

Fife Council Education Service

Care & Welfare

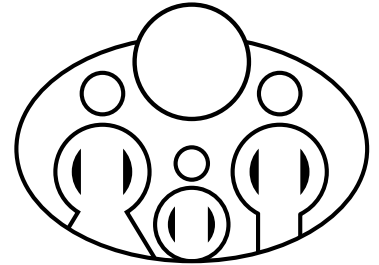


Anti-bullying

GUIDANCE

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Acknowledgements

Bullying - Don't Suffer In Silence - An Anti-Bullying Pack for Schools
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Introduction

These anti-bullying guidelines support the Anti-bullying Policy (2003) and have been devised for use in schools and other educational establishments as part 4 of the Care and Welfare Guidelines.

The Education Service approach to anti-bullying is set within the wider strategy of ethos development in schools, the personal and social development of pupils in schools and the role of the school in responding to traumatic incidents. It is important that all staff, pupils and parents have an active part to play in the evolution, development and maintenance of the 'Anti-bullying Policy', involvement and ownership contribute significantly to effectiveness.

Challenging bullying effectively will improve the safety and happiness of pupils, show that the school cares and make clear to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable. Creating a climate where bullying behaviour is not acceptable is of the essence.

What is bullying?

1 There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be :

- ◆ Deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- ◆ Repeated often over a period of time
- ◆ Difficult for the targeted person(s) to defend themselves against

The nature of bullying

2 Bullying can take many forms and happens both in and out of schools but the three main types are :

- ◆ Physical : hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- ◆ Verbal : name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- ◆ Indirect : spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion of the victim from social groups, making the victim subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious emails or text messages on mobile phones

3 Name calling is the most common direct form of bullying. This may be because of a person's individual characteristics but pupils can be called hurtful names because of their ethnic origin; nationality or colour; sexual orientation, or some form of disability or any other perceived difference.

KEY POINTS FOR STAFF

- ◆ Never ignore suspected bullying
- ◆ Don't make premature assumptions
- ◆ Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils giving the same account does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth
- ◆ Adopt a problem solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves
- ◆ Ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the schools anti-bullying policy and initiatives
- ◆ Always involve parents/or carers
- ◆ Follow up repeatedly over a period of time, checking that the bullying has not resumed

KEY POINTS FOR PUPILS

- ◆ Bullying is a form of harassment – you have the right to feel safe
- ◆ Tell someone you can trust – a friend, family member or teacher
- ◆ You will be supported in trying to resolve bullying issues

KEY POINTS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

- ◆ You should expect to be kept informed of the anti-bullying policy, procedures and strategies in your school
- ◆ Inform the school immediately if you suspect your child is being bullied or is involved in bullying
- ◆ You should expect to be kept informed and involved in dealing with bullying issues concerning your child
- ◆ Work closely with the school to resolve bullying issues

Establishing a whole-school policy in four stages

The policy needs to set out strategies to be followed, backed up by systems to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and review. There are four main stages in establishing a whole-school policy.

Stage 1 - Awareness raising and consultation

- 1 A policy will only be effective if everybody in school has discussed and understood the problem of bullying, and agreed on good and bad practice.
- 2 Awareness raising in school helps everyone to understand the problem and agree a definition of bullying. Though you could use one of the definitions in this pack, developing your own will promote useful discussion.
- 3 Some schools have found the following approach helpful, with adults and children, when trying to define bullying :
 - ◆ Each person recalls examples of bullying experienced or witnessed
 - ◆ They explain why these were bullying rather than other forms of aggression
 - ◆ In pairs or small groups they discuss their observations, noting areas of agreement and disagreement about the features of bullying
 - ◆ A consensus emerges, and a definition is established
- 4 Consultation lets everybody say what they think the policy should contain, but requires careful planning. Back up questionnaires with meetings and opportunities for discussion. Provide pupils with a copy of the draft policy and set questions about it. As part of their homework, they can discuss the draft policy with their parents/carers.
- 5 A working party can help with formulating the draft policy. Family members; lunchtime supervisors; community police officers; educational psychologists, school health visitors and linked social workers may offer valuable perspectives. Such working parties require good leadership and require careful focusing. Schools who involve pupil representatives have found their suggestions practical and sensitive to the schools positive ethos.
- 6 An agreed policy should be short, succinct and written in language that everyone understands. It should include :

- ◆ A definition of bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying
 - ◆ Aims and objectives
 - ◆ Procedures to follow e.g. who to tell, how to record bullying, sanctions
 - ◆ Intervention techniques, curriculum support, training policy, play policy (depending on resources)
- 7 The anti-bullying policy should be part of the school's overall behaviour strategy.

Stage 2 – Implementation

- 8 Senior management should give a clear lead so staff and pupils know how to respond when an incident occurs. They need to act consistently. An anti-bullying launch involving the whole school may help.
- 9 There are many opportunities to promote the policy :
- ◆ During assemblies and collective worship
 - ◆ During tutorials
 - ◆ Through project work
 - ◆ Through rôle plays or stories which can indicate what pupils can do to prevent bullying
 - ◆ Through literature
 - ◆ Through historical events or current affairs might be chosen to re-enforce the anti-bullying approach
 - ◆ During personal, social and health classes
- 10 Direct action should remind pupils that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. An accurate record of incidents and the school response should be kept.
- 11 The school may wish to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Police with regard to bullying.
- 12 It is essential to follow-up after an incident to check that the bullying has not started again. This should be done within about two weeks, and again within the following term. Immediately after intervention, the bullying is likely to stop. However, research shows bullying can be very persistent and may recur. If pupils expect follow-up, they are unlikely to start bullying again.

Stage 3 – Monitoring

- 13 To monitor trends within the school and in case of possible litigation staff must keep accurate records of incidents, and the schools responses to all reported bullying.

- 14 Monitoring by a key member of staff shows progress made and enables follow-up, indicating whether the policy is really effective. The policy should make clear under what circumstances records are used for monitoring, how long they will be kept and who should have access to them.
- 15 It is essential to follow-up the launch of a policy with regular reminders. A low profile policy can be easily forgotten, and in subsequent years, new pupils need to be made aware of the policy.

Stage 4 – Evaluation

- 16 Use data from monitoring and feedback, which staff, families and pupils provide, to review and update the policy – at least once every school year. A termly report to school board, parents/carers and staff may be helpful. After one year, schools typically find that :
- ◆ Staff are more vigilant and responsive to bullying
 - ◆ Fewer pupils report being bullied or that they bully others
 - ◆ More pupils say they would not join in bullying someone else
 - ◆ More pupils would tell a member of staff if they were being bullied
- 17 Sometimes all indicators are positive, sometimes results are mixed. Awareness raising increases pupils' understanding and makes them more likely to report incidents. There may even be a temporary increase in reported incidents. In primary schools, bullying is usually reduced within the first year of implementation. It may take longer (two or three years) in secondary schools. In the long term, change should be positive if schools continue to work through the process.

Who is involved in bullying - and where

- 1 Bullying is most likely where adult surveillance is intermittent. In primary schools, a high proportion of bullying takes place in the playground. In secondary schools, it is also most likely outdoors, but classrooms, corridors and toilets are common sites.
- 2 Both boys and girls bully others. Usually, boys are bullied by boys, but girls are bullied by girls and boys. The most common perpetrators are individual boys or groups of several boys. Children who bully others can come from any kind of family regardless of social class or cultural background.
- 3 Usually one pupil starts bullying a victim. There are often other pupils present. They may :
 - ◆ Help the bully by joining in
 - ◆ Help the bully by watching, laughing and shouting encouragement
 - ◆ Remain resolutely uninvolved
 - ◆ Help the victim directly, by telling the bullies to stop, or fetch an adult
- 4 Any child can be bullied, and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely :
 - ◆ Lacking close friends in school
 - ◆ Being shy
 - ◆ Having an over-protective family environment
 - ◆ Being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority
 - ◆ Being different in some obvious respect – such as stammering
 - ◆ Having additional support needs or a disability
 - ◆ Behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a ‘nuisance’
 - ◆ Possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games
- 5 Some pupils who are being bullied may behave passively or submissively, signalling to others they would not retaliate if attacked or insulted. They may benefit from assertiveness training. Others may behave aggressively, sometimes provoking others to retaliate. Approximately 20% of pupils being bullied also act as bullies.

- 6 Verbal bullying is common amongst boys and girls. Boys experience more physical violence and threats than girls, although physical attacks on girls by other girls are becoming more frequent. Girls tend to use indirect methods which can be more difficult to detect.
- 7 Pupils being bullied may be reluctant to attend school and are often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. They can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures – feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive.
- 8 Pupils being bullied may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust in adult life.

Pupils' attitudes to bullying

- 9 Pupils' understanding varies with age. Early years pupils may confuse bullying with fighting and nasty experiences generally. But difficulties in identifying bullying in 4 to 7 year olds should not prevent schools taking action.
- 10 Surveys suggest that fewer than 30% of pupils would get involved when another pupil was being bullied. Girls seem more supportive of pupils being bullied than boys, but not necessarily more likely to intervene.
- 11 Pupils being bullied are more likely to talk to family members than teachers. Older pupils are less likely to tell anyone at all. Most pupils being bullied who do tell teachers or parents describe the outcome as positive. However in a minority of cases the bullying increased due to an inappropriate handling of the situation.

Bullying by Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Disability

RACIST BULLYING

- 12 In racist bullying, a child is targeted for representing a group, and an attack on the individual sends a message to that group. Racist bullying is therefore likely to hurt not only the victim, but also other pupils from the same group and their families. In the 1999 MacPherson Report, racist bullying was defined as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.' Anti-bullying policies should cover racist bullying and all incidents should be recorded. Incidents can include:
 - ◆ Verbal abuse by name calling, racist jokes and offensive mimicry
 - ◆ Physical threats or attacks
 - ◆ Wearing provocative badges or insignia

- ◆ Distributing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- ◆ Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- ◆ Racist graffiti or other written insults
- ◆ Refusing to co-operate in work or in play

13 A range of strategies is available to deal with incidents :

- ◆ Ensure that the school's anti-bullying policy refers explicitly to racial harassment and relates to the school's anti-racist policy
- ◆ Put in place an effective recording systems e.g., an incident book containing the name of perpetrators and the action taken
- ◆ Be aware that even young children can understand the consequences of their actions
- ◆ Listen carefully to pupils and provide opportunities for them to express views and opinions
- ◆ Multi-agency working with e.g., the police, youth services etc.
- ◆ Involve parents and the wider community
- ◆ Use peer mediation to resolve conflict between pupils, and theatre-in-education groups to raise awareness and find solutions

Sexual Bullying

14 Sexual bullying impacts on both genders. Boys are also victims – of girls and other boys. In general, sexual bullying is characterised by :

- ◆ Abusive name calling
- ◆ Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- ◆ Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- ◆ Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- ◆ Pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- ◆ In its most extreme, sexual assault or rape

15 Useful strategies to help deal with sexual bullying include :

- ◆ Refer to it explicitly in anti-bullying policies
- ◆ Use surveys to find out the extent and nature of the problem
- ◆ Record incidents in a separate incident book
- ◆ Develop understanding of gender relations and suitable strategies through staff training
- ◆ Explore sexism, and sexual bullying, through the curriculum/personal, social and health education

- ◆ Recognise and challenge the sexual content of verbal abuse
- ◆ Use single-sex groupings to explore sensitive issues
- ◆ Ensure that the school site is well supervised, paying attention to areas where pupils may be vulnerable – perhaps using CCTV

Homophobic Bullying

16 Sexual bullying can also be related to sexual orientation. Pupils do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay or bisexual to experience such bullying. Just being different can be enough. Factors hindering schools challenging homophobic bullying include staff inexperience and parental disapproval.

17 Strategies for reducing such bullying include :

- ◆ Including it in the school's anti-bullying policy – so pupils know discrimination is wrong and the school will act
- ◆ Covering it in INSET days on bullying in general
- ◆ Guaranteeing confidentiality and appropriate advice to lesbian and gay pupils
- ◆ Challenging homophobic language
- ◆ Exploring issues of diversity and difference – discussing what schools and society can do to end discrimination
- ◆ Exploring pupils understanding of the impact of their use of homophobic language

Additional Support Needs

18 Pupils with additional needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being both directly and indirectly targeted usually about their specific difficulties or disability

19 Strategies include :

- ◆ Referring to such issues in anti-bullying policies
- ◆ Reflecting on how staff behaviour might unintentionally trigger bullying
- ◆ Avoiding undue attention being made to differences between children with additional support needs and others
- ◆ Using appropriate classroom activities sensitive to their needs
- ◆ Teaching assertiveness and other social skills
- ◆ Using peer mentoring
- ◆ Teaching victims to say no or to get help
- ◆ Using rôle playing in dealing with taunts

- ◆ Providing special resource rooms at break times and lunch times

Bullying by text messages on mobile phones

20 Independent research has suggested that this may be an increasing problem. Children should be careful who they give their phone number to, and keep a record of dates and times of any offensive messages. Staff and parents/carers need to encourage victims to save messages they are concerned about and let a member of staff see them. When pupils report bullying via text messages the school needs to take the complaint seriously. The child's family may need to contact the police. If such bullying has been carried out by one or more pupils on a persistent basis, or there has been a threat of violence it will need to be dealt with firmly. The same necessarily applies to malicious emails sent by other pupils.

Finding out about bullying in school – survey methods and interpretation of results

- 1 Monitoring will help the school assess progress and evaluate the anti-bullying policy so that action can be targeted where it is most needed and will be most effective. Surveys can reveal :
 - ◆ How frequently pupils have been bullied
 - ◆ Same sex/opposite sex bullying
 - ◆ Same age/different ages
 - ◆ How long the bullying goes on
 - ◆ Numbers involved
 - ◆ In what ways it has happened
 - ◆ How often they have bullied others
 - ◆ Who they tell
 - ◆ What action was taken and by whom
 - ◆ Where bullying takes place
- 2 Schools together with pupils can develop their own questionnaires. Use of PICO (Participation in Consultation Online) to set up individual school questionnaires is advocated – a template, and instructions, is appended (Appendix)
- 3 A quicker and shorter method is to carry out a sampling survey with particular groups of pupils. This can be helpful if schools decide to focus on a group of pupils, such as a class or year group who are causing concern, or they want to measure the effect of a particular intervention against bullying. Keeping a log of incidents can also add information on, for example, gender, repetition of incidents, etc.
- 4 One method of identifying high risk locations is to provide pupils with maps of the school and grounds, school gates and environs and ask them to highlight places where bullying occurs. Pupils can individually sort photographs of locations into 'safe' and 'unsafe' places – unsafe places should be patrolled regularly. This can be especially useful when modifying supervision arrangements, or planning changes to the playground environment. Pupils should also have opportunities to highlight incidents on buses and in their home areas as incidents often spill over into school.

- 5 Interviews may be useful – individually or in small groups – especially by children with moderate or severe additional support needs. Schools need to think carefully about who does the interviewing, as the pupil-interviewer relationship can affect the honesty of the answers – do it in private, but where both are visible to others. Children may not like to repeat unpleasant names they have been called, or stories that have been told about them. Making notes during an interview can be distracting, so do them as soon as the interview is over. Opportunities to discuss the issues can also be taken in personal social and health education and other areas of the curriculum and this may lead to the accumulation of more information on the school's situation.
- 6 Confidentiality is a difficult issue. Sometimes interviewers may need to disclose information to others. They should explain to pupils how they might need to use such information. Some children are prepared to write about their experiences in an anonymous questionnaire, but not to talk about them. Even one-to-one interviews are not always reliable in detecting whether particular pupils have been bullied or not.
- 7 With younger children, photographs or pictures of types of bullying behaviour could be used to show what kind of bullying is occurring and how often.
- 8 Repeating surveys over time will allow schools to check trends and monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the school policy and strategies employed to reduce incidents.

Strategies to combat bullying

- 1 Bullying should be discussed as part of the curriculum, but teachers also need general strategies to deal with the problem. Whilst they should try strategies such as those described below, schools may find that stronger measures are needed in the more serious and persistent cases.
- 2 Where other strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

Curricular approaches to bullying

- 3 The curriculum can be used to :
 - ◆ Raise awareness about bullying and the anti-bullying policy
 - ◆ Increase understanding for victims, and help build anti-bullying ethos
 - ◆ Teach pupils how constructively to manage their relationships with others
 - ◆ Understand why people bully each other
 - ◆ Understand the effects of bullying on the bullied, on bullies, and on bystanders?
 - ◆ Explore strategies to stop bullying?
- 4 Many local theatre-in-education groups present workshops, exploring bullying in depth and rehearsing preventive strategies.
- 5 Care must be taken to include pupils with additional support needs in curriculum work about bullying in an appropriate way for their individual needs.

Choosing strategies for reducing bullying

- 6 The following paragraphs list some of the key strategies schools have used to prevent and reduce bullying; they might not remain appropriate if there has been violence and tougher measures will then be needed. Anti-bullying strategies for older pupils can include preparation for adult relationships. Many strategies for older pupils can be used, with adaptation, for younger ones. Younger pupils can be taught to be assertive and to work co-operatively; some schools have taught mediation or conflict resolution skills to young pupils and buddying schemes may offer appropriate support. Each incident may need to be approached differently. It is essential that children and young people are involved in finding solutions to assist them to feel in control again. One way of involving the young person is to ask them to keep a record in the form of a 'diary' for each whole day.

This can be the means by which a young person is able to relate events and feelings to a teacher and parent/carer in a confidential setting. It can form the basis for discussion on resolution of the problem.

- 7 Many schools have found that the best policies usually include a combination of strategies that can be drawn on and adapted to fit the circumstances of particular incidents. A single strategy is unlikely to provide a complete solution on its own.

Co-operative Group work from age 5

- 8 When this is integrated into normal classroom practice, pupils can :
- ◆ Explore issues and controversies by considering different points of view
 - ◆ Be more tolerant of others and more willing to listen
 - ◆ Trust those of the opposite gender and those from other ethnic groups
 - ◆ Become better integrated into the peer group
- 9 Children work together on shared tasks, involving co-operation and individual accountability. For example, groups of pupils in expert groups research aspects of a topic. The 'experts' then return to the home group to instruct one another and produce a joint piece of work. In a final plenary session, children are debriefed about the task that they have just done, or the way in which they have worked together, or both.
- 10 Variants include trust-building exercises, co-operative games, problem solving activities, discussion groups, role play and simulations.

Circle time from age 5

- 11 Time is set aside each week for teachers and pupils to sit in a circle and take part in enjoyable activities, games and discussion. The positive atmosphere generated in the well managed circle usually spreads into other areas of class activity. Circle time :
- ◆ Creates a safe space to explore issues of concern
 - ◆ Explores relationships with adults and peers
 - ◆ Enhances effective communication
 - ◆ Affirms the strengths and enhances the self-esteem of each member
- 12 Circles last for 20-30 minutes, at the beginning or end of a session of work. Participants listen carefully, making eye-contact with one another and address particular problems – for example, relationships, anger, fighting and bullying.
- 13 The teacher and pupils agree on simple, positive rules which encourages the group to :

- ◆ Focus on their own feelings and those of others
 - ◆ Listen to one another and tolerate others views
 - ◆ Learn to take turns
 - ◆ Discuss difficult issues using a problem-solving approach
- 14 Putting this method into practice needs good organisation and links to other anti-bullying strategies.

Circles of Friends from age 5

15 Sometimes known as Circles of Support, they build relationships around a vulnerable pupil. The method must first be explained to the pupil and the parents/carers, whose agreement and support are essential. Circles aim to :

- ◆ Improve the level of acceptance and inclusion of the pupil
- ◆ Help the pupil make friends inside or outside the Circle
- ◆ Increase insight into the pupils feelings and behaviour

16 The class meet with a trained counsellor or an educational psychologist who explains it is unusual to talk in this way about a pupil who is not present, but making clear that the pupil has agreed to the discussion. The class then :

- ◆ Describe the pupil with only positive things being said
- ◆ List things about the pupil that they find difficult to accept
- ◆ Discuss how they would feel and behave if they were isolated or socially excluded
- ◆ Consider how they might help – pupils typically produce two clear solutions: offering friendship and finding ways to keep the pupil on track
- ◆ Identify what might prevent the pupil from changing
- ◆ Volunteer to form the pupils Circle of Friends (between six and eight pupils)

17 Soon afterwards, the initial Circle of Friends meeting takes place including the focus pupil. Ground rules are negotiated and aims clarified about helping them to make friends and change any negative behaviour. In turn, circle members explain why they volunteered. The leader asks what they like and value about this person and responses are written down. Next, the reader carefully asks about the pupils negative behaviour. The group brainstorms strategies for helping the pupil which are recorded and then prioritised. Finally, circle members come up with a name for their group, and subsequent weekly meetings of 30 to 40 minutes are set up.

18 Experienced leaders comment frequently on the extent of the support offered by circle members and their ingenuity in devising practical strategies.

Active listening/counselling-based approaches for 11 to 18 years

QUALITY CIRCLES

19 Quality Circles develop skills directly related to the curriculum while solving problems related to bullying. There are five steps :

- ◆ Identify and prioritise problems
- ◆ Analyse each problem – establish its extent and find possible causes
- ◆ Develop a solution and an action plan – perhaps trying a small pilot run to see if it works in practice
- ◆ Present the solution to management
- ◆ Evaluate the solution, implementing it if possible. If not, management must explain reasons, so that the quality circle can reconsider or move to another area of concern

Assertiveness training groups – primary and secondary pupils

20 In a safe, supportive environment, bullied pupils talk about their experiences, and learn and practice effective responses. They avoid either any use of threats or trying to manipulate or intimidate, and keep responses honest and transparent. Pupils feel more secure and in control, with less anger and despair. Responding in a neutral but direct way takes the heat out of the situation.

21 The younger the pupils, the shorter the sessions and the smaller the group. The training encourages :

- ◆ Making assertive statements
- ◆ Resisting manipulation and threats
- ◆ Dealing with name calling
- ◆ Escaping safely from physical restraint
- ◆ Enlisting support from bystanders
- ◆ Boosting self-esteem
- ◆ Remaining calm in stressful situations

22 Once a group has begun no new pupils should be admitted. However, pupils can drop out at any time. Lunchtime groups are viewed more like a club than a withdrawal class and pupils can be more honest about whether they wish to attend or not. They use their own situations to practice, giving them confidence to use the techniques outside the group and experiment with different strategies.

23 Sometimes it may be better to work with pupils individually than to construct a group involving pupils who have not been badly bullied. Do not mix targets with aggressors.

The last meeting should be carefully managed to emphasise the gains the pupils have made from the group but at the same time to draw the group to an end.

Peer meditation

24 Peer Mediation is extremely powerful as pupils often feel much more comfortable with their peers than with adults.

Rather than a bully/victim scenario, the pupils are not judged in any way and both pupils take responsibility for moving the situation forward. This may be especially useful for the 'victim' as constantly having decisions made for them can only serve to reinforce the powerlessness of their position.

Pupils are trained as peer mediators and usually work in pairs.
Mediation is voluntary, so the pupils must be willing to enter the process.

Peer Mediators assist pupils in conflict by listening to each side of the situation and helping them to reach their own agreement for the future at a mediation meeting.

Mediators :

- Do not take sides.
- Do not tell the pupils what to do.
- Do not gossip about the session.

(If they are worried about safety they would tell a teacher.)

The mediators ask the pupils :

- To talk one at a time and not interrupt each other.
- To speak with respect and not call each other names.
- To speak from their own point of view and not blame or accuse the other pupil.

The Peer Mediators reinforce the ground rules throughout the session and encourage the pupils to listen to each other, understand feelings and offer suggestions to improve the situation. They should agree a solution and if necessary meet again to assess its effectiveness.

Meditation

25 Adults may also act as mediators to combat bullying.

The mediators must be seen to be neutral which may make it difficult for some members of staff to mediate. Arrangements could be made with other schools or mediation services. The adults must be trained mediators.

Mediation sessions are voluntary and can be arranged between pupils, parents, teachers, etc.

The mediator/s will reinforce the ground rules and encourage the parties to listen to each other, understand and recognise each others perspective and collaboratively build an agreement for the future.

- 26 This approach can be expensive in terms of time and money. Groups need regular meetings with the same member of staff, books, materials and a conformable meeting room free from interruptions allowing space for role-play.

Working with victims

- 27 The behaviour of certain pupils can contribute to bullying though this is no way justifies it. Some pupils find it hard to concentrate in class, are hyperactive or behave in ways that irritate others. They may get angry easily and fight back when attacked or even slightly provoked – and a large number of classmates and adults, including the teacher may dislike them. They may also bully weaker pupils.
- 28 Parents and teachers should co-operate in identifying such behaviour. The pupil needs improved social skills. Assertiveness, conflict resolution and stress management are all worth developing. Friends could give feedback on annoying behaviour.

When tougher measures are needed

- 29 Where pupils do not respond to preventive strategies to combat bullying, schools will need to take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying. As part of their behaviour policy, schools should have a sufficient range of sanctions to deal with this type of bullying. The school should make sure that the whole school community knows what sanctions will be taken. The sanctions should be fairly and consistently applied.

Sanctions might include :

- ◆ Removal from the group (in class)
- ◆ Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- ◆ Detention
- ◆ Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum

Working with Parents / Carers

Involving Parents

- 1 Parental support is often a key to success or failure in anti-bullying initiatives. Although not always apparent, parental approval is important to children and young people of all ages and some schools have learned to build on this. The majority of parents support anti-bullying measures and are keen to participate. Consultation is important, helping to create an ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged and bullying considered unacceptable.
- 2 However, a significant number have an unhelpful attitude in that they say bullying is an inevitable (even desirable) part of growing up. They encourage bullied children to stand up for themselves' rather than to seek help. While understandable, this conflicts with the aim of most anti-bullying initiatives which encourage children to tell staff about bullying rather than try to fight back.
- 3 Useful approaches include :
 - ◆ Regular consultation and communication with pupils and parents/carers
 - ◆ Providing information about the nature and effects of bullying – for example posters displayed in the school and information packs/newsletters which include the findings of surveys
 - ◆ Advising parents of the possible consequences of children bringing valuable items to school
 - ◆ Putting on a drama to which parents are invited – an existing play such as “Only Playing” is based on pupils own experiences and can be developed from role-play in drama classes, or by using survey examples.

Parents reporting bullying

- 4 When parents contact schools, often in some distress, to report that their child has been bullied, their concerns must be taken seriously. Sometimes they may be faced with disbelief or hostility or made to feel they are to blame. Such problems can and must be avoided.
- 5 A variety of front-line staff could be the first point of contact for parents.

Good practice includes :

 - ◆ Recognising that the parent/carer may be angry and upset
 - ◆ Keeping an open mind; as bullying can be difficult to detect.
 - ◆ Remaining calm and understanding

- ◆ Making clear that the school does care
 - ◆ reassuring the parent/carer that something will be done
 - ◆ Explaining the school policy, making sure procedures are followed
- 6 When a case is referred to them, senior managers/Guidance staff should :
- ◆ Ask for details and record the information
 - ◆ Make an appointment with parents/carers to discuss the actions to be taken to ensure that the bullying will be stopped
 - ◆ Ensure that appropriate action has been taken with relevant staff and that the school policy has been implemented
- 7 Many of the same points apply when the school has to tell the parents/carers that their child is involved in bullying. Parents are more likely to accept a calm approach, following the agreed guidelines of an anti-bullying policy they are familiar with. This helps to defuse anger and resentment. Specific requirements depend on whether the child in question is the target or the bully.

Parent of bullies and targeted pupils

- 8 Most anti-bullying policies involve the parents/carer of the (alleged) bully being invited in to discuss their child's behaviour. Such discussions are potentially extremely difficult and it is better to involve parents constructively at an early stage rather than only as a last resort. This could undermine the co-operative ethos between parents and school.
- 9 Often it is helpful to use a problem-solving approach in the first instance. Blame is much more likely to make the parent react defensively and make it much harder to reach a resolution.
- 10 The parents of a target are likely to have one main concern: that the bullying stops. Some may also want the perpetrators to be punished. Strong measures will sometimes be necessary. This can place strains on continued parental ownership of the policy. Comprehensive consultation, awareness raising and communication are the best preparation for such situations.
- 11 Some claims of bullying may turn out to be false or exaggerated. However, whatever the target's previous history, all claims of bullying should be treated seriously and not dismissed without further enquiries being made.

Beyond the classroom

Developing a playground policy

- 1 Playground policies should set out clear guidelines for managing pupil behaviour during breaks and lunchtimes. All staff should be involved, especially lunchtime supervisors, as well as pupils.
- 2 Effective supervision involves moving around the grounds, talking briefly with pupils and anticipating potential difficulties. A suspected problem should be quietly and promptly investigated.
- 3 Schools need efficient communication between playground supervisors and those responsible for co-ordinating the behaviour policy and clear definition of roles and responsibilities of supervisors and teachers when on duty.
- 4 Playground supervisors authority is not always acknowledged undermining their efforts to manage behaviour. They need to be able to operate with rewards and sanctions, referring an incident for further action if necessary, and knowing about follow-up. Teaching staff should fully support them appropriately in the exercising of their authority.
- 5 Older pupils may be able to help lunchtime supervisors, as in traditional prefect systems, but preferably this should be linked to the development of a mentoring rather than a disciplinary relationship.

Improving the environmental quality and educational use of school grounds

- 1 Many schools could improve their environment to reduce bullying. A poor environment may offer few places for educational, social, physical and creative activities.
- 2 An improved playground environment should be secure, safe and easily supervised.

Beyond the playground

The purpose of this chapter is to consider bullying and its effects when it takes place outwith school premises. Bullying can, and does, occur in many other settings – on the bus to and from school, at shops at lunchtime, and after school, in leisure centres and in the local community. Bullying outside school grounds may affect young people’s well-being and mood in school, so it cannot be ignored. It is important that other services, agencies, groups and individuals complement school messages about bullying and understanding of bullying behaviours.

The focus of this section is the consideration of issues for schools and other services in relation to bullying beyond the playground. It is everybody’s responsibility to challenge and prevent bullying, to be aware of bullying behaviours and to look after each other. Schools are not solely responsible for addressing this problem. It is for every person in the community to take action and play a part.

Practical issues for School and Community

- 1 There are clearly some key areas in which bullying may be more likely to occur. Pupils travelling to and from school are often unsupervised and are not always with friends. There are key issues concerning supervision and control on buses. Since many young people have bus passes, withdrawing the privilege of using the pass on school buses may be a sanction to address bullying issues on school transport.
- 2 It is essential that young people feel safe walking to and from school. There are initiatives tied to raising physical activity levels and creating health promoting and eco schools which aim to increase numbers of children and young people walking to school. Incorporating bullying awareness in these programmes, may also help to address the issue.

- 3 A multi-agency approach to bullying should benefit young people in all their environments, so that they feel equally safe in and out of school. Involvement of local shopkeepers in steering groups for Health Promoting schools would support the strengthening of relationships between schools and the wider community. Multi-agency training on anti-bullying policy, protocol and ethos would be an ideal way of ensuring consistency of understanding, approach and action. Inviting integration teams, educational psychologists, school nurses and the police, etc., to any training or information-giving sessions for school staff would raise the profile of anti-bullying work and help ensure that all agencies feel they have a part to play.
- 4 Inter-school relationships are important where bullying between schools could be an issue. Consideration of different starting and finishing times, together with fostering a sense of identity and of representation of the school in its community, may help to reduce the potential for conflict.
- 5 Bullying through the use of mobile phones (text messaging) and emails is an area of particular and increasing concern (see Part 2).

Bullying and the law

School Bullying in Law – What is the law on bullying in school?

Pupils have the right to be educated in an atmosphere which is free from fear. Headteachers and others responsible for running schools have a duty to do all that they reasonably can to protect pupils in their charge from intimidation, assault or harassment. This right and this duty are enshrined within documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the European convention on Human Rights. It should also be remembered that schools are subject to the law of the land. Assault, harassment and intimidation are offences, whatever the age of the perpetrator or victim.

Although there is no law which states that Scottish schools must have a specific anti-bullying policy, documents such as “Action Against Bullying”, which was distributed to all schools in Scotland in 1992, contain a strong recommendation that they should. This recommendation has been endorsed by local authorities, the Scottish Office and its successor, the Scottish Executive.

When should bullying be referred to the police or to the Reporter to the Children’s Panel?

- 1 The legal system is rarely involved in dealing with school bullying. There are very good reasons for this. Less serious bullying can and should be dealt with within the school. By working together, parents, teachers, pupils and other members of the wider school community can develop effective reactive strategies which can be implemented quickly. It is important that bullying is resolved as quickly as possible before any serious damage is done to the personal development or education of the young people involved.
2. There may be circumstances in which the police are called in, either as a last resort or because of the seriousness of an incident. Anyone can make a complaint about bullying to the police. Teachers, parents or other members of a school community may decide to do so if:
 - ◆ A bullying incident could have serious consequences for the victim – making a judgement about this can be very difficult because even incidents which are perceived as being minor by an observer can have potentially serious long-term consequences for a victim
 - ◆ Other strategies have failed or are considered to be inappropriate because of the seriousness of what has happened
 - ◆ There is a reasonable possibility that making such a report could make the bullying less likely to recur and produce an outcome that helps the victim

There may be occasions when an episode of bullying involves incidents both in and out of school. In such circumstances it is vital for teachers and parents to work in co-operation with the police and other appropriate agencies such as social services or youth organisations.

What can the police do?

- 3 Schools and the police are developing new ways of working together pro-actively to prevent bullying. For example, in 1992 Lothian and Borders Police helped schools in the Liberton area of Edinburgh to produce a pack entitled, 'Speak Up'. More recently Grampian Police have produced a CD-ROM for schools entitled, 'Learning for Life.'
- 4 The police will investigate reports of serious incidents of physical bullying or harassment. If they are satisfied that an offence has been committed and that a person or persons who may be responsible have been identified and are under 16 they will normally send a report to the Reporter to the Children's Panel. The Reporter will then decide whether or not to call a hearing to discuss the case. Sometimes a hearing will be called to discuss the welfare of a victim of bullying, as in the case when a girl stopped attending school because she said she was frightened of bullies at her school. The police may decide that there is insufficient evidence to justify a referral to the Reporter but officers may be able to help by speaking to the young people involved and to their families.

Can solicitors help?

- 5 A small number of people in Scotland have taken a claim against local authorities to court. In other countries such as Sweden, Ireland, England and Australia such cases have been more common. If a parent or an adult victim decides to take this course they should consult a solicitor for advice or contact the Scottish Child Law Centre for information.

What are the advantages of taking legal action?

- ◆ Victims and their families sometimes feel that their concerns are not being treated seriously. Involving a solicitor can change this
- ◆ A solicitor can provide support to individuals who may feel powerless against school authorities
- ◆ A court decision in favour of a victim could help that person to come to terms with their experiences by ruling that the school did not act properly
- ◆ The court may order that damages be paid as compensation for the harm suffered
- ◆ A high profile court case can help to identify the duty of schools to protect victims. This could make it less likely that others will suffer in the future

What are the disadvantages of taking legal action?

- ◆ It can be very stressful. If the case is defended, an emotionally fragile victim may be subjected to lengthy cross-examination
- ◆ Any resolution will be severely delayed. Papers have to be prepared and witnesses who are willing to testify must be found.

Meanwhile victims and their families may not be able to put the events behind them. For example Deborah Scott took Lothian Regional Council to court over bullying which occurred in 1988 and 1989. It was ten years before the case was heard

- ◆ The outcome is uncertain. Deborah Scott lost
- ◆ Enormous expense can be involved, especially if the claimant does not receive legal aid. Becky Walker lost her case and was ordered to pay Derby County Council's costs which were estimated at £30,000. The judge in that case revealed that even if she had won she would only have been awarded £1250
- ◆ Once a headteacher knows that there is a possibility of legal action it will become more difficult for him or her to admit that mistakes may have been made and that a new approach is needed

Further information

Important numbers

◆ <i>The Scottish Child Law Centre provides free information service from 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Monday to Thursday on</i>	0131 667 6333
◆ <i>The Law Society of Scotland</i>	0131 226 7411
◆ <i>The Children's Legal Centre</i>	01206 873820
◆ <i>The Govan Law Centre</i>	0141 445 1955
◆ <i>Anti-bullying Network</i>	0131 651 6100
◆ <i>Scottish Child Law Centre</i>	0800 317 500
◆ <i>Childline</i>	0800 441111
◆ <i>Parentline Scotland</i>	0808 800 2222
◆ <i>Kidscape Resources</i>	020 7730 3300

Useful reading

Bullying: A Guide to the Law by Carolyn Hamilton in *Bullying: A Practical Guide to Coping for Schools* Edited by Michele Elliot, pub. Pitman 1997. Although this is concerned with the law in England and Wales it contains information and advice which also applies to Scotland. Different Acts of Parliament apply and there are important differences between the education systems north and south of the border but schools in all parts of the UK have similar legal duties of care.

Action Against Bullying – Drawing from Experience by Margaret Johnstone, Pamela Munn, and Lynne Edwards, pub. Scottish Council for Research in Education 1992.

Bullying at School – Advice for Families by Andrew Mellor, pub. Scottish Council for Research in Education 1997.

WEB-SITES :

www.bullying.co.uk
www.childline.org.uk
www.childreninscotland.org.uk
www.ethosnet.co.uk
www.coastkid.org

www.britkid.org
www.antibullying.et
www.osiriseeducation.co.uk
www.children1st.org.uk/parentline
www.kidscape.org.uk

What HMEI will expect to find in your school

The Anti-Bullying Policy may be found embedded in another policy, perhaps on relationships, but wherever anti-bullying sits in a school's policy framework, HMI will look at the following points during an inspection :

- 1 Whole school ethos - which is a critical factor.
- 2 Practice, rather than policy.
- 3 Pupil complaints procedures - especially in regards to teacher bullying.
- 4 Parent, staff and pupil awareness of the anti-bullying policy and whether pupils and staff were involved in its formulation.
- 5 A consistently high level of vigilance, with staff looking for signs of bullying, and tackling incidents of bullying without over-reacting.
- 6 How recent incidents of bullying have been handled - HMI check that a school didn't go into "crime and punishment" mode, despite possible pressure from the parents.
- 7 How PSD programmes take pupils through the issues - e.g. how concepts of power and conflict are handled as part of a wider agenda to develop kids' effective social relationships.

HMI will check that :

- 8 Teachers look at the perception of the victim, and check what the victim's needs are.
- 9 Teachers have tried to work out the intention of the bully - were their actions intended or simply thoughtless?
- 10 The school doesn't rate the seriousness of the bullying just by the nature of the incident but also takes into account the effect on the victim.
- 11 Teachers consider the support needed by both the victim and the bully, and make an appropriate response to those needs.
- 12 The school records bullying incidents and that appropriate actions are taken.

