

# Bullying and Bullying Behaviour

Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated in our school. We fully subscribe to the following statement:

"All children / young people in Glasgow's educational establishments, have an entitlement" to work (and play) in a learning environment in which they feel valued, respected and safe and are free from all forms of abuse, bullying or discrimination". (A Standard for Pastoral Care in Glasgow Schools). Being subjected to bullying can have a serious impact on the health and wellbeing of a child. The outcome of bullying behaviour, in addition to possible physical injury, can be upset with someone feeling threatened, and/or humiliated and vulnerable. Self confidence is undermined and anxiety can result.

As a school we will do all we can to prevent bullying from occurring. We will do this by being vigilant, observant and accessible. We know that positive relationships with pupils can help prevent or curtail bullying behaviour as children are much more likely to confide in someone they are comfortable talking to and trust and we will always attempt to build positive relationships with our pupils.

We will regularly discuss bullying with the children at assemblies, during Circle Time and as part of our Health and Well Being programme. We will seek to have an event during National Anti Bullying Week to maintain its profile. We will share strategies with the children on how to build resilience, to find the confidence and courage to be assertive, to help our children understand the nature of bullying and how it can be prevented, give advice on what to do if a child is subjected to or witnesses bullying and we will explain what bullying is and how it differs from occasional aggressive, unkind, anti social or upsetting behaviour.

The majority of children are not bullied and they have an important role within their class to act against bullying if they witness it. Acting as a united group is very powerful against a bully and this group can reprimand the bully, support the victim and let an adult know. We will encourage a child to act as an advocate for the child experiencing bullying and to report it to a member of staff who will take the matter seriously and follow our established procedures.

## Bullying: A definition

The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) offers a useful definition of bullying:

- There is an Intention to Harm: bullying is deliberate, with the intention to cause harm. For example, friends teasing each other in a good-natured way is not bullying, but a person teasing another to upset them is bullying.
- There can be a Harmful Outcome: those subjected to bullying experience physical and/or emotional harm.
- It involves Direct or Indirect Acts: bullying can involve direct aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours or socially isolating someone, either in company or through Social Media

However, bullying also has characteristics that set it apart from other aggressive behaviours:

- Repetition: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, like a fight, is not bullying
  - Unequal Power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, or psychological resilience
- Bullying Behaviour shares all of the above characteristics except that it may be a one off form of behaviour

Increasingly online bullying is featuring as a form of bullying, either on its own or in conjunction with face to face bullying. Parents should follow the following procedure in relation to on line bullying – Copy (the text) Block (the person / people who are making the comments) Report (to the service provider and to the school) Resist (becoming involved in an exchange online with the perpetrator) Online bullying out with school by a pupil or pupils from our school should be reported to the school and will be dealt with in the same manner initially as general bullying behaviour where someone is acting in a bullying manner.

When dealing with an incident it is important to establish whether actual bullying, as opposed to aggressive or anti social behaviour, has taken place. The definition above should help determine this.

If behaviour is identified as potentially bullying in nature the matter should be referred to the Department Head who will investigate the incident(s) and seek to establish whether bullying has taken place. The incident will be logged on Click + Go, in line with our Authority's Anti Bullying Policy. At this stage it is an allegation of bullying until it has been fully investigated. If bullying is not established the incident will be monitored and reviewed after an identified period of time. If bullying is established the initial report will be amended from alleged to confirmed on our records and the matter will then be passed onto the Head Teacher.

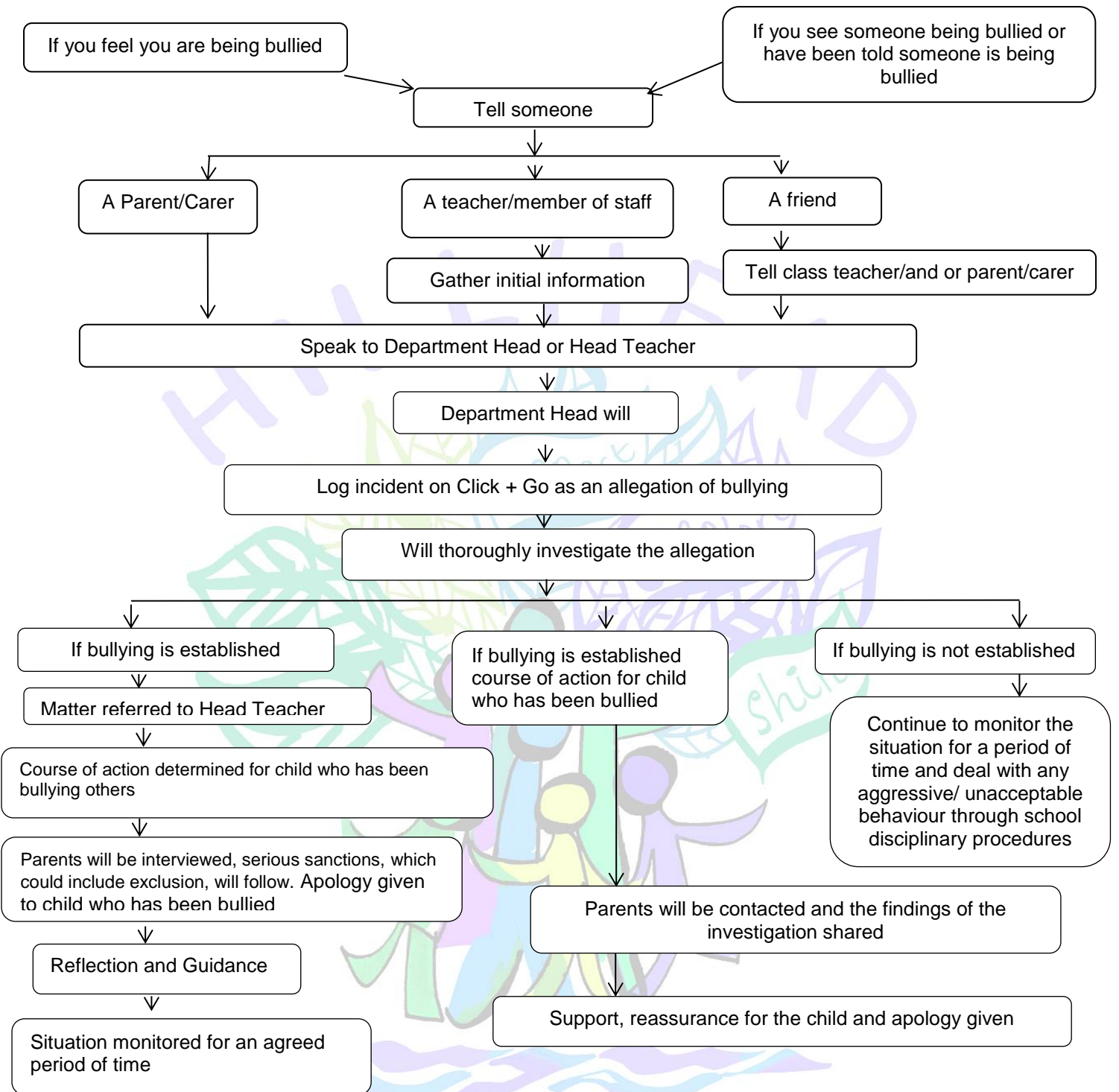
The Head Teacher will decide on a course of action, again in line with our Authority's Anti Bullying Policy. This course of action will involve serious sanctions for the perpetrator with the child's parents being asked to attend a formal meeting and could include exclusion. There will be the opportunity for the child to reflect on his/her behaviour and there will be guidance for the child who has bullied. The intended outcome will be to find a resolution where a child takes responsibility for his/her actions, is able to acknowledge the effect and impact of his/her behaviour and is willing to apologise and ensure that there is no repetition of this behaviour.

We would take the following action for a child who has been subjected to bullying.

Parents of the child will be contacted and the findings of the investigation shared. Support and reassurance will be given to the child and, if appropriate, the child will have the opportunity to express how the behaviour impacted on him/her. An apology will be given and the situation will be closely monitored over an identified period of time. This is in line with the restorative practices we would use when dealing with serious behaviour.

Below is a flow chart outlining what happens when a bullying incident has taken place or has been witnessed.

## What happens when a bullying incident is reported





## The role of parents

Parents have a very important role to play when there is an allegation of bullying. A child can sometimes struggle to find a way of disclosing that bullying has taken place. A parent may be aware of a change in behaviour - a child becoming withdrawn or anxious - before a child is ready to disclose. Care and patience are required to create the conditions when a child feels confident enough to share their experience. The parent must act on their child's behalf and report the matter to the school (Department Head or Head Teacher). The school will act quickly and sensitively. The referral has to be treated as an allegation until evidence can be gathered that bullying has taken place, consistent with the criteria identified in the definition. Not all aggressive or unkind behaviour is bullying and it is important to note this.

Bullying, by its nature, can be extremely difficult to identify and prove, often there are no witnesses and sometimes bullying cannot be established, even after a thorough investigation. This will not deter us from trying to establish the truth but needs to be borne in mind. If you have any concerns about your child being bullied, please contact Susan Thomson (Depute Head responsible for P1 & P2), Karen Barclay (Depute Head responsible for P3 & P4), Andrew Robson (Depute Head responsible for P5, P6 & P7) or Francis Donaghy (Head Teacher).

