



**respectme**  
Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service

# **Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right**

Anti-Bullying Policy Guidance  
for Schools and Children &  
Young People's Services



## Welcome

Writing a policy can sometimes seem like a daunting and overwhelming task. This guide is designed to support you through the process, by simplifying the steps you need to take and signposting you to other sources of information.

The key thing to remember is that your policy must resonate consistently with your day-to-day practice to ensure fairness, respect, equality and inclusion. The policy should reflect the principles of GIRFEC and Curriculum for Excellence, keeping the health and wellbeing of Scotland’s children at its heart.

Children and young people need to feel safe and secure in school. Their health and wellbeing is a priority of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovement> and is a pre-requisite for successful learning, attainment and achievement.

A robust anti-bullying policy matched by consistent, predictable practice will help to create safe environments where bullying cannot thrive.

### Notes

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## So, let’s get started...

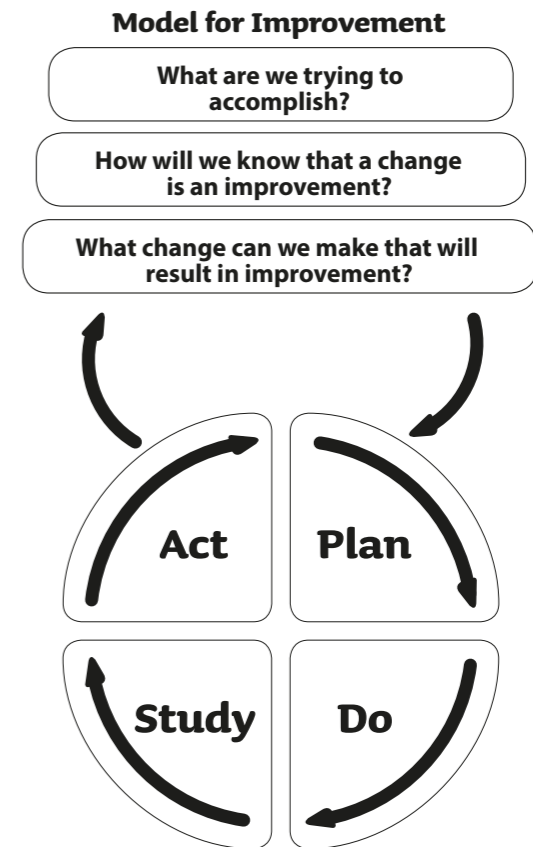
Firstly, we strongly recommend that you attend one of our free one-day anti-bullying training events. This training will introduce you to Scotland’s approach to anti-bullying. It will give you core messages and principles to embed into your work, and will provide practical advice on how you can best prevent, reduce and respond to bullying when it happens. It will help to build your confidence and knowledge of anti-bullying practice and equip you for the policy journey ahead. Attendance at our training will also give you access to our practitioner’s toolkit, which you can then use to cascade the training to colleagues in your organisation. You can find out more and book a place here: <http://www.respectme.org.uk/booking.html>

When reviewing or drafting your anti-bullying policy and implementing it into daily practice there are three stages to go through:

- o Stage One – Reviewing your Policy and current practice
- o Stage Two – Writing your policy
- o Stage Three – Implementation and review

**We will take you through each of these stages and the checklists at the back will act as a guide, while providing a record of your learning and reflections.**

The ‘Plan, Do, Study, Act’ improvement methodology promoted by Education Scotland can be applied to this process. See diagram above.



### Next steps....

The reference points for writing your school policy are:

- o The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children & Young People. An updated version of this will be published shortly. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0>
- o Your Local Authority’s Anti-Bullying Policy



This diagram illustrates the overarching policy landscape within which your school or service’s anti-bullying policy should sit:

# 1

## Stage one – reviewing your policy and current practice

### Form a working group

An ideal way to take this forward is by setting up a **Policy Review Working Group**. This group should be representative of those who will be expected to implement the policy and those who will be recipients of it. The group should be as diverse as possible and ideally include:

- o An influential person to lead the policy review process – this is likely to be a teacher, head teacher or a senior staff member
- o Other staff who will be involved in its implementation
- o A parent/carer – and link this process to your Parent Council if you are based in a school
- o Children and young people – or find an effective method of gathering pupil or service users' voices through consultations, such as questionnaires
- o A member of the wider school/service community, e.g. teaching assistant, support workers, police liaison officer, catering or janitorial staff

Agree a plan for the way forward at the group's initial meeting. Consider timescales for the new policy to be in place and map out how you are, realistically, going to achieve this. Set out meeting dates/key milestones and allow enough time for meaningful consultation with staff, parents and children and young people.

Think about assigning roles to members of the group to take individual responsibility for drafting a section. Often the group leader can then co-ordinate and edit inputs into an overall draft.

Whether there is an existing policy or the group is producing one for the very first time, they should familiarise themselves with the National Approach and with their Local Authority guidance. These provide the framework within which a school/service policy should sit.

### Self-evaluation

To help you assess performance in this area there is a Self-Evaluation Template in **Appendix 1**. **Use this tool as an internal working document to critically assess how good you are at preventing and responding to bullying behaviour** and what needs to change.

### Prejudice-based bullying

In line with the National Approach, it is vital that all schools and services make a clear statement in relation to prejudice-based bullying and mention each of the protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010. Schools and services that list these, help to create an environment where prejudice can be challenged. This also gives adults and children and young people a clear commitment to respecting safety and promoting inclusion.

### Online bullying

The Working Group should ensure that online bullying is taken as seriously as any other form of bullying. This should be explicit within the anti-bullying policy and should be woven throughout it, rather than as a separate section. Further guidance on staying safe online can be found on the respectme website [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

**It is important that the working group is aware of the above core messages at this stage of the process and ensure they remain on the agenda at every single stage throughout the process.**

### Consultation

Consulting with the people involved in implementing and receiving the policy is crucial to its success. Not only does this allow for the critical review of any existing policy, and whether it has achieved its aims, but it also allows for fresh input into the new policy. Consultation should be extended to:

- o The wider school or service community
- o Children and young people
- o Parents and carers

You can carry out the consultation in a number of ways, for example using questionnaires, focus group discussions, Q & A sessions or suggestion boxes. Be as inclusive and innovative as possible to attract a wide range of views. **Sample questionnaires are attached in Appendix 2.**

Consider how you are going to manage the responses from your consultation. Feeding back to those you have consulted with is imperative to demonstrate that you have listened and meaningfully considered their input. The suggestions that have been incorporated as a result of the consultation should be clearly seen and, ideally, acknowledged within the policy itself.

### Involving children and young people

The most successful way to address bullying is to create a positive school ethos and culture. Children and young people have a right to be included and consulted. Again, you can gather their views through focus groups, surveys, and classroom or group exercises. The results will provide you with local intelligence about the nature and extent of bullying as they perceive it.

Bullying violates Children's Rights – see the UNCRC for further information: [www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk) – and Children's Rights are embedded within Scottish legislation with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation>

### Involving parents and carers

A key group of stakeholders are parents and carers, who have a right to be included and consulted. In relation to schools, the principles of involving parents and carers are set out in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Parents and carers can be key partners in supporting how bullying is challenged, prevented and responded to. The working group should review the current practice for involving parents and carers in the development of the anti-bullying policy. The group should also consider good practice around how, when and if parents and carers are informed about bullying incidents, and use the principles of children's rights to guide this discussion.

Parents and carers should be able to access Local Authority policies and individual school policies with ease. Local Authorities and schools can also consider publishing leaflets specifically for parents and carers.

# 2

## Stage two – writing your anti-bullying policy

Once you have completed the self-evaluation and the working group has consulted on current practice and anti-bullying work, you can then start to develop your local policy.

Your policy should start by referring to the Local Authority anti-bullying policy and the National Approach.

It would be considered good practice to relate other policy and legislative areas such as GIRFEC, UNCRC, and The Equality Act as context. Your revised policy should contain a statement which clearly states the organisational stance on bullying and the scope of the policy. An example of how to link your school policy statement with that of the Local Authority could be:

“\_\_\_\_\_ Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all people in its educational establishments.”

Followed by:

“Here at \_\_\_\_\_ School/service, our values are respect, dignity, fairness and inclusion (or whatever your local ones are). We understand that bullying is never acceptable and that children and young people have the right to learn in a safe, secure environment.”

Be sure that your local policy reflects and signposts the Local Authority anti-bullying policy.

### The nationally agreed definition of bullying as set out in the National Approach

In Scotland, bullying is defined as:

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)

If you use this definition, please cite ‘respectme 2015’.

Policies should be clear that bullying includes both online and face to face bullying. We would **not** advise schools or services to treat bullying that happens online as something that happened ‘outside’, but instead remember it is behaviour that happens ‘to’ someone and it will impact upon them.

### Policies should have a clear statement that bullying is a breach of children’s rights

**Your policy should include a clear commitment to challenging all types of prejudice-based bullying and language.**

We would expect **every individual school/ service’s** anti-bullying policy to list all of the protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010, and state that any bullying related to these characteristics is unacceptable. We would advise signposting to the Local Authority policy section that expands on prejudice-based bullying. Alternatively, you can find out more about prejudice-based bullying at: [www.respectme.org.uk/bullying/prejudice-basedbullying](http://www.respectme.org.uk/bullying/prejudice-basedbullying).

### Expectations, or codes of behaviour, and responsibilities for all staff/volunteers and children and young people

This section allows schools and services to set out what is expected from everyone; management and staff; parents and carers; and children and young people.

It can outline the basic rules of behaviour; respectful relationships etc. and can be enormously helpful in facilitating the resolution of issues when each party accepts their individual roles and responsibilities.

This is where you can state how to report bullying or concerns, and what people can expect.

### A clear commitment to promoting and role modelling positive relationships and positive behaviour

This will include challenging prejudice-based language and behaviour and role modelling appropriate responses and support.

### A range of strategies that will be used to prevent and respond to bullying

Schools can adopt a range of pro-active, preventative strategies to raise awareness, keep the profile of the anti-bullying culture high, and reinforce the message that bullying is never acceptable. Examples of these include anti-bullying awareness days, posters and visual reminders, parents’ evenings, staff training and promotion of accessible policy documents.

Each school or service has a unique culture and the policy can showcase the specific initiatives you use to actively prevent, reduce and respond to bullying in your setting.

### The recording and monitoring strategies that will be used for management purposes

A statement on recording and monitoring bullying incidents is contained within the National Approach and your Local Authority policy guidance should also have explicit instructions around recording and monitoring. It is imperative that your school or service reflects this and complies with the Local Authority guidance.

Of particular note is the requirement to specifically record prejudice-based bullying incidents which relate to protected characteristics. The Equality Module on SEEMIS allows for this data to be gathered and analysed at both school and Local Authority level when the templates are populated.

### The consultation undertaken with children and young people and parents and carers should be evidenced in your policy.

Your local policy should contain sections where you can directly quote the feedback from children and young people and parents and carers;

*‘We asked children and young people and they said they wanted...’*

*‘Parents and carers told us they value...’*

### You should state how and how often the policy will be evaluated and reviewed with children and young people, parents and carers and staff

We recommend that anti-bullying policies are reviewed every three years, and this should be factored into school improvement plans in advance.

### A commitment to staff development and training

Information on the free training programmes provided by respectme can be found here <http://respectme.org.uk/training/programmes-and-calendar/> and specific training dates can be organised by your Local Authority.

## Consult on your final draft

The Working Group should now be at a stage to put together a draft of a new policy based upon the review work carried out.

At this stage there is an opportunity to conduct a secondary consultation on the final draft document if this is considered worthwhile. Any input from the secondary consultation period, if undertaken, should be discussed and any appropriate changes made.

This stage of consultation is about content and checking understanding.

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## Stage three – implementation & review

### Launch the policy and communicate procedures to staff, children & young people and parents & carers

This provides an opportunity to celebrate success, keep the profile of the work high, raise awareness of the policy's existence and reinforce the anti-bullying culture. Crucially, it promotes clarity on procedures, roles and responsibilities, and provides an opportunity for questions to be addressed.

Children and young people can be involved in the design of the launch event and music and drama can often be used effectively for this. Copies of the policy can be made available at the launch, or instructions can be given on how it can be accessed, e.g. via the school website, handbook, noticeboard, etc. Consideration should be given to additional access requirements, e.g. non-English speakers, partially-sighted, etc.

respectme video resources to support the launch can be found on our website: [www.respectme.org.uk/resources](http://www.respectme.org.uk/resources)

### Ongoing recording and monitoring of bullying

It may be beneficial to appoint a member of staff to facilitate this process to ensure that monitoring and evaluation is taking place, evidence is collated and reviewed, trends are analysed and emerging issues are resourced.

Recording, monitoring and evaluation can be on-going and can be carried out in various ways:

- o Recording of bullying incidents or concerns at a central point
- o Facilitating on-going working groups to discuss experiences of implementing the new policy and discussing both the positive aspects and the challenges that staff are facing
- o Keeping bullying on the agenda for regular discussion at Pupil or Parent Council, Service and team meetings
- o Using questionnaires to discover the true nature and extent of the impact of the policy. If you conducted questionnaires at the beginning of your policy review, these can act as a benchmark for comparison
- o Monitoring incidents of prejudice-based bullying and incorporating this into regular feedback to the school or service
- o Holding focus groups to share and compare experiences of implementation.

# 3



## Maintaining a high profile

It is important to maintain the profile of the anti-bullying work undertaken and reinforce this ethos in everyday workings and relationships. Ideas on how this can be done include:

- o Ground rules or a pledge visibly displayed
- o Role-play and drama
- o Art work
- o Anti-Bullying Week initiatives
- o Literature
- o Visual reminders – posters and badges
- o Workshops
- o Discussions
- o Peer Mediation
- o Increased supervision in ‘hotspot’ areas

**These activities and resources must also reflect the diversity of the children and young people and their families who attend your school or service.**

Visible and inclusive support is important to LGBTI+ young people, those with a disability and minority ethnic children and young people. Schools and services should make sure these identities are represented and support is available to everyone. This can include using posters to signpost helplines and support groups, and making information accessible in different languages and formats.

**Ensuring your school or service sends out a clear message that this is a safe and inclusive place is the responsibility of all adults in all groups and in all classrooms. Support and guidance is available from a range of organisations that specialise in representing the views and experiences of groups of young people – including those protected under the Equality Act and other groups such as Looked After Children and Young People.**

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## Checklists

### Section 1 – Reviewing your policy and current practice

- Set up a Policy Review Working Group.....
- Agreed a timescale for policy completion and set out key milestones to achieve this.....
- Referred people to the National Approach.....
- Assigned roles/tasks to members of the Policy Review Working Group.....
- Completed the Self-Evaluation template.....
- Discussed the inclusion of prejudice-based bullying.....
- Date self-evaluation undertaken and findings disseminated.....
- Engaged and consulted with local/community stakeholders.....
- Used the sample questionnaire.....
- Communicated feedback to ALL those who took part on how their views have shaped and influenced the policy.....
- Involved and meaningfully consulted with the wider school/service community....
- Involved and meaningfully consulted with children and young people.....
- Involved and meaningfully consulted with parents and carers.....

## Section 2 – Writing your policy

- A statement which lays out the organisational stance on bullying and the scope of the policy .....
- Made a clear commitment to promoting and role modelling positive relationships and positive behaviour .....
- Signposted national and local authority/organisational policy .....
- Listed range of strategies that will be used to prevent and respond to bullying .....
- The nationally agreed definition of bullying as set out in the National Approach .....
- Outlined the recording and monitoring strategies that will be used for management purposes .....
- A clear statement that bullying is a breach of Children’s Rights .....
- Evidenced your consultation responses throughout .....
- Include a clear commitment to challenging all types of prejudice-based bullying and language .....
- Set a date for review .....
- All of the protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 are listed .....
- Considered training needs .....
- Developed expectations or codes of behaviour, and responsibilities for all staff/volunteers and children and young people .....
- Agreed and produced a final draft .....
- Set a date for launch .....
- Incorporated any final feedback from consultation .....
- ## Section 3 – Implementation and review
- Communicated the launch date .....
- Involved children and young people .....
- Invited appropriate input from speakers .....
- Included parental involvement .....
- Communication plan in place .....

## Appendix 1: Self-evaluation tool

### School anti-bullying policy & practice: self-evaluation

Activity	Critical reflection notes	Score (see guidance below)	Actions required & timescales for improvement
<b>Policy</b>			
Does the school have a current anti-bullying policy which reflects both its Local Authority guidance and the National Approach?			
How well were staff, pupils, parents and other relevant stakeholders involved in the policy development?			
To what extent does the whole-school community have ownership of the vision, aims and values of the policy? How well has it been communicated and implemented?			
If there is no current policy, what is the plan and timescale for remediating this?			
<b>Whole-school staff training/involvement</b>			
How well do all staff know and understand GIRFEC, the wellbeing indicators, the UNCRC and the National Approach?			
How well do we ensure that all staff undertake regular professional learning around anti-bullying policy and practice?			
<b>Culture &amp; practice</b>			
What steps have been taken to raise awareness, prevent and respond to bullying?			
How effectively are we creating and promoting an ethos of inclusion, diversity, participation and positive relationships aimed at eliminating discrimination, educating young people and building empathy to support an anti-bullying culture in our school/setting?			
How effectively are incidents related to equalities and/or prejudice-based bullying acted upon to prevent future occurrences?			

#### Guidance for scoring

- 1 Nothing happening at all
- 2 Little/dependent on individual staff
- 3 Significant/consistent across the school
- 4 Planned for, monitored and embedded

Continued overleaf

## Appendix 1: Self-evaluation tool

### School anti-bullying policy & practice: self-evaluation

Activity	Critical reflection notes	Score (see guidance on the facing page)	Actions required & timescales for improvement
How <b>consistent</b> is anti-bullying practice across the whole school/setting?			
How well do children and young people show consideration for others and demonstrate positive behaviour and relationships?			
<b>Parental/family engagement</b>			
How well do we support families in developing skills which lead to positive relationships, better learning and better behaviour?			
How well do we enable parents, carers and families to contribute to the life of the school/group and be involved in anti-bullying policy and practice?			
How do we ensure that relationships with parents, carers and families, the local community and partners are characterised by trust and respect?			
<b>Recording, monitoring, continuous improvement &amp; learning</b>			
How effective are recording and monitoring processes where there are bullying concerns?			
How well do we know if the steps we have taken to prevent and respond to bullying have improved outcomes for children?			
What is our process for seeking feedback on the effectiveness of anti-bullying work undertaken and ensuring that valuable learning from it is incorporated into future policy?			
Do we have examples of good practice worth sharing more widely?			
<b>Response, support &amp; pupil voice</b>			
How clear are children and young people about how they can report bullying and what level of support they can expect?			
How well do we support children and young people to recover their sense of agency and make decisions about their wellbeing after a bullying experience?			
How well do staff know learners as individuals?			
<b>TOTAL SCORE (out of maximum 84)</b>			

## Appendix 2: Sample questionnaires

### Wider school – teaching staff and school community

- o Have you seen bullying between children and young people?
- o What kinds of bullying have you seen?
- o Do you notice bullying behaviour, attitudes or language that is discriminatory; for example racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or about faith or religion?
- o What is your understanding of the school or organisational procedures about bullying?
- o Are you clear about what is expected of you?
- o What do you do when you see or hear bullying behaviour?
- o What action do you take when a person tells you they are being bullied?
- o What do you think should be included in the school policy?
- o What additional support or training do you feel you need to address bullying behaviour?
- o How do you think bullying can be prevented?
- o What can **you** do to role model respectful relationships?

### Children and young people

- o What kind of bullying behaviour have you seen or been involved in?
- o Do you notice bullying behaviour or language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or about someone's faith or religion? For example, have you seen or heard people making fun of someone or leaving them out because they are Muslim or Jewish or Catholic, or calling someone names using language that puts down gay people or girls and women?
- o What should someone who is being bullied do?
- o What should the school do about bullying behaviour?
- o What should the school do with people who are bullying others?
- o What do you think should happen about bullying that takes place outside of school?
- o What do you think parents and carers can do to help bullying situations?
- o What do you think young people could do to help themselves handle the situation until they're ready to tell an adult?
- o How do you think bullying can be prevented?
- o What can **you** do to role model respectful relationships?

### Parents and carers

- o Do you think bullying goes on in school?
- o Have you witnessed any kind of bullying?
- o What would you do if your child was being bullied?
- o Do you know who to contact if you have concerns?
- o Do you understand the steps that the school/organisation would take to deal with the person being bullied? And the person/people involved in the bullying?
- o What do you think should be included in a school anti-bullying policy that would help everyone in school to feel supported?
- o How do you think bullying can be prevented?
- o What do you think should happen about bullying that takes place outside of school?
- o What do you think parents and carers can do to help resolve bullying situations?
- o What can **you** do to role model respectful relationships?



## Further info

'Bullying – A guide for parents and carers' can be found here:

[www.respectme.org.uk/resources/publications](http://www.respectme.org.uk/resources/publications)

We also offer free training for parents and carers across Scotland. Visit our website to find out more: [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

Parents can also contact ParentLine Scotland for emotional support and to talk to someone in confidence: 08000 28 22 23



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The Scottish  
Government

