



# EDUCATION and SOCIAL CARE ADMIN HANDBOOK

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	DATE
AH/027/01	Bullying in Schools Policy	31/10/2016

<b>Contact:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Telephone:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Email:</b>	[REDACTED]

This document has links to the following themes:

- |                                    |                                   |                                      |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| SAFE <input type="checkbox"/>      | HEALTHY <input type="checkbox"/>  | ACHIEVING <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| NURTURED <input type="checkbox"/>  | ACTIVE <input type="checkbox"/>   | RESPONSIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RESPECTED <input type="checkbox"/> | INCLUDED <input type="checkbox"/> | POLICIES <input type="checkbox"/>    |

HISTORY		
REFERENCE	CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS	DATE
AH/027/01	▪ New document reference number	31/10/2016
SS/056/01	▪ Original publication	24/04/2003

# THE MORAY COUNCIL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

## POLICY ON BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Bullying may be defined as the unjustified display of aggressive verbal or physical behaviour on the part of one individual or group towards another. Aggressive behaviour itself is a biological trait which human beings share with the animal kingdom and the human competitive urge is one manifestation of this, as indeed is such harmless childhood play.

Aggression is unacceptable however when it is used to torment, to inflict pain or to humiliate others so that victims lose the power to defend themselves and it is behaviour motivated by such intentions that merits the term "bullying".

1.2 Bullying, understood in those terms, occurs at all ages and in all circumstances. It is not peculiar to interaction between children. Bullying is exhibited by nations, by governments, by organisations and by individual adults; it is as prevalent in the workplace or the home as in a school playground, although it is frequently disguised within the adult world as "being assertive", "standing up for one's rights", "exercising discipline", or "controlling others".

1.3 Unless the nature of bullying is rightly understood, we risk having a false perception of bullying when it occurs amongst children. We may wrongly see bullying as a phenomenon confined to that age of childhood and, as a consequence, we may imagine wrongly that bullying behaviour arises spontaneously in certain children - when its origins are to be found rather in the child's experience of aggressive behaviour in the domestic setting or elsewhere. If the roots of the problem are not properly established, then action taken to deal with the problem will be ineffective. It is essential that adults are made fully aware of the effects of their own behaviour (both towards children and towards one another) and that they avoid the trap of imagining that bullying is a form of behaviour specific to children.

1.4 Care needs to be taken to avoid creating stereotyped images of "bully" and "victim". According to circumstances, a bully may readily become a victim or vice versa. Either role is an indication that the individual's social skills are impaired, whether because of that person's temperament, upbringing or level of maturity. Experience shows that many abusers of children suffered abuse in their own childhood; similarly many bullies are motivated by a reaction to being bullied themselves. Both bully and victim are frequently the socially-marginalised, in adulthood or in childhood, and both need whatever understanding and support the rest of society is willing and able to provide for them.

1.5 Considerable care and judgement needs to be exercised by teachers and parents in responding to incidents of bullying. Harsh words and rough play are features of normal development; children need to learn that certain behaviour has certain consequences. It may be as harmful for a child to be over-protected as to have real concerns ignored. The crucial distinction is where the imbalance of power e.g. between an older and younger child or adult and child, is such that the victim clearly needs positive support and the bully needs to share an understanding of the damage which may be caused.

1.6 Whenever it is felt that a bullying incident has racial overtones or, indeed, if one of the parties involved e.g. pupil, parent, witness, believes that there is a racial aspect involved, a racial incident monitoring form should be completed and processed in line with policy.

### **2. A Policy For Schools**

2.1 Schools, as educational establishments, should not be expected to assume all responsibility for correcting the moral imperfections of society at large. Children are inevitably confused by the conflicting standards set for them by adults. Not only are inconsistent messages given out by adults but the models of grown-up behaviour witnessed daily are likely to be at variance with the behaviour that is expected of children.

2.2 It should not be imagined, therefore, that schools alone are capable of eradicating unjustified aggressive behaviour amongst children. Schools should endeavour, as always, to set a lead in such matters but they deserve acknowledgement from all those in offices of high responsibility that the task is one to be shared equally by government, by families and the community.

- 2.3 With these provisions, each school should as a matter of course consider carefully its corporate attitude towards bullying, within the context of its existing policies for promoting behavioural standards and for building effective relationships between children and adults. School handbooks should incorporate a positive statement reflecting its commitment towards establishing interpersonal relationships founded upon equity, mutual respect and an awareness of individual rights (see section 3).
- 2.4 Schools will find the "Anti-Bullying" packs, developed by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) and issued by The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), valuable in suggesting a great many useful and practical ways of promoting classroom discussion and activities designed to stimulate an understanding of the problems of violence (whether physical or verbal) inherent in human relationships. Such work will naturally find a place, as it always has done, in all aspects of the curriculum but especially within the framework of Personal and Social Development Studies or Religious and Moral Education.
- 2.5 Specific assistance to schools in the promotion of whole-school policies is available from Educational Support Services and from the Educational Psychology Service.
- 2.6 Schools may further wish to consider developing individual initiatives designed to promote a non-bullying culture. Amongst many possible strategies, the following are worthy of consideration:-
- Carrying out an in-school survey of attitudes towards bullying in particular and personal relationships in general;
  - Surveying adult attitudes within the local community;
  - Setting up pupil-staff forums for the discussion of interpersonal relationship difficulties;
  - Formulating through collaboration between staff and pupils, a simple but positive "mission statement" representing the school's corporate stance on the matter of bullying;
  - Considering the value of relating the problems of inter-child relationships to those encountered at a national and international level; and exploring work done by Amnesty International, the United Nations and similar organisations;
  - Reviewing the school's strategies for identifying oppressive behaviour and establishing clear guidelines to enable the appropriate, consistent and measured response to be made on the part of all members of staff;
  - Ensuring that, in all instances of serious aggression or harassment, the parents of the children are enabled to participate fully in the resolution of the problem.

### **3. School Statements on Bullying**

- 3.1 Given widespread concern about bullying, schools require to have a written statement about their policy and practice on bullying. It is for schools to determine the precise content of such statements but the following guidelines are put forward as a measure against which the quality of provision in this area can be evaluated.
- 3.2 It is important in this sensitive area that all those involved clearly understand policy. It is therefore suggested that the statement on bullying might be drafted with 3 specific audiences in mind, the whole school staff, parents and the community, and pupils. These 3 approaches might be reflected in the staff handbook, a parents' handbook or brochure and a pupil handbook.
- 3.3 The statement should include the following areas:
- i. General school philosophy and ethos.
  - ii. School structures for the positive management of behaviour and the support of individual children.
  - iii. The school's specific response to incidents of bullying with an emphasis on the need for a child to 'tell'.
  - iv. Guidance to parents about how to raise concerns with the school.

- v. Description of arrangements to monitor the incidence of bullying e.g. annual audit, surveys, staff-pupil forums.
- vi. Description of arrangements for the regular review of the statement in consultation with all staff, parents, pupils and the community.