



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

together
we can
STOP!
BULLYING!



Falkirk Council
Education Services

Introduction



Falkirk Council expects all schools and the central services to provide quality learning experiences that will enable all children and young people to achieve their potential and participate in a fair

and caring society. All children and young people are entitled to an education free from intimidation and bullying in any of its forms.

Our new Anti-Bullying Policy is underpinned by a range of government legislation and documentation. This will provide a framework for schools and early years providers to promote positive relationships and reduce the number of bullying incidents. Education Services will support schools and early years providers in taking the Policy forward. We will work in partnership with all appropriate services and agencies.

Headteachers of schools and early years establishments have a specific responsibility for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of anti-bullying procedures within their school/establishment. This includes:

- Developing a school based Anti-Bullying Policy in consultation with young people, their parents/carers, staff and other services/agencies
- Continuously promoting a culture of inclusion and mutual respect to ensure that bullying is seen as unacceptable by all
- Developing positive and proactive anti-bullying strategies to reduce incidents of bullying

- Ensuring everyone in schools takes responsibility for preventing, reporting and challenging bullying behaviour
- Ensuring staff are alert and respond to behaviours which amount to bullying in circumstances where the victim is unlikely to report it
- Ensuring ongoing communication with everyone
- Ensuring that bullying incidents are handled appropriately
- Identifying a named member of staff to record and monitor bullying incidents
- Ensuring that logged incidents are forwarded to central services
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy on a regular basis
- Identifying training needs of all staff
- Ensuring that all parties including victims and perpetrators receive appropriate support from relevant services and agencies
- Working with other services and agencies to address incidents of bullying and intimidation that originate in the wider community.

I am confident that the new Anti-Bullying Policy will enhance existing practice and help ensure children and young people can learn in safe and supportive environments.



What is bullying?

Bullying is someone being deliberately hurtful to others over a period of time either physically, verbally or indirectly such as ignoring them. It is an abuse of power or strength and can happen anywhere, to anyone regardless of age or gender.

Bullying works through fear and manipulation. A child or young person can be intimidated or threatened to keep quiet about what is happening. It is important therefore that all parents and staff in schools be on the lookout for signs of bullying. Children and young people who are being bullied should be encouraged to report these incidents.

Sending abusive or bullying text messages and e-mails are new versions of bullying. They can replace or simply add to other forms of bullying such as scribbled notes, graffiti on walls, abusive telephone calls, name calling, physical violence, ignoring, stealing or damaging belongings, demanding money or possessions.

ALL parents want to protect their children from bullying no matter whether their child is the victim or the person displaying bullying behaviour.



Racist violence and harassment

This type of bullying can range from ill considered remarks to deliberate physical attacks causing injury. Victims can be singled out because of their skin colour, ethnic group, religious or cultural practices, the way they talk or the clothes they wear.

How does bullying affect people?

Bullying affects the victim, their family, friends, organisations and the wider community. Bullying can cause a range of social and emotional problems and have verbal, physical and psychological effects.

Things to look out for

- Obvious physical signs of being hurt
- Damage to personal belongings
- Unwillingness to go to school/ absence from school
- Changes in behaviour, mood or attitude towards learning
- Child or young person being more “clingy” or emotional than normal
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Signs of stress, anxiety, nervousness
- Pretending to be ill or becoming ill
- Bed wetting
- Self harm
- Change in normal behaviour to fit in with others

Children and young people most vulnerable to bullying

The most vulnerable children and young people include those who are unlikely to retaliate, are perceived as being different, those who go through a change in their family circumstances, have disabilities or obvious physical differences.

Bullies justify their actions by saying that there are differences about their victims which means they are “deserving” targets.

However, children and young people with obvious differences are not the only ones to suffer. There are many others who are bullied for no apparent reason.

Is bullying a crime? What can we do about bullying?

Everyone has the right to contact the police regarding any incident they consider to be illegal. This includes incidents such as assault (even if this happens within the school), serious threats or harassment.

The Police will then decide if further action is needed and if there is enough evidence, charges can be made or the case can be referred to the Children's Reporter. However, in many cases, police involvement or other legal action would not be the best or most appropriate way of resolving issues for all concerned.

The School's role – All schools must develop their own Anti-Bullying Policy which conforms with Council Policy. Bullying is a problem faced by all schools and they are serious about tackling it.

Falkirk Council's Anti-Bullying Policy provides an effective framework for schools to promote positive relationships and to reduce the number of bullying incidents. Schools take the FRESH approach to deal with bullying:

Fairness

listen to all sides of the story

Respect

treat all pupils involved with respect and dignity

Engagement

of pupils and parents in solving the problem

Safety

of all pupils whilst at school

Honesty

discuss openly and honestly any bullying or other problems with parents of the pupils involved.



What are Staff in Schools expected to do?

All incidents of bullying will be thoroughly investigated and staff will try to deal promptly, effectively and sensitively with every incident of bullying and it is their goal to resolve incidents for the benefit of all parties involved. Schools also make every effort to reduce the opportunity of bullying. Ways of doing this can include:

- Staff playing their part in the whole school approach to tackling bullying. This involves listening to pupils, taking action at various levels, developing a positive school atmosphere, regularly reviewing anti-bullying policies/strategies, curriculum development, ensuring that pupils feel safe in all parts of the building and working in partnership with parents.

- General Behaviour Policies - these can include anti-bullying statements as an expectation of behavioural standards.
- A child centred approach where schools have buddying and mentoring systems. This encourages older pupils to develop different ways of supporting the younger ones. Buddies can hold clubs during breaks/lunch or offer friendship and support. Mentors may support in different ways such as reading or helping with homework.
- Pupil Councils often develop their own anti-bullying activities in the school.



Supporting Advice for Your Child

- Do not be afraid to report incidents of bullying. Talk to someone you trust such as a teacher or other adult.
- You have the right to expect your concerns and worries to be treated seriously.
- Write down what has been happening, when and where it happened. Describe incidents without exaggerating.
- Make sure the adult understands how upset you are and that the matter is not trivial.
- Ask the adult what actions they propose to take. Tell them if you think these suggestions will make the situation worse. Offer your own suggestions.
- Although certain aspects of information shared with an adult will remain confidential, some things may need to be discussed with other trusted professionals to ensure the safety and well being of others.
- Take all measures to try and protect yourself such as walking home with friends or ask someone to stay with you.

Advice for Parents

Learning that your child or young person is being bullied, you will immediately want to protect them and then confront the bully. Feelings of embarrassment, helplessness or wanting your child or young person to be tougher and fight back are also common. Whilst none of these responses will really help the situation, there are several steps you can take.

- Avoid blaming anyone, be patient, make time to listen.
- Ask questions sensitively without interrogating.
- Show your child that you care but avoid making them feel more anxious or isolated.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep, for example promising confidentiality.
- Discuss alternative ways to respond to bullying such as being assertive, not reacting, getting help if pursued, agreeing with the bully, saying "You're right" and walk away.
- Raise your concerns with the school giving as much information as possible including dates, places and where possible names of children involved.
- Work with the school to find a resolution.
- Let your child know what is happening. Any outcome should involve their agreement.
- If a child or young person is in serious danger, then you have a responsibility to act even if they do not want you to.
- Make sure you do something as bullying can cause serious damage to a child or young person's educational and personal development if allowed to continue for a long period.
- Let your child or young person know that they have done the right thing by talking about what has happened and that bullying is wrong.
- Remember you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school.
- You can also talk to people in the wider community – such as friends, neighbours, family support workers, social workers, health workers, youth workers, community police, community workers eg church leaders, guides/ scout leaders, Childline, Kidscape etc.



Role Play

Assess your child or young person's behaviour and way of interacting with others and see what suggestions you can make to turn the immediate situation around.

Role play can help with this and make skills in dealing with bullies more real.

Act out situations and allow your child or young person the chance to practise different responses, prevention techniques - such as staying with other kids and not getting involved with bullies in any kind of interchange.

What if my child is displaying bullying behaviour?

Learning that your child or young person is bullying others is distressing for parents. Should this happen to you, it is important to remain calm and avoid becoming defensive. Bullying can often stem from unhappiness or insecurity. Before punishing a bullying child, you should take time to talk to them about their actions to find out why they are acting in this way.

Not all bullying stems from family problems but it is a good idea to examine the behaviour your child witnesses at home. If a child or young person lives with taunting or name calling from a parent, brother or sister, this may prompt similar behaviour outside the home.

In addition to creating and maintaining a positive home atmosphere you should:

- Remind your child or young person that bullying is a serious problem which will not be tolerated at home, by the school or the police.

- Think about the reasons why they are bullying others.
- Encourage your child or young person to treat others, whether different or not, with kindness and respect.
- Find out if your child or young person's friends are also bullying.
- Set realistic goals for your child or young person, do not expect immediate changes.
- Reassure your child or young person that you love them but that you do not approve of this kind of behaviour.
- Talk with staff at your child or young person's school to sort problems out. You know your child or young person best and can make suggestions to tackle any problems.



Restorative Approach to Bullying Behaviour

Whilst many believe that children who bully must be punished for their behaviour, it is widely accepted that this type of response can at times be ineffective, dangerous, breeds resentment and can make the situation worse.

Punishment can make a person resentful instead of reflective. Children who bully must be given the opportunity to hear about and face up to the pain, hurt, distress and anger they have caused to others. Punishment does not help to restore relationships and can result in further retaliation. Exclusions can only be carried out when incidents fall within the legislative criteria.

Falkirk Council has a responsibility to protect those being bullied but also to provide an education for all pupils including children who bully or those with behavioural problems. Whilst appropriate action will be taken by the school, it is also important that all parents involved, work with the school to resolve the problems in the best interests of their child or young person.

Anti-Bullying Policy

If you need any further information about your school's Anti-Bullying Policy, you should contact the Headteacher direct.

Additional Sources of Information and Help

Want to find out more? Need someone to talk to? Try the Parentline Plus free 24 hour helpline. Tel: 0808 800 222 or free textphone 0800 783 6783 www.parentlineplus.org.uk Or contact Childline on Tel: 0800 44 1111

Literature

- 'Focus on Bullying', 'Bullying at School – Advice for Families' booklets are available from the Anti Bullying Network, Moray House, The University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ. Tel: 0131 651 6103 www.antibullying.net
- 'Tackling Bullying: Listening to the Views of Children and Young People' and 'Bullying: don't suffer in Silence' pack is available from DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ. Tel: 0870 000 2288 www.dfes.gov.uk
- 'Don't Bully Me! Advice for Primary Age Children', 'Stop Bullying Pocket Book' are both available from Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH. Tel: 08451 205 204 www.kidscape.org.uk
- 'Tackling Bullying' booklet is available from the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), 1c Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ. Tel: 0808 800 5793 www.ace-ed.org.uk



Websites

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| www.kidshealth.org | www.bullying.co.uk |
| www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk | www.bullyonline.org |
| www.anti-bullyingalliance.org | www.childline.org.uk |
| www.childrenslegalcentre.com | www.safeguarding.org |
| www.beatbullying.org | |

If you would like a copy in community language, braille,
large print or audio-tape, please call 01324 506602.

此文件設有其他
語文。請向有關
方面索取。

هذه الوثيقة متاحة عند الطلب
في اللغات الأخرى في المجتمع.

یہ دستاویز دوسری کمیونٹی زبانوں میں مطالبے پر دستیاب ہے۔

ਇਹ ਪਤਰਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ
ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਤੇ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ।



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