Aberdeenshire Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all in its establishments. Here at Strathburn School we know that bullying is never acceptable and that children have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment.

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. (Respect Me, 2015)

Bullying may be defined as a range of pre-meditated, persistent and often deliberate actions, undertaken by a person or a group of people, which cause the victim (s) physical or emotional distress.

It may be useful to point out a distinction between acts of bullying and incidents which although not to be encouraged are commonplace when groups of children play together and are still learning social boundaries. An occasional quarrel or tussle between two children will be treated as a breach of discipline by staff, but is not bullying. Similarly, reciprocal or casual name-calling is not to be condoned, but is not bullying. Sustained victimisation is. The crucial distinction is where the imbalance of power is such that the victim clearly needs positive support. At the same time the bully needs to be made aware of the damage, which his/her actions are causing.

The school is opposed to all forms of bullying behaviour, be this physical, verbal, threatening and intimidating behaviour or ostracism from groups, games or activities and we will do deal effectively with any incidents which might occur. Victims of bullying will be supported by a range of strategies and resources depending upon the needs of the child and the nature of the incidents.

**Prevention**

As a school we have an ethos of nurture and kindness at the centre. The principles of GIRFEC and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators are known to all staff and are shared regularly with pupils. As a Rights Respecting school we also regularly revisit children’s rights. Through our Health and Wellbeing curriculum we focus on developing positive relationships and again reinforce our school values of honesty, positivity, kindness and respect. There are also inputs around online safety and there is a school mobile phone policy in place.

**What action will be taken against a child who bullies?**

While many believe that children who bully must be punished for their behaviour, it is widely accepted that this type of response can be ineffective, breed resentment or make the situation worse. It is also evident that those that engage in bullying benefit from support and education in social interactions, empathy and emotions. Children often have underlying reasons behind their behaviours and part of their learning is to be supported to ensure that they interact appropriately with others and treat everyone as an equal. Parents/carers and other professionals will be engaged in addressing bullying behaviour. Staff have restorative conversations with pupils to support the development of empathy and understanding. A solution focused approach is used to ensure that all children are supported. Throughout the school there is also a nurture approach throughout the school so that all children feel valued and safe and that they have adults that know them well.

**Parental responsibilities:**

* Ensure that any incidents are reported promptly to the school
* Be aware that the school will not be able to share details of other children and the ways in which the behaviour has been addressed – all children have a right to confidentiality
* Work with the school – we all want our pupils to feel safe and happy in school and to be achieving their full potential
* Bear in mind that there are often many sides to the same story

**Pupil responsibilities:**

* Be kind to each other
* Treat others as equals
* Report any incident that you are uncomfortable or unhappy with to an adult – use a worry box, speak to an adult, use methods identified in class.
* Adhere to the ICT Responsible User Agreement

**Staff responsibilities:**

* Ensure that incidents are recorded – Aberdeenshire Bullying and Equalities Recording and Monitoring Bullying Incidents in Schools (RAMBIS)
* Record appropriately on SEEMIS Pastoral Notes
* Follow up any concerns raised by pupils or other staff members
* When appropriate contact parents to keep them informed and work together to ensure positive outcomes for those involved.
* Reinforce the anti-bullying message through the health and well-being curriculum
* Ensure that children’s rights are regularly revisited throughout the session,
* Have a nurturing classroom and use restorative conversations to address any challenging behaviours.
* Keep parents informed of any concerns and also positive progress.

Date reviewed: August 2022