

# LANARK PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY



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**South Lanarkshire Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all people in its educational establishments.**

**This policy has been produced in consultation with the parents, staff and pupils of Lanark Primary School.**

### **Rationale**

The ability to learn in a safe, positive environment is essential in our ever-changing world of education, work and leisure. Schools have a key role to play in working with pupils and parents/carers to ensure that every child can make the most of the opportunities that education offers. Promoting positive behaviour and a strong anti-bullying ethos is a key focus in helping every pupil enjoy their school years. Our policy on anti-bullying is consistent with South Lanarkshire Council Education resources guidelines 'Treat Me Well', as well as 'Respect Me' <https://respectme.org.uk/> GIFREC <https://www.gov.scot/policies/gifrec/> and UNCRC <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-rights/united-nations-convention-of-the-rights-of-the-child> .

South Lanarkshire Council's decisions are made in adherence to UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

*Article 2 (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.*

The council's thinking, with regards to the wellbeing of children and young adults, is influenced by GIFREC (Getting it Right for Every Child).

*To help make sure everyone – children, young people, parents, and the services that support them – has a common understanding of what wellbeing means.*

-The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

South Lanarkshire Council are also bound by the Equality Act of 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Equality Act 2010 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

South Lanarkshire Council has a firm stance against bullying, as stated on the council website:

*Bullying in schools*

*All our teachers and school staff promote a positive ethos and support any child or young person who has been a victim of bullying.*

*Parents can also help by encouraging responsible behaviour and attitudes at home to reduce bullying.*

*Our schools promote positive behaviour and reward achievement. We aim to make them safe environments where everyone is respected, treated fairly and co-operates. We also encourage Parent Councils to become involved.*

Here at Lanark Primary School, our values are Respect, Trust and Honesty, Being Active, Responsibility, Kindness, Being Hard Working, Learning and Good Manners. We believe in dignity, fairness and inclusion. We understand that bullying is never acceptable and that children and young people have the right to learn in a safe, secure environment.

**Aims:**

- to ensure that all young people are free to learn in a safe and secure environment without fear of bullying
- to ensure a shared understanding of what bullying is
- to develop a partnership approach to bullying with staff, pupils and parents all playing their part
- to promote a positive ethos at Lanark Primary that fosters resilience and self-esteem for our pupils
- to equip young people with the necessary skills to recognise and tackle the problems associated with bullying both in school and in the world outside
- to support young people who have been the victims of bullying
- to help those who have participated in bullying to recognise the causes and consequences of their behaviour

**What is bullying?** (All information taken from RESPECTME.org)

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on the other person's sense of wellbeing. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. It is

behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out and it can happen face to face and online.

Bullying behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour might not be repeated, the threat that it might can be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these.

This behaviour, face to face or online, can include:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened face to face
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or phone
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be

### **Is intent required?**

Every bullying incident should be looked at individually. In some cases, children or young people may not be aware that their behaviour is actually bullying. They are perhaps modelling the behaviour of adults or other children and young people, not understanding that it is wrong because they have never been taught otherwise. In these circumstances, the intent to bully may not be present, but the impact and effect on the person being bullied will be no less severe because of this.

It must be explained to the person bullying that their behaviour is unacceptable and why. Intent is difficult to prove and young people can often reframe their behaviour when challenged. It's more important to focus on the behaviour and the impact it had, rather than trying to establish whether someone acted deliberately or not.

### **Does the behaviour have to be persistent?**

The issue with persistence is that the behaviour has to take place more than once, but the impacts of bullying can be felt after a single incident, instilling fear that it might happen again. Bullying doesn't need to be persistent to have an effect on the mental health and well-being of a child or young person. For those who have been bullied, the fear and anticipation of further bullying can affect their ability to be themselves and interact with others in a healthy fashion. Bullying behaviour and its potential impacts on children and young people should be addressed as they arise. It is vital to respond to the behaviour that you see and the impact this is having, rather than relying on a rigid definition.

How persistence is viewed by one person - for example daily, weekly or monthly - may be quite different to how it's viewed by someone else, leading to inequality and inconsistency of practice. It isn't helpful to wait and see if a pattern or repetition emerges before taking action.

### **What about impact?**

Bullying can affect people in different ways and this should be taken into consideration. If you are unsure if behaviour is bullying, look at the effect it is having on the child or young person. If they are unable to respond effectively and regain their sense of self and control in the situation, adults need to intervene to help restore it. Keeping the focus on impact reduces the emphasis on issues of persistence and intent. What you do about bullying is more important than how you define it.

We should always remember that children will tease each other, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and disagree about what they like and don't like. This is a normal part of growing up and should be distinguished from bullying. However, in an environment where this behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying, making those being bullied feel afraid, uncomfortable and unsafe in their environment.

All behaviour communicates feelings. Our response should focus on identifying how someone feels and helping them to cope with and respond to those feelings. Children and young people may act out of character when they are being bullied and changes in behaviour can be signals that something is wrong. We need to focus on what someone did and the impact that it had.

## **Online bullying**

For children and young people, online environments are social spaces where they can hang out and meet friends. Like any other place they visit, there are benefits and risks. Adults need to be engaged with children and young people about where they go online, just as they are when they go into town or to any other 'real' physical place.

But online bullying, or 'cyberbullying' as it is often referred to, shouldn't be treated any differently; it's still about behaviour and impact. The behaviour is the same but it takes place online, usually on social networking sites and online gaming platforms, and can include a person being called names, threatened or having rumours spread about them. We should address online bullying in the same way. Our responses will be more consistent and effective when we address online bullying as part of our whole anti-bullying approach, not as a separate area of work or policy.

## **Developing a Positive Ethos**

At Lanark Primary School we believe that by working with pupils, parents, carers and staff to build a strong school community with shared values we can minimise the occurrence of bullying. We have a variety of strategies to promote positive behaviour:

- a comprehensive pre-school programme where common expectations can be established
- the encouragement of co-operative play from an early stage
- regular whole school assemblies to share success and recognise individual achievement
- Classroom Charter created by the teacher and pupils, which is displayed and referred to in every class
- emphasis on team work through the House System
- a wide range of extra-curricular activities to encourage children to have fun and use their leisure time productively
- playground supervisors who are vigilant for any signs of bullying
- the use of senior pupils as monitors and specially trained mediators to help deal with minor disputes amongst younger pupils
- Pupil Leadership Teams to reflect pupil opinion and help shape decision making, including a Kindness Council
- a comprehensive Health and Wellbeing programme which fosters emotional health and helps equip pupils with the skills to avoid and combat bullying. This includes an annual focus on Protective Behaviours and Cyberbullying
- 'Go For Green' Behaviour Management System

## Handling Bullying Incidents

We recognise that in spite of our best efforts to promote positive behaviour incidents of bullying can still occur. Fundamental to our policy on bullying are the following principles:

- All bullying is unacceptable, regardless of any excuses that are given to justify it.
- Every incident of reported bullying will be investigated fully.
- It is the shared responsibility of every member of staff, parent, carer and pupil to eliminate bullying at Lanark Primary School.

School Staff will:

- Take immediate action.
- Establish the facts of an incident –is it bullying?
- Report all incidents of bullying or suspected bullying to the management team.
- Record and report all cases of racial, disability or gender harassment in line with SLC procedures.

The Management Team will:

- Fully investigate and speak to all concerned.
- Maintain appropriate records using an agreed proforma.
- Involve parents at an early stage.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and fears of the victim.
- Work with all concerned to find solutions, restore self-esteem and prevent further incidents.
- Enlist the help of specialist staff where necessary.
- Monitor pupils involved to ensure that the situation is resolved.
- Take appropriate action in all cases of racial, disability or gender harassment in line with SLC procedures.

We would like parents to:

- Stress the importance of sociable behaviour.
- Discuss resilience and coping strategies with your child.
- Actively support our anti-bullying policy by discussing this with your children.
- Be open- minded and establish the facts of an incident. Is it bullying or 'falling out'? Are there two sides to the story?
- Notify the school as soon as possible about bullying incidents. Don't wait for things to resolve themselves. We are here to help!
- Work in partnership with us to resolve the situation. We want every child at Lanark Primary School to feel safe and secure.
- Encourage your child to tell someone about bullying incidents. The sooner we know about a problem, the sooner we can sort it out.
- Monitor your child's use of social networking sites and text messaging.

We would like children to:

- Tell a teacher, parent/carers, mediator or friend if you are being bullied
- Remember that it is not your fault. Bullies act the way they do because they are unhappy or have problems that need to be sorted out.
- If you see someone being bullied, tell an adult as soon as you can.
- Remember that bullying can be fixed! If everyone works together it will stop.

## **Changing behaviours and attitudes**

Every incident of bullying is different, but we will react firmly and promptly when bullying is identified.

Research shows clearly that restorative practice and counselling are more effective in dealing with bullying than sanctions. Our aim is to determine the cause of the behaviour and to ensure it stops permanently, so that the victim can feel safe and secure. We have had great success with this methodology and take pride in the exemplary behaviour of almost all of our pupils.

However, a range of sanctions are available, **if** deemed necessary. These include:

- Being kept in school under supervision at intervals.
- Withdrawal from favoured activities such as football or Golden Time.
- Working with parents through behaviour charts etc.
- Exclusion from the classroom, undertaking class work with DHT/HT.
- Very severe cases may warrant serious measures such as temporary suspension from school or exclusion, but this is extremely rare.

We recognise that the needs of the victim are paramount and use a range of support that may include:

- peer support
- support network including members of staff
- Protective Behaviours training
- specialist intervention

## **Recording, monitoring and evaluating**

- All incidents of alleged bullying will be recorded
- Such situations will be monitored regularly.
- If any racially motivated incident occurs this is recorded according to council procedure.
- The Management Team will work with staff and representative groups of pupils and parents to monitor the effectiveness of anti-bullying guidelines and revise these as required.

## References

[https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/341/treat\\_me\\_well\\_anti-bullying\\_guidelines](https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/341/treat_me_well_anti-bullying_guidelines)

<https://respectme.org.uk/>

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-rights/united-nations-convention-of-the-rights-of-the-child>