

**CORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ANTI-BULLYING/RESPECT POLICY**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child tell us that

"*Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally".*

Aberdeen City Council’s Policy on 'Positive Relationships and Anti-Bullying Approaches in Schools' states that

"*Relationships in schools should be characterised by respect, kindness and consideration* ..."

*“It’s every child’s right not to be bullied. Children’s rights are unique in that many of them, although designed for the safety and protection of children, have to be provided for by adults and the government.”* (respectme.org.uk)

**Aims of the Anti-Bullying/Respect Policy**

Our expectation is for this policy and its key messages and ethos to keep a high profile in everyday practice, through relationships with staff, partners, parent/carers and children to foster respectful relationships and behaviours.

We are committed to challenging prejudice-based bullying. Prejudice can often be the basis for bullying related to the Protected Characteristics as outlined in the equality Act (2010); age, disability, sex, transgender, race, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion or belief. Further to these protected characteristics, bullying behaviour can be linked to prejudice attitudes towards body image, social and economic status, young carers, and children who are Looked After.

* To ensure that all teaching and support staff, pupils and parents have a clear understanding of bullying.
* To ensure that all teaching and support staff are consulted on and know what the school policy is, and follow procedures.
* To ensure that pupils and parents are consulted on and know what the school policy is, and what they should do if bullying arises.
* To give assurance to pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
* To increase awareness of the causes and effects of bullying.
* To offer guidance/support on dealing with bullying.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the Aberdeen City Council, ‘Education & Children’s Services Anti-Bullying Policy’, and the online materials available at respectme.org.uk**

**What is bullying?**

Definition of bullying behaviour:

*“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on the 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. The behaviour happens face to face and online.”* (Respectme, 2015)

Bullying can be (but is not limited to):

* EMOTIONAL: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures/glances)
* SEXUAL: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
* HOMOPHOBIC: because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
* RACIST: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
* VERBAL: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours
* CYBER/ONLINE: e-mail and social media misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology e.g. camera & video facilities
* PHYSICAL: punching, kicking etc.

**Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

* is unwilling to go to school
* begins to truant
* changes his/her usual routine
* becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
* is frightened of walking to or from school
* does not want to go on the school/public bus
* persistently feels ill in the morning
* begins to do poorly in school work
* comes home with possessions damaged or missing
* has unexplained cuts/bruises
* becomes unusually argumentative/unreasonable
* stops eating
* is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
* is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
* provides improbable excuses for any of the above

This list is by no means exhaustive: these signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

If a pupil is being bullied, he/she will not be able to fully take advantage of the education being offered, nor feel part of a caring, supportive and safe community.

**Proactive Respect Measures at Cornhill School**

The action taken by the school when incidences of bullying take place will vary depending on the circumstances. Pupils and parents can be assured that every incident of bullying is treated seriously and that action will always be taken to support victims and investigate the motivation of those denying respect to others.

All staff members at Cornhill School provide a positive personal example through their supportive relationships with each other and with pupils. We use praise and the issuing of certificates and awards to recognise achievement and good behaviour (see our ‘Positive Behaviour Policy’). An atmosphere of respect and acceptance of others is encouraged amongst all staff and pupils and is embedded within corridor rules, dinner hall and playground expectations, assemblies, whole school initiatives, etc.

Our senior pupils are directly involved in various initiatives to support positive behaviour such as; Nursery Buddies; Playground/Dinner hall Buddies; Prefects; House captains/Vice Captains, etc. Anti-Bullying posters (along with those promoting kindness and respect) are displayed around the school and the topic of bullying is addressed in lessons across the Health & Wellbeing curriculum and through class activities such as Circle Time. There is a regular Senior Management Team presence in and around school and a strong PSA presence within the playground. We operate an 'open door' policy for pupils to speak with all staff and promote a culture of non-acceptance of bullying.

At Cornhill School, it is important that we offer emotional support to children who may experience, or are affected by, bullying behaviour. Children may speak to a range of trusted staff members including SMT, teachers and PSAs. There is also support through other agencies such as ChildLine ( https://www.childline.org.uk/ ) or Stonewall (https://www.stonewall.org.uk/ ) should a child feel more comfortable talking to someone else.

Through discussion and activities in Focus Groups, pupil-led House Challenges and Pupil Council meetings, our pupils clearly show an awareness of the importance of reporting bullying and were confident when identifying adults they trust to tell. A strong theme from the pupil voice is that of kindness and respect and these are clearly valued attributes. As such, a friendship bench has been installed in the playground and the Buddy Training adapted to include these messages. Our Parent Council has reviewed and shared this policy; this policy is available on our website: https://cornhill.aberdeen.sch.uk/

**Staff members will:**

* Listen to the pupil.
* Respond promptly to all referrals of bullying incidents from pupils, staff and parents.
* Inform pupil of everything you intend to do. e.g. "I am now going to speak with…”.
* Refrain from using labels, ‘bully’ and ‘victim’.
* Challenge disrespectful comments and actions made in a general sense. e.g. using 'gay' pejoratively.
* Challenge disrespectful comments or actions aimed at pupils within class making him/her aware of the distress such words/actions cause.
* Be aware of early signs of distress. e.g. pupil becomes shy, withdrawn, aggressive .
* Pass all information on bullying or suspected bullying to SMT promptly.
* Involve the pupil who has been bullied in considering what strategies might work and give them a voice in decisions.
* Keep a record of incidents and action taken (this includes SEEMiS).
* Where appropriate, advise SMT to complete Racist/Homophobic Incident Forms. (Incident form files in special section of the folder in HT Office.)
* Enable the pupil who has bullied to understand the consequences of his or her actions (use a Restorative Justice approach where possible -help perpetrator to understand why his/her behaviour is unacceptable and to understand the consequences for him/her and those bullied and provide opportunities to make amends.) Also, work with pupil who has bullied on issues. e.g. jealousy/seeking respect/control/confidence.
* Monitor the results of actions after dealing with incidents.
* Take care not to over-react, especially to rumours that may be unfounded.
* Inform relevant staff about actions taken and keep them up-to-date with progress.
* Enable the pupil who has been bullied to see that improvement is achievable.
* Where appropriate consider the involvement of other agencies.
* Where appropriate, inform parents of situation and actions taken.
* Where appropriate, ask parents in for meeting.
* Ensure that pupils are aware that if they experience or witness bullying they should talk to someone they trust (e.g. parents/carers, friend, member of staff, other visitor to the school such as Rev. Aitken, etc.)

**Recording and Reporting**

All instances of prejudice-based bullying that fall under the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act (2010) must be reported and recorded. At Cornhill School, we are required to use the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module to record and monitor incidents of bullying. This enables us to monitor, review and record any actions progressed.

Ongoing training for staff will be accessed where appropriate. Continued links will be made with agencies such as ChildLine, Children’s 1st and NSPCC.

**Parents/carers** can play an active role in measures to prevent bullying behaviour and look for potential signs of bullying behaviour. Parents/carers can encourage their child not to retaliate and can support/encourage them to report the bullying behaviour. Parents can seek support from staff at Cornhill School and directly report the bullying. Parents can;

* underline to their child/children that the rights of others' should be respected
* talk with their child/children regularly about school life
* contact the school regarding any concerns relating to bullying
* support the school in its respect message
* demonstrate and role-model respectful exchanges with others

As online bullying largely occurs out with school, we are unable to investigate these matters or seek those responsible. **It is important however, that you inform us of such matters so that we may monitor changing friendships within school.** If you feel uncomfortable with communications you receive then;

* Do not respond
* Block the message
* Print any evidence
* Report Abuse Button if necessary (report to the Social Media platform)
* Consult the CEOP website for advice
* Remember , it is your prerogative to inform the Police if you feel that communications are threatening/abusive

**Our pupils** should avoid any kind of bullying behaviour and should watch out for signs of bullying behaviour among their peers. We are clear with pupils that being a ‘bystander’ is not acceptable and we share our expectations that pupils should report incidents of bullying. We regularly remind pupils of the options for reporting bullying behaviour. Our pupils have a duty to help maintain a culture of respect in Cornhill Primary School and we ask them to:

* treat everyone within the school and community with respect;
* report bullying concerns immediately;
* avoid taking 'action' independently;
* support staff fully when investigating incidents of bullying by telling the whole truth.