Fox Covert Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

August 2026

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Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure

We are a Rights Respecting School. This procedure covers the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 2 – You have the right to protection against discrimination.
- Article 19 – You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 29 – You have the right to an education which develops your personality and your respect for other's rights and the environment.

Purpose

This policy exists to safeguard all children, young people, and staff at Fox Covert Primary School from any form of unacceptable behaviour by other children and young people. Supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our learners is central to achieving positive outcomes, ensuring they have the best possible start in life and are equipped to grow into:

- Successful Learners
- Confident Individuals
- Responsible Citizens
- Effective Contributors

Our values and beliefs

All pupils and staff have the right to feel safe, included, and supported, and we are committed to helping every young person achieve their full potential. At Fox Covert Primary School we:

- Respect each individual and celebrate the diversity within our community.
- Provide a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to support success for all learners.
- Encourage creativity and help young people develop the skills and resilience they need for the future.
- Use restorative approaches to repair, strengthen, and sustain positive relationships across the school.
- Promote equality of opportunity for everyone and work proactively to eliminate all forms of bullying and discrimination.
- Recognise the impact that bullying and discrimination can have on a young person's self-worth, wellbeing, and learning.
- Actively foster positive relationships between individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds.
- Acknowledge that some individuals and groups may face disadvantage, prejudice, or discrimination related to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, looked-after status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, culture, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or any combination of these factors.

Definitions

Bullying involves both behaviour and its impact. Its impact affects a person's ability to feel in control of themselves, often referred to as their sense of *agency*. Bullying occurs within the context of relationships and includes actions that cause individuals to feel hurt, threatened, frightened, or excluded. These behaviours may take place in person or online.

Bullying behaviours may include:

- Name-calling, teasing, belittling, or making threats.
- Ignoring someone, excluding them from groups, or spreading rumours.
- Physical actions such as hitting, tripping, or kicking.
- Taking, hiding, or damaging personal belongings.
- Sending abusive texts, emails, or instant messages, or posting harmful comments on social media or other online platforms. It is recognised that pupils should not have registered social media accounts until they are thirteen years old. Fox Covert PS reinforces this age restriction through ICT lessons and Internet Safety Week.
- Behaviours that make someone feel bullied or fearful of being bullied.
- Targeting an individual because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.
- Online bullying is addressed in the same way as all other forms of bullying. The behaviour and its impact remain the focus, even when it occurs on social networking sites or online gaming platforms.

Equalities

Our school follows the legal definition of *equalities*, which protects individuals who have one or more of the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

These groups are legally recognised as *protected groups*. However, we also recognise that pupils without a legally protected characteristic may still be at risk of bullying. This includes, for example, care-experienced children, young carers, and children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Responsibilities

The Head Teacher is responsible for establishing and implementing the school's local bullying-prevention procedures. However, the effectiveness of these procedures relies on the shared commitment of all staff, pupils, and parents/carers. Staff members are expected to be proactive, to take all allegations of bullying seriously, and to pass on any reports to the appropriate colleagues. Accurate and appropriate records are maintained at all times through our SEEMis system.

Pupils are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying, including any concerns about others who may be unwilling or afraid to report incidents themselves, where it is safe to do so.
- Support one another and seek help when needed, ensuring that everyone feels safe, included, and free from fear within the school environment.

All school staff are expected to:

- Take a proactive role in putting the school's anti-bullying procedures into practice.
- Treat every allegation of bullying with seriousness and professionalism.
- Maintain accurate and appropriate records of any reported concerns or incidents.
- Notify the Equalities Co-ordinator of all suspected or confirmed instances of bullying.

Parents and carers can support the school's anti-bullying approach by:

- Supporting the school's anti-bullying procedures and reinforcing them at home.
- Encouraging their children to contribute positively to the school community.
- Actively monitoring their child's use of mobile phones and the internet and intervening if there are concerns about inappropriate or unsafe use.
- Raising any concerns about bullying involving their own child or any other child.
- Contacting the Head Teacher if concerns persist after initial action by school staff.
- Using the school's complaints procedure or the City of Edinburgh Council's Advice and Conciliation Service if concerns remain unresolved following the Head Teacher's involvement.

Concerns and Feedback

We acknowledge that there may be occasions when parents or carers feel that an incident of bullying, or a wider community concern, has not been handled to their satisfaction. If this is the case, we ask that the matter be raised with the Head Teacher in the first instance. Should the issue remain unresolved following informal discussion, parents and carers may submit their concerns formally through the school's Complaints Procedure. If early resolution is still not achieved, the matter may then be referred to City of Edinburgh Education Department's Advice and Conciliation Service. We also welcome positive feedback from parents and carers when aspects of our work have gone well.

Communicating this procedure

We promote our anti-bullying, equality, and diversity procedures throughout the school year, including during Health and Wellbeing lessons and assemblies. The procedure is available on the school website, and posters displayed around the building provide pupils with clear information on how to report bullying or access confidential support.

Evaluating and reviewing our procedure

The effectiveness of this procedure is reviewed annually, alongside data on reported incidents, attendance, exclusions, attainment, and the achievement of pupils within protected groups. Pupils' experiences and perceptions of bullying are gathered through questionnaires and focus groups, and feedback from parents is also considered as part of the review process.

Prevention

By fostering a positive school ethos around bullying prevention, rights, equalities, and health and wellbeing, we aim to reduce the likelihood of bullying occurring. This includes:

- Regularly updating posters across notice boards and classrooms to reinforce that bullying and discrimination are unacceptable. Our *STOP* approach (Several Times on Purpose & Start Telling Other Adults) lets pupils know what they should do if they, or someone they know, is experiencing or displaying bullying behaviour.
- Conducting regular surveys and focus groups to assess the school's ethos and the health and wellbeing of pupils.
- Ensuring that the Rights Respecting School group promotes understanding of human rights through lessons, events, assemblies, and displays. These values are embedded across the school, empowering pupils to become active citizens and engaged learners.
- Working in partnership with external agencies and organisations—including health services, police, and voluntary sector partners such as Respect Me, Stonewall, and LGBT Youth Scotland—to promote a positive and inclusive ethos.
- Supporting diversity and delivering anti-bullying projects that raise the profile of equality and inclusion.
- Maintaining a well-established befriending system to support transitions from nursery to primary school and from primary to high school.
- Including bullying and equalities as standing agenda items for the Pupil Council.
- Providing staff with access to professional development that enhances their understanding of bullying, prejudice, and discrimination, and strengthens their skills in restorative approaches.

Curriculum for Excellence is used to:

- Strengthen pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens.
- Provide age-appropriate learning materials and resources that reflect a diverse and balanced range of perspectives.
- Monitor the attainment and achievement of pupils in protected groups and take action to support improvement where needed, helping all learners to succeed.
- Ensure that children and young people in protected groups are meaningfully included in opportunities for pupil participation, enabling them to contribute effectively to school life.

- Develop resilience, empathy, and confidence in young people.
- Promote awareness of bullying and reinforce our Equality, Diversity and Anti-Bullying Procedure across a wide range of curriculum areas.

What we do when bullying occurs

A young person may not always be aware that their actions constitute bullying, but the impact on others is still significant and is treated seriously. Pupils who experience bullying or discrimination will be listened to and supported. Those who display bullying behaviour or discrimination will be responded to fairly and consistently, using a range of appropriate measures.

Examples of our approaches include:

- Restorative practices that provide opportunities to acknowledge and address harm.
- Involving parents or carers when appropriate.
- Emotion Talks regulation programme.
- Whole school assemblies on Anti-Bullying, Kindness, Childline and Children's Rights.
- Using de-escalation strategies to reduce tension and prevent further conflict.
- Implementing physical separation of the pupil(s) involved in bullying, where necessary and feasible.
- Offering support through our support base to help build confidence and provide ongoing assistance.
- Applying appropriate consequences, which may include the loss of privileges.
- Assessing whether additional support needs are present, including access to counselling.
- Working with external agencies and partners in health, police, and the voluntary sector.
- Referring pupils to specialist support services such as Psychological Services, the Education Welfare Service, Social Work, or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- Following Child Protection procedures where this is deemed appropriate.
- Recognising that exclusion is not a punishment for bullying behaviour and would only be considered as a last resort.

Our work with pupils who experience bullying

- We reassure pupils that reporting the incident was the right thing to do, emphasising that they are not to blame and do not deserve such treatment.
- We encourage them to express how they feel and work to understand the full extent of the issue.
- We involve them in decisions about how the situation can be resolved, making clear that the behaviour can be stopped and that we will continue to intervene until it is.
- We discuss strategies to help them stay safe and feel safe.
- We ask them to inform us immediately if any further incidents occur.

Our work with pupils who engage in bullying behaviour

- We speak with each pupil involved separately, listening to their account and gathering information from any witnesses.
- We reinforce that bullying is unacceptable, outline our expectations, and contact parents or carers at an early stage, ensuring pupils know this has taken place.
- We consider appropriate consequences in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Management Procedure.
- We assess whether referrals to other professionals—such as an educational psychologist, counsellor, or the police—may be necessary.
- We follow up after incidents to ensure the bullying has not resumed in any form, including through others acting on behalf of the original pupil, and we make pupils aware that this monitoring will occur.
- We work with pupils who have engaged in bullying to identify the support they may need to change their behaviour.

Reporting and Recording Incidents

- Pupils who experience bullying, or who witness bullying happening to others, should report the incident to their class teacher or any member of staff.
- Staff who receive a report of bullying must pass this information to the designated senior manager. The designated senior manager will share relevant and proportionate information as required and ensure appropriate records are maintained.
- The Head Teacher or Principal Teacher will record the incident in the Bullying and Equalities module within SEEMiS.
- All incidents are formally recorded, and any bullying or discriminatory behaviour related to race, disability, gender, faith, or sexual orientation is treated with equal seriousness and clearly identified within the records.
- The annual Equalities return will be collected centrally from SEEMiS each year.

Online bullying and bullying beyond the school premises

We recognise that bullying can take place outside the school environment, including through mobile phones and social networking platforms. Such behaviour may involve pupils from our school, pupils from other schools, or individuals who are not in education. When a pupil or parent reports bullying occurring outwith the school premises, we will:

- Speak with pupils about how to manage or avoid bullying situations outside school.
- Contact the Head Teacher of another school if their pupils are reported to be involved.
- Liaise with transport providers when incidents occur on school buses.

Planning

We review and draw on all relevant information to ensure that equality and anti-bullying priorities are fully reflected within our improvement plans.

Equality Impact Analysis

When developing or reviewing school policies or services, we carefully consider the needs of all protected groups and assess whether any individual or group may experience a positive or negative impact. We record our findings and, where required, take action to minimise any potential negative effects.

Involvement

We actively encourage all young people to take part in school and extra-curricular activities, and we take positive steps to ensure that our diverse school community is fully represented in clubs, events, surveys, and the student council.

Gathering and Monitoring Information

- We routinely monitor pupils' attainment by ethnicity and gender.
- We are committed to developing effective ways of tracking the progress of looked-after and disabled pupils.
- We monitor attendance and exclusions by ethnicity, disability, and gender.
- We review annual incident records alongside survey data.
- We draw on information gathered from pupil surveys to inform our work.
- We take proactive steps to ensure that all data relating to pupils' disabilities, ethnicity, caring responsibilities, and looked-after status is accurate and regularly updated.