Online:** May include messages or images intending to hurt, humiliate or intimidate another person. May also take place on online gaming, social networking sites or instant messaging platforms.
- **Prejudice-based:** actions based around a person’s race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, in line with the Equality Act (2010).
- Any abuse or actions that would be deemed homophobic, biphobic or transphobic.

Although online, and all forms of, bullying may happen outwith the school grounds, WHAC recognises this is a form of bullying that can have a huge impact on young people. Online bullying incidents will not be treated as ‘outside of school incidents’ and will be dealt with in accordance to the guidance in the policy (see section 5). However, where required, there will be more involvement with the school community police officer if the behaviour was potentially criminal.

3. BULLYING, THE LAW AND REGULATIONS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Knowledge and understanding of Children's Rights is essential in good practice. The UNCRC states that children need to be protected so they can survive, develop and participate in a fulfilling life. Staff share a responsibility to address any behaviour that can harm the development of children.

UNCRC have produced numerous articles that can be directly linked to children's rights and bullying, for example:

You have the right to be protected from harm - Children and young people have a right to be protected from all forms of bullying and all adults in their lives regardless of their role share a responsibility to provide this protection.

You have the right to an education - Bullying can cause children to refuse to attend school if they feel unsafe. This denies a child's right to education. Staff and parents/carers have a responsibility to change behaviour that is making a child feel unsafe.

The right to protection from discrimination - Bullying stemming from prejudice can devalue a child's beliefs. Children have a right to have their characteristics respected by others and adults have an important role to play in promoting this message while strongly challenging all other prejudice-based attitudes and actions.

You have the right to rest, relax and play - Bullying behaviour can cause children to be excluded, or self-exclude, from activities and unable to participate fully. Withdrawing from hobbies and interests they previously enjoyed can be another impact of bullying.



The Equality Act 2010

This policy places a duty on schools to:

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

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people due to their:

- **Disability** – Referring to a person with a physical or mental disability which has either substantial or long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **Sex** - Reference to a man or a woman or reference to persons of the same sex.
- **Gender reassignment** - Referring to a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex, including reference to a transsexual person.
- **Pregnancy and maternity** - Refers to a person who is either pregnant, breastfeeding, have recently given birth or are on maternity leave.
- **Race** - Race includes- colour, nationality, ethnic/ national origins or someone who belongs to a particular racial group.
- **Religion or belief** - Reference to any religious or philosophical belief and reference to a lack of belief.
- **Sexual orientation** - Refers to a person's sexual orientation towards- persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex.
- **Age** – Refers to discrimination against anyone based on their age
- **Marriage & Civil Partnership** – Refers to a person's marital status and/or the marital status of friends and relatives

If young people are seen to be discriminating against these protected characteristics, then action will be taken by staff (see page 5 for Responding to Bullying).

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.

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE – HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Education Scotland ‘Principles and Practices’ document states that:

‘Children and young people should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment and all staff should be proactive in promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and the wider school community. Robust policies and practice which ensure the safety and wellbeing of children should already be in place. In addition, there are many ways in which establishments can assist young people. These include peer support, buddies, breakfast or lunch clubs, safe areas, mentors, pupil support staff and extended support teams.’

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. It is locally embedded and positively embraced by organisations, services and practitioners across Children’s Services Planning Partnerships, with a focus on changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of babies, infants, children, young people and their families.

WHAC works with young people, parents/carers and outside agencies to ensure it meets the needs of young people so they can fulfil their full potential. The GIRFEC values and principles seek to realise children’s rights on a day to day basis which promotes a shared approach and accountability that:

- valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly
- considering and addressing inequalities
- understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society

WHAC consider each of the eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) in collaboration with young people to ensure their wellbeing is being monitored and if any issues arise they can be supported. These include the young person feeling; safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

4. EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

There are a range of proactive and preventative strategies available to help raise awareness of bullying and that raise the message that bullying is never acceptable. All members of the WHAC school community have a responsibility to prevent bullying behaviour by promoting positive relationships and respect for others. By encouraging respect, and promoting positive behaviour we are less likely to see bullying as an acceptable behaviour.

Responsibilities of all staff:

- Promote positive behaviour within and out with the classroom.
- Challenge bullying behaviour in class, around the school and role modelling appropriate response and support.
- Report concerns to Pupil Support/SLT.
- Support pupils who have been involved in bullying through restorative practice where appropriate.
- Ensure young people are aware of their rights towards each other to promote a positive ethos.
- Raise awareness of LGBT, anti-racism, disability amongst young people and staff.

Responsibilities of Pupil Support staff:

- Giving young people the platform to comfortably discuss bullying and the impact it can have on young people. Facilitate/support these discussions.
- Including Anti-Bullying in the Health and Wellbeing curriculum and in other curricular areas where possible.
- Raise awareness in class throughout the year with a special focus on Anti-Bullying week.
- Continue to work positive peer influence programmes such as MVP.
- Ensure there are secure, positive places where pupils can go to, such as The Hub, when the rigours of the playground can be too much.
- Establishing an S6 working group that promotes anti-bullying through Health and Wellbeing lessons to BGE pupils.

Responsibilities of pupils:

- Treating everyone in the school community with respect.
- Report any incidents of bullying to a member of staff where the matter will be taken seriously and responded to.
- Being involved in the Anti-Bullying week during Health and Wellbeing and promoting an anti-bullying culture all year round.
- Looking after one another if anyone has experienced being bullied, or is involved in bullying others. Everyone needs some support to help things change.

Anti-Bullying Committee:

WHAC Anti-Bullying committee has been established since August 2023. The group have been working on promoting anti-bullying, preventing bullying new ways of reporting bullying. The group has launched a series of initiatives such as;

- Delivering anti-bullying assemblies to all year groups.
- Designing a wall display in the main section of the school to raise awareness of anti-bullying and how young people can be supported if they are experiencing bullying.
- Designing an anti-bullying lesson that was launched during Health and Wellbeing during Anti-Bullying Week.
- Meeting once a term to discuss improvements that can be made to promote anti-bullying and coming up with new ways to prevent bullying behaviour.
- Conducting a whole school survey to get feedback on pupils' thoughts and recommendations on how WHAC deals with bullying behaviour. Pupils said they wanted an anonymous place they could report bullying to. The group met to discuss how this could be done and created a way for them to report incidents discreetly.
- Making anti-bullying a priority by having it on the deputy head boy and girls remit.

5. REPORTING AND HANDLING BULLYING INCIDENTS

Pupils reporting an incident.

Any pupil that feels they are being bullied or suspects someone else is being bullied should discuss it with a trusted adult or parent/carer. Parent/Carer's have a responsibility to inform school staff as soon as possible to allow for support to be put in place.

All adults have a responsibility to explain to young people the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying in order to keep themselves and others safe.

In the first instance, pupils should go to their pupil support teacher, however there are other systems in place such as talking with a classroom teacher or anonymous reporting available to pupils.

Cairn – Mrs Fraser

Scaur – Mrs Mack

Nith – Mrs Robertson and Mr Laverty

Staff reporting an incident.

- Report any instance of bullying to pupil support staff.
- Referral through SEEMIS if required.

When a bullying incident is reported, a member of staff will investigate the allegation and gather as much information as possible to establish if bullying has taken place.

Consideration should be given to the following questions:

- What was the behaviour?
- What Impact did it have?
- What does the child or young person want to happen?
- What do I need to do about it?

This may involve speaking to the young person involved, other relevant staff and where appropriate, other young people to gather relevant information.

The person who may have been bullied will be reassured and, where necessary, measures will be put in place to keep them safe and the member of the school community who raised the issue will be kept informed on what is happening.

What happens if a bullying incident has taken place after investigation:

There will be several ways in which the person who has been bullied will be supported, and the perpetrator will be involved in restorative actions or consequences depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents and their engagement with the restorative process. There will be a degree of professional judgement when imposing sanctions.

Initial possible actions when bullying is found to have occurred:

- Reflective discussion with perpetrator about their actions and impact on
- Restorative conversations between person experiencing and person displaying bullying behaviours. Facilitated by a member of staff
- Person experiencing to be supported by named member of staff.
- Prevention measures in school; seating plans changed
- Parental involvement including potential attendance at restorative meetings
- The situation will be monitored by named member of staff.
- Information recorded in Bullying and Equalities Module on Seemis
- Demerits, marked as 'bullying' which will notify parents and carers
- Police intervention depending on the nature of bullying behaviour

Possibly actions if bullying behaviour continues:

- Break and lunchtime detentions
- Removal from classes
- Opportunity for school trips revoked
- Opportunity to play in school sports teams revoked
- Police intervention depending on the nature of bullying behaviour
- Exclusion

Bullying Incident Flow Chart

