

# Balerno High School



## Anti-Bullying and Prejudice Policy

November 2020: Review November 2023

Developed in line with CEC Policy by L Coffey

In consultation with:

- Rights Respecting Schools Pupil Group,
- Inclusion and Equalities Group
- Balerno High School Parent Council
- Balerno High School Staff

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## **Balerno High School Anti-Bullying and Prejudices Procedures**

This policy is created in accordance with guidance provided in CEC Procedure *Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice Amongst Children and Young People and Prejudice Amongst Children and Young People* (CEC October 2020)

See also supplementary guidance on preventing and responding to incidents of prejudice and discrimination related to protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Part 1: Tackling Racist Incidents / Creating an Anti-racist Culture.

### **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

City of Edinburgh Council is strongly committed to providing a safe environment for all people in its educational establishments. We are committed to ensuring positive relationships. Bullying, prejudice and discrimination are never acceptable and children, young people and staff have the right to learn and work in a safe, fair and secure environment.

This school procedure follows the City of Edinburgh Council's Communities and Families Procedure on 'Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice amongst Children and Young People' (2020) which is based on 'Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People'.

The emotional health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff is essential for our children to have the best start to life and to have successful life chances. We are committed to developing positive relationships between all in the school community, children, young people, staff and parents. Our core practices are the 4 Rs: Relationships, Rights Respecting, Resilience, Restorative.

We are a Rights Respecting School. This procedure covers the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 2 – You have the right to protection against discrimination.
- Article 19 – You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 29 – You have the right to an education which develops your personality and your respect for other's rights and the environment.

This procedure has been revised and updated in consultation with staff, parent and pupil groups, including our Parent Council, GSA group and Rights Respecting Schools Group.

### **Our Vision:**

Balerno High School is a community build on strong relationships and a commitment to success.

### **Our Values:**

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- All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. Balerno High School supports every young person to achieve and attain their very best.

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- We actively foster respectful relations between diverse groups and individuals, respect individuality and celebrate diversity.
  - We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying, prejudice and discrimination. We challenge inequality and promote inclusive, nurturing environments.
- We recognise the effects that bullying, prejudice and discrimination can have on a child or young person's feelings of worth, on their health and wellbeing and on their school-work.
- We provide opportunities for success through a variety of curricular and extra-curricular options and pathways.
- We encourage creativity and support our young people to build the skills and resilience they need for the future.
- We have the courage to aspire to the very best we can be. We belong to our school and we are very proud of our tradition and heritage.
- We use restorative approaches to repair and strengthen relationships between staff and pupils within our whole school community.

### **What do we mean by 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 feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online."

*(respectme; 2015)*

Bullying behaviours can take many forms. Examples of bullying behaviours include:

- Name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening.
- Ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours.
- Hitting, tripping, kicking.
- Taking and damaging belongings
- Sending an abusive text, email or instant message, or posting an abusive comment on a social networking site (online or cyber-bullying).
- Targeting someone because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

It is important to recognise that subtle comments, or comments which appear to have humorous intent, can also be bullying. Staff should be alert to this.

## **Discrimination, Prejudice-based Bullying and the Equality Act 2010**

Bullying behaviour can often be rooted in prejudice and discrimination due to difference or a perceived difference. We are committed to challenging discrimination, prejudice-based bullying and language, and to fulfilling our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out rights which include legal protection from discrimination to any of the nine protected characteristics: disability; race; sex (gender); pregnancy/maternity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; gender re-assignment; age; marriage/civil partnership

Note: In relation to the education of children and young people, the protected characteristics of age, marriage and civil partnership are not included.

We recognise that children and young people can also experience bullying in relation to: asylum seeker or refugee status; body image; being care experienced; social or economic status; young carer responsibilities; imprisonment of parents/carers, siblings, or other family members.

We recognise that children and young people can experience disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination because of any of these individual factors or a combination of factors.

### **Hate incident or hate crime**

A bullying incident is a hate incident if the victim or anyone else thinks it was carried out because of hostility or prejudice based on actual or perceived disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity. If the incident is a criminal offence and the offender targeted the victim because of their prejudice or hostility based on any of these characteristics, this is a hate crime. All hate crimes should be reported to Police Scotland through the School Link Officer. In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of staff/Equality Co-ordinator should seek advice from the School Link Officer.

### **Responsibilities and Reporting bullying, prejudice and discrimination incidents**

Headteachers are:

- responsible for the introduction and implementation of this procedure. However, all staff, all pupils and their parents/carers must play an active part in following the guidance and putting it into practice. Teachers and support staff are expected to be pro-active, to treat all allegations seriously and to refer reports of incidents to the Equalities Co-ordinator/designated member of the senior leadership team. The incident is recorded accurately with future actions detailed.

The Equalities Co-ordinator, in consultation with the Head Teacher, is required to:

- ensure that all allegations are reported and recorded rigorously
- monitor SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities module reports regularly, at least termly
- monitor and report annually on the implementation of this procedure
- supervise the review and updating of this procedure at least every three years

Pupils are asked to:

- report all incidents and suspected incidents of any type of bullying, discrimination or prejudice that they experience to a member of staff, where it is safe for them to do so
- support each other and to seek help from a member of staff, to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.
- if they don't feel able to speak to a member of staff, pupils can complete an online, anonymous form to make a report or are encouraged to contact an external organisation for advice and support, e.g. Childline, LGBT Youth Scotland or ELREC.

All school staff are required to:

- be pro-active in implementing the procedure
- treat all allegations and observation of bullying, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour or language seriously
- seek to address incidents, where appropriate
- record any incidents on a Wellbeing Concern form
- inform the Equalities Co-ordinator / designated member of staff of all incidents

Parents/carers are asked to:

- be aware of respectme, Scotland's Anti-bullying Service booklet – Bullying Behaviour: A Guide for Parents and Carers (available at <http://respectme.org.uk/resources/publications>)
- work collaboratively and respectfully with staff, children and young people and other parents/carers where appropriate to help ensure bullying, discrimination and prejudice cannot thrive
- speak to any member of staff (the class teacher, Pupil Support Leader or member of Senior Leadership Team) if they have any concerns about bullying, discrimination and prejudice experienced by their child or by another child / children at the time of the incident or as soon as possible thereafter
- encourage their children to be positive members of our school community
- take an active interest in what their children are doing online – where they're going and who with, in the same way as if they were going into town, to the sports centre, youth club, or any other physical place - and to put appropriate support in place if there is a concern they are engaging in activity which puts them or others at risk.
- understand that we seek to understand the experiences and address the needs of all children and young people who experience bullying, discrimination or prejudiced behaviour as well as those who

present bullying, discrimination or prejudiced behaviour. We do this within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support.

- speak to the Head Teacher if their concerns continue following initial intervention
- be aware that they can contact a relevant external organisation for advice and support
- be aware of the school's complaints procedure and the Council's Advice and Conciliation Service and their rights with regard to these procedures

### **PROMOTION OF EQUALITY**

Through the Curriculum for Excellence, we:

- Increase knowledge of children's rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens.
- Challenge stereotypes, bias and discrimination, including prejudice-based attitudes and language
- Teach Critical Literacy
- Aspire and continually develop our curriculum to provide age-appropriate reading materials and resources that positively reflect and represent diversity, e.g. family structures that include single parents, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, same-sex parents
- Build resilience and empathy in young people as confident individuals.
- Raise awareness about bullying and our Anti-Bullying Procedure across a range of school subjects.

### **PREVENTION**

By promoting a positive school ethos, with a focus on rights, equalities and health and wellbeing, we hope to prevent bullying, prejudice and discrimination happening. For example:

- Our pupil GSA Committee and Rights Respecting Schools group actively support the school's work on prevention of bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
- Bullying, prejudice and discrimination and other equality-related issues are a standing item on the SLT meetings, faculty meetings and our Pupil Council agenda.
- We carry out regular surveys and focus groups to evaluate ethos and health and wellbeing in the school.
- The Rights Respecting School group ensure that all the pupils are aware of and learn about their human rights through lessons, events, assemblies and displays. The Rights-Respecting values are being embedded in the school and so pupils are being empowered to become more active citizens and learners.
- The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme is now established in the school. Senior pupils are trained and empowered to prevent incidents that could lead to gender violence, which

can be domestic abuse, sexting, assault or homophobia. Pupils are taught to challenge peers about their behaviour if it is safe to do so.

- We work with other agencies and partners in health, police and the voluntary sector to promote a positive ethos. This includes working with organisations such as LGBT Youth Scotland, SCORE and respectme.
- We operate a buddying system to support transition from primary school
- Our staff receive regular updates to increase their awareness and understanding of all forms of bullying, prejudice and discrimination as well as to develop skills in restorative practice.

## **SUPPORT**

How we support pupils who are bullied or experience prejudice and discrimination

See also supplementary guidance on preventing and responding to incidents of prejudice and discrimination related to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Part 1: Tackling Racist Incidents / Creating an Anti-Racist Culture.

We listen to the child or young person

- We reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling.
- We encourage them to talk about how they feel, find out what happened and who was involved
- We involve them in making choices about how the matter could be resolved.
- We discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We ask them to report any further incidents to us straight away.
- We affirm that the bullying can be stopped and that we will persist with intervention until it does.
- We say clearly what will happen next and that we will update them on progress.
- When the incident has been resolved, we monitor and check that bullying has not started again.

## **What happens next?**

- The teacher or member of staff who receives the report will record the incident on a Wellbeing Concern form and discuss next steps with the Pupil Support Leader / designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator.
- At all times, child protection procedures and/or Risk Management procedures should be followed, if necessary.
- In most cases, further investigation will be done by the designated member of senior leadership team / Year Head or Pupil Support Leader.

Further investigation may involve:

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- Speaking with the children or young people involved, preserving confidentiality.
- Speaking with children or young people or others who witnessed the incident, preserving confidentiality.
- Speaking with parents (after consultation with the child or young person)
- Seeking advice from partner services and relevant organisations

In all cases where there may be criminal implications (e.g. sexual assault or hate crime), the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will report this to Police Scotland via the School Link Officer. In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of the senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will seek advice from Police Scotland via the School Link Officer.

If it is found that bullying, prejudice or discrimination has taken place, we will take appropriate and proportionate action as below. If it is found that bullying, prejudice or discrimination has not taken place, we will speak with the child or young person who reported the incident and offer further support if needed. At all times, we will update the child or young person who reported bullying, prejudice or discrimination.

### **Our work with pupils who bully others or present prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes / behaviour**

A child or young person who is bullying someone else may not be doing this consciously, but the impact of bullying, prejudice or discrimination is still felt and this is taken seriously. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour or present prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes / behaviour will be treated fairly and consistently using actions that are proportionate and appropriate to the age and stage of the child and to the incident.

- We interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in the incident separately.
- We listen to their version of events and take time to discover the reasons for the behaviour.
- We talk to anyone who may have witnessed the incident.
- We contact the parents of the pupil(s) at an early stage.
- We reinforce the message that bullying, prejudice and discrimination are not acceptable, and that we expect it to stop.
- We address prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes that may be behind the behaviour
- We seek a commitment to stop bullying.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We consider consequences under our school's Positive Behaviour Management Procedure.
- We consider what support the pupil needs and whether other referrals are required, e.g. educational psychologist, counsellor.
- In all cases where there may be criminal implications (e.g. sexual assault or hate crime) we report this to Police Scotland.
- In the case of hate incidents, we seek advice from Police Scotland.
- We advise pupils responsible for bullying, prejudice or discrimination that we check to ensure that the behaviour stops.
- We follow up after incidents to check that the bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour has not started again in any form.

Some examples of our actions

- Restorative practices, including acknowledging grievances.
- Involvement of a parent/carer.
- Mediation between pupils.
- De-escalation strategies.
- Physical separation of person/people presenting bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour, where necessary and possible.
- Consequences, including loss of privileges.
- Assessment of additional support needs, including counselling, for the person being bullied or experiencing prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour or for the person who is bullying or displaying prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour.
- Involvement of other agencies and partners in health, police and voluntary sector.
- Referral to specific support service, such as Psychological Services, Education Welfare Service, Social Work or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Follow-up

When the incident has been resolved, we monitor and check with the child or young person that bullying has not started again.

Note: Exclusion from school is not itself a sanction or punishment for bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour and would only be used in specific circumstances and as a last resort.

**Online bullying and bullying outside the school premises**

We know that bullying, prejudice and discrimination can occur outside the school gates and via mobile phones and social network internet sites. The behaviour may be presented by pupils from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent informs us of bullying, prejudice or discrimination outwith the school premises we will:

- Talk to pupils, individually or through PSE, about how to avoid or handle these incidents outside of school.
- Talk to the Head Teacher of any other school(s) whose pupils are allegedly presenting bullying, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour.
- Talk to the transport company about bullying on buses
- Talk to the police, if appropriate, and encourage parents/carers to do so.

## **RECORDING AND MONITORING BULLYING INCIDENTS**

The designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator or Pupil Support Leader will record all incidents in the Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS.

The following information is recorded:

- the person experiencing the behaviour
- the person displaying the behaviour
- the nature and category of the incident
- the perceived reason(s) for bullying
- actions already taken and future actions
- conclusion (being addressed, resolved, not resolved, unfounded)

All incidents should be recorded. Records should include whether the incident is bullying, and/or prejudice-based and the nature of this. If there is any dispute or doubt (on the part of any individual) about whether the incident was or was not bullying or prejudice, the incident and the doubts should be recorded.

The designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will:

- ensure that this procedure is implemented.
- monitor SEEMiS reports on regular basis, at least termly.

Records of bullying, discrimination and prejudice-based incidents will be collected centrally from SEEMiS by the local authority from August 2020 on a termly basis.

## **COMMUNICATING THIS PROCEDURE**

We promote our anti-bullying procedure throughout the session. The PSE curriculum supports education in relationships, diversity and social thinking. Our procedure is on the school website. Posters are on display around the school advising pupils how they can report bullying, discrimination and prejudice, or seek confidential help. In-school arrangements for anonymous reporting are regularly promoted via the school bulletin.

The pupil-led GSA and Rights Respecting Schools groups communicate with and educate staff through creating and providing information to help staff to understand the different perspectives of minority groups in school.

## **CONCERNS AND FEEDBACK**

We recognise that there may be times when pupils or parents/carers feel that we have not dealt well with an incident of bullying, discrimination and prejudice or a wider community issue. If a pupil

or parent/carer feels that an incident/issue has not been fully resolved to their satisfaction, we ask them to contact the Head Teacher in the first instance.

If the Head Teacher cannot resolve these concerns informally, parents/carers can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Complaints Procedure. If early resolution at this stage is not achieved, then parents/carers can use the Council's Advice and Conciliation Service. We are also pleased to receive positive feedback from parents/carers when things have gone well.

At any time, a pupil or parent/carer can seek advice and support from an external organisation.

#### **EVALUATING AND REVIEWING OUR PROCEDURE**

We evaluate the effectiveness of this procedure on an annual basis, reviewing the number of incidents that are reported alongside the attendance, exclusions, attainment and achievement of pupils in protected groups. Pupils' perceptions and experiences of bullying are reviewed through questionnaires and focus groups. Feedback received from parents is also taken into consideration. The procedure is reviewed formally every 3 years.