

# Anti-Bullying Policy

Wellington School, Ayr



**Wellington School  
Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Wellington School will not tolerate any form of bullying.**

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## Introduction

Staff, parents and pupils all have responsibilities in relation to bullying and expectations in this regard are indicated in the following pieces of legislation:

- the 2001 national agreement on teachers' salaries and conditions of service\*
- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989\*
- the Human Rights Act 1998\*
- the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000\*
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The relevant extracts from these can be found in Appendix 1

This Anti-Bullying Policy was developed in line with relevant information from the following school documents:

Disability Accessibility Strategy	Oct. 2004 – Sept. 2007
Guidance within the Senior Department	March 2000
Child Protection Policy	
Equal Opportunities	
Promoting Positive Behaviour	March 2002

This Anti-Bullying Policy was evaluated throughout session 2005 – 2006 and session 2006-2007 and amendments made for session 2007-2008. It was further amended for session 2008-2009.

### **The Aims of the Policy**

The focus of this policy is to promote positive behaviour and to provide working guidelines to staff to meet required standards in:

- preventing bullying;
- dealing with bullying;
- providing information for pupils and parents.

## A Definition of Bullying

Bullying is an abuse of power. It is a repeated, deliberate act of aggression which causes embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It takes many forms and may include physical attacks, verbal insults, threatening email or text messaging, extortion and theft, threatening and obscene gestures, spreading malicious rumours and deliberately excluding people from a group or activity. Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is normally characterised by:

- Deliberate aggression - when someone intentionally seeks to harm another.
- A perceived imbalance of power – where those being harmed feel powerless.
- Aggression that leads to pain and distress – pain that can be physical and/or emotional.

Action that takes place over a period of time – a single, isolated incident would not normally be described as bullying.

A first offence, however, should be challenged, the unacceptable nature of the behaviour explained and the school policy on such matters outlined. The pupil should be told that any further occurrences would be logged against them.

Behaviour which is not bullying is described by Andrew Mellor of the Anti-Bullying Network as follows: “It is not bullying when two people of roughly the same strength (meaning emotional, psychological and physical strength) have a fight or disagreement.”

### Wellington School

- recognises that not all pupils who are reported as ‘bullying’ others are always deliberately intending to hurt.
- will not label pupils or staff as ‘bullies’ or ‘victims’ during any discussion with those persons involved in an alleged or actual incident of bullying.

## Examples of bullying behaviour

This is by no means a definitive list:

- Writing offensive things about someone using graffiti, notes, letters, text messages, email, etc.
- Verbally abusing someone by name calling, making threats, using sarcasm, etc.
- Physically hurting someone by pushing, shoving, tripping up, etc.
- Damaging personal property by tearing clothes, ripping books, etc.
- Excluding someone by making sure they are isolated from their friends and peers.
- Inciting others to bully
- Humiliating someone because they are seen to be 'different'  
e.g. this can include racial bullying, homophobic bullying, sexual harassment or bullying someone because they have SEN or a disability. This is in line with the Disability Accessibility Strategy 2004 – 2007

Bullying can cause stress, which can affect a person's health. Symptoms may include anxiety, headaches, sleepless nights, stomach upset, loss of confidence or self-esteem, depression and not wanting to come to school or the workplace.

The effects of bullying should not be minimised.

## Values Statement

Wellington School promotes an ethos where:

- everyone can learn and work in a safe, caring and respectful environment.
- independence is valued and individuals can flourish without fear.
- pupils are encouraged to develop self-confidence, self-discipline and high self-esteem
- pupils and staff are encouraged to develop a caring attitude towards each other and the wider community.
- positive behaviour is promoted and success is celebrated.
- pupils and staff are encouraged to participate in decision making and school life.

## Committing the School to Action

### Wellington School

- “recognizes the hurt that bullying causes.
- takes all reasonable steps to protect its pupils from bullying.
- provides victims with appropriate care.
- plans to help bullies change their behaviour.”<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Preventing Bullying – A Whole School Approach

- 1.1 The curriculum
- 1.2 Monitoring of potentially vulnerable pupils/groups of pupils including new pupils, pupils who are visibly different and those in transition between the primary and secondary departments
- 1.3 Encouraging a ‘telling’ environment
- 1.4 Awareness-raising
- 1.5 Staff training
- 1.6 Keeping up to date with available resources/literature

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson, G. & Maines, B. Safe to Tell, 2000 Lucky Duck Publishing Ltd.

### 1.1 Anti-bullying work through the curriculum

The subject of bullying is discussed and explored within the curriculum in a number of areas:

- Personal and Social Education
- Health Education
- Form Time
- Drama
- Literature
- Circle Time
- Assembly

## 1.2 Monitoring of potentially vulnerable pupils/ groups of pupils.

Although not inevitably victims of bullying, it is important to recognise that the transition from Primary to Secondary and the move of a single pupil to a new school can be described as a ‘predictable crisis’<sup>2</sup>, therefore, staff should be alert to the experiences of pupils in this situation. Equally, “vulnerability isn’t always visible to adults. The victim (of bullying) may look like any other child”<sup>3</sup> and staff should be alert to the behaviour of ‘ordinary’<sup>4</sup> pupils as well as those who are different. It is important to recognise here that the ‘vulnerable’ pupil can also be the one exhibiting bullying behaviour.

- In the Senior Department the Form Tutor (First Level Guidance Tutor) initially interviews any new pupil and following this, a record of the interview is forwarded to the Year Head who conducts an interview at a later date if this is deemed necessary. An informal meeting is always held between the Form Tutor and any new pupil within the first week of their arrival in school. New pupils continue to be monitored throughout the session.
- Pupils who are visibly different – due to the nature of the school these pupils are known to staff and all staff are vigilant concerning these pupils. This is in line with the Disability Accessibility Strategy 2004 – 2007.
- Pupils in the transition stage between Primary 6 and Primary 7 and between Primary 7 and Secondary 1 – the nature of the school being on one campus allows for a smooth transition for most pupils. The First Level Guidance system, which allows for a small number of pupils to be known well by one member of staff, allows for close monitoring of pupils at this stage. The House System allows for senior pupils to be known by junior pupils and vice versa.
- Pupils in the Primary Department spend most of their time with their class teacher, who knows each child well, and is aware of many aspects of life which could render a child vulnerable. Playground supervisors also play a large part in monitoring pupil behaviour, and inform class teachers of any concerns there may be. There is close dialogue between all teachers, playground supervisors and AHT regarding any pupils who give cause for concern.
- Any member of staff who feels they are the subject of bullying behaviour may report this using the Staff Grievance Procedure.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, G. & Maines, B. *Safe to Tell*, 2000 Lucky Duck Publishing Ltd.

<sup>3</sup> Johnstone, M. Munn, P. Edwards, L. *Action Against Bullying; Drawing from Experience*, SCRE

<sup>4</sup> Johnstone, M. Munn, P. Edwards, L. *Action Against Bullying; Drawing from Experience*, SCRE

### 1.3 Encouraging a ‘telling’ environment

“Silence and secrecy nurture bullying.”<sup>5</sup> Young people will not tell for a variety of reasons. Mainly they are worried about the subsequent reaction of the bully. They are naturally fearful of retribution and are also often confused in their attitude towards the bully, who can be a dynamic, fun and attractive classmate. Once pupils know that telling will result in a fair resolution they will trust adults with information about bad behaviour. It is important that the traditional “tale telling” myth is destroyed. A telling environment is one where all members recognise that they have responsibilities to the other members in the group and if they are aware of bullying they have a duty to tell. Wellington is committed to the development of a safe environment where pupils can ‘tell’ without fear of reprisal.

Staff, ancillary staff, parents and pupils should promote the key message that:

- If you are being bullied, tell someone. Don’t suffer in silence.
- If you see someone being bullied, tell a teacher immediately.
- Don’t think it’s OK to be a ‘bystander’ – this can give the impression that bullying is an acceptable form of behaviour.

As an alternative to reporting a bullying concern directly to a member of staff, pupils may email bullying concerns to

[antibully@wellingtonschool.org](mailto:antibully@wellingtonschool.org)

Parents and pupils should note that this could not be done anonymously; however, all information received will be treated sensitively.

Pupils may also post a note in to the bully box, which is positioned outside the Guidance Base.

Parents/carers and pupils will be given copies of the relevant anti-bullying literature at the start of each session or upon entry in to the school.

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<sup>5</sup> Munn, P. School Action Against Bullying, 1993 SCRE

1.4. Awareness Raising - in Personal and Social Education, through the School Council and through Assemblies issues relating to bullying are raised. Continued consideration will be given to any opportunity that arises to promote the anti-bullying message.

1.5. Staff Training –Staff are encouraged to identify their training and development needs, and with respect to this policy, staff will be given the opportunity to access further professional development opportunities.

1.6 Anti-bullying materials are available within the school for staff use.

## 2. Investigating, dealing with, recording and monitoring incidents of bullying.

Many incidents of bullying are resolved quickly and with limited staff intervention, however, there are other incidents of bullying which are more complex and require greater expertise and more time availability. The latter type of bullying is more than likely to be dealt with by the Year Head/Assistant Head, whereas it may be appropriate for a Form Tutor/subject teacher or primary class teacher to deal with the former.

Occasionally, help may be sought from professionals outwith the school setting e.g. the school nurse, the school doctor, psychological services.

The main aims of intervention in an alleged or actual incident of bullying are to:

- “make the victim feel safe; and
- to encourage better behaviour from the bullies, observers and/or colluders”<sup>6</sup>

All incidents must be recorded and monitoring must take place within a two-week period. In cases of persistent bullying, monitoring will continue throughout the session.

Parents/carers will be informed and involved at as early a stage as appropriate in order to foster and strengthen a co-operative ethos. This will be done by telephone or letter and parents may be asked to make an appointment to come into school to meet with the designated member of staff.

Parents/carers will be:

- told about the steps which will be taken to try to resolve the incident.
- given progress reports.
- advised of disciplinary action to be taken (if any).

Designated members of staff for dealing with alleged or actual incidents of bullying in the Senior school are:

Mrs N. O’Connell, Assistant Head (Year Head S1/2)  
Mr B. Farrelly Assistant Head (Year Head S3/4)  
Mrs L. McMahon Assistant Head (Year Head S5/6)  
Mrs G. Leask, Depute Head

and in the Junior school are:

Mr C. Robinson, Assistant Head (Junior)  
Mrs P. McLaren, Assistant Head (Infant)

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, G. & Maines, B. Safe to Tell, 2000 Lucky Duck Publishing Ltd.

All staff should follow the five key points suggested in the pack 'Bullying – Don't Suffer in Silence (2000)' produced by the DfEE:

- never ignore suspected bullying.
- don't make premature assumptions.
- listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same thing does not mean they are all telling the truth.
- adopt a problem solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves.
- follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.

If an alleged or actual incident is reported, the member of staff should try to establish:

- who is involved
- the nature of the bullying
- the extent of the bullying
- where it was taking place
- the effect(s) on the person(s) being bullied
- the nature of the relationship between the alleged bully and the pupil(s) experiencing bullying
- if there were any triggers to the behaviour

This should then be discussed with the designated member of staff who will decide what measures should be taken to try to resolve the difficulty.

Wellington School employs The No Blame Approach, or a variation thereof, to the resolution of difficulties. (See Appendix 2 for an outline of the seven steps involved in The No Blame Approach.) The Shared Concern Method, or a variation thereof, is also employed. (See Appendix 3 for an outline of the four steps involved in The Shared Concern Method.)

Disciplinary steps will **only** be taken if the bullying is persistent and the attitude and behaviour of the perpetrator(s) does not change.

### **3. Bullying in the wider community**

The school cannot be held responsible for bullying which takes place off the school premises, on the school buses or outside of school activities. The school recognises, however, that bullying which takes place outside the school often happens in school, too and, therefore, will give advice on how to prevent this happening. The school would stress, of course, the role parents play in trying to ensure the safety of their child between home and school. Any concerns relating to incidents of bullying on the school buses must be addressed to the Deputy Head, the Bus Organiser and the Bus Company.

## Appendix 1

### “A teaching profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

#### **The 2001 national agreement on teachers salaries and conditions of service**

(McCrone) reached certain recommendations which outlined the duties of teachers and have particular relevance to bullying, i.e.

- promoting and safeguarding the health, welfare and safety of pupils

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989**, which has been endorsed by the Scottish Executive, contains a number of articles which are pertinent to the issue of bullying.

Article 12 states: Parties shall assume to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 19 states: Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Article 28 states: Parties recognise the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity they shall, in particular...Take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conforming with the present convention.

**The Human Rights Act 1998** allows people to claim their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights in Scottish courts and tribunals, instead of having to go to the European Court in Strasbourg. The Act underpins this by requiring all public authorities in the UK to act compatibly with the Convention rights.

Under the Scotland Act, the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament are required to comply with rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) in exercising their powers. Although, the Human Rights act does not contain any specific mention of the right of a child to be protected from bullying it may be that its existence will make it more likely that school policies may be challenged in the courts.

**The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000** charges Headteachers with a specific duty to consult pupils:

“The development plan shall include an account of the ways in which, and extent to which, the headteacher of the school will –

- a. consult the pupils in attendance at the school; and
- b. seek to involve them when decisions require to be made concerning the everyday running of the school.”

The school has made the decision, therefore, to write this school policy on bullying, and update it, with a meaningful input from pupils. This was carried out in line with the requirements of the Disability Accessibility Strategy October 2004 – September 2005.

## Appendix 2

### **The No Blame Approach – an outline**

#### Step one – talk with the victim

The victim must understand and give consent to the process to follow which will involve the designated member of staff talking, on their behalf, to a group which includes the bully/bullies, and any colluders or observers. The victim is not invited to attend the group since anything that is said could undermine the problem-solving approach. The group, however, may include friends of the victim.

#### Step two – convene a meeting with the people involved

#### Step three – explain the problem

The detail of the incident are not discussed, nor is blame allocated, however, it is made quite clear to the group that a particular individual is suffering distress.

#### Step four – share responsibility

The designated member of staff at this point in the meeting will explain that no-one is in trouble but that the responsibility lies with them to improve the situation and that the group has been convened with this purpose in mind

#### Step five – ask the group members for their ideas

Group members are usually concerned for the individual and relieved that they are not in trouble. Each individual is asked to suggest ways that they might improve this situation.

#### Step six – leave it up to them

The designated member of staff ends the meeting by passing the responsibility over to the group to solve the problem. A further meeting is arranged.

#### Step seven – meet them again

The designated member of staff will meet with each person involved individually, including the victim. This allows monitoring of the bullying and keeps the pupils involved in the process.

Adapted from Lucky Duck, Maines and Robinson 1992

### **Appendix 3**

#### **The Shared Concern Method**

##### Step one – working with the bullies

The bullies, colluders, bystanders are seen first and individually.

##### Step two – meeting the victim

The designated member of staff has to work out quickly what type of victim this may be.

##### Step three – preparing for a meeting

Preparations should be made for a meeting with the victim and the group who were involved in the bullying. Individuals are seen first and then the group. Careful preparation for this stage is necessary to ensure that both sides are prepared to make positive comments about each other.

##### Step four – group meeting

A group meeting with the designated member of staff as mediator should be arranged. Both sides must come up with suggestions for improvements in the situation.

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