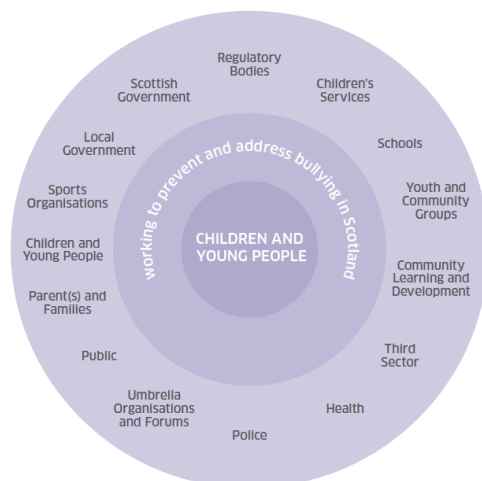




Anti-Bullying Policy



UNCRC Article 19

I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

Plan administration	
Version number	V. 2.1
Date of review	May 2025
Electronic copies of this plan are available from	Staff Handbook - Whole School Team - Learners - Anti-Bullying Policy
Hard copies of this plan are available from	PA to the Headteacher
Date of next review	May 2026
Person responsible for review	PTs PS (Pastoral)/DHP

The effectiveness of this SOP will be monitored regularly at SLT meetings and reviewed every year or earlier if required.

Date of Review	Changes/updates/alterations if any	Signed
May 2024	Policy update. New rationale statement. Inclusion of UNCRC articles. Inclusion of important statements in boxed areas. Updated 'Preventing bullying' section. Updated PSHE input.	S Ross
June 2025	Slight wording updates and new UNCRC article on cover page. Grammar improvements.	S Ross

Rationale

In Hamilton College we wish for all our young people to feel safe and secure and able to build positive relationships with their peers and with adults. To do this we aim to provide a supportive environment that promotes mutual respect. Bullying behaviour can impact on wellbeing and can affect participation, attainment, and inclusion. We strive to ensure a holistic approach is employed to build capacity, resilience, and skills in young people to prevent and deal with bullying. We also seek to support parents and carers in their role.

Staff, learners and parents all have a duty in relation to bullying, and expectations in this regard are indicated in

- The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) national approach in Scotland.
- Equalities legislation, regulations, and guidance.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, where bullying behaviour is a breach of the Convention.

UNCRC Article 19

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated in body or mind.

Children and young people who feel cared for and valued are much more likely to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. For these outcomes to be achieved, children should be safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible and included.

Children and young people in Hamilton College are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others, whether deliberate or not.

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”

(Matthew 7:12)

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

(Ephesians 4:29)

This policy has been developed to take account of the national guidance on anti-bullying, **‘Respect for All – The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People’**. All staff, learners and parents have a duty in relation to bullying, and expectations in this regard are set out in the policy and lie within a larger legislative and policy framework.

Every member of the school community should be aware that the way they interact with others will add or detract from the positive ethos of the school.

Bullying Behaviours

Children and young people may experience changes in their friendships as they navigate the process of growing up. These challenges, disagreements, or conflicts may be minor and temporary. In some instances, learners may require assistance in resolving these conflicts to prevent them from escalating into bullying behaviours.

When addressing bullying, it is crucial to avoid categorising children and young people as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Such labels can have lasting effects and may hinder a child's ability to recover or modify their behaviour. Instead, all young people should be guided to understand why engaging in bullying behaviour is inappropriate, enabling them to make positive changes.

Recognising and acknowledging bullying behaviours is essential for timely identification and intervention when such incidents occur.

Bullying behaviours can include.

- name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening and intimidating by racist, homophobic, or sexist remarks.
- hitting, tripping, pushing, kicking.
- taking and damaging belongings.
- ignoring, excluding, spreading rumours.
- sending abusive messages electronically, e.g. via text, emails, social networking sites or messaging apps.
- making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied.
- targeting someone because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

This is not an exhaustive list; there may be other behaviours that can be classed as bullying.

Definition of Bullying

In Scotland, bullying is defined as:

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)

Cyberbullying

These behaviours can take place anywhere (school, home, community, etc.) but bullying also occurs in the virtual world which children and young people access through mobile phones, the internet and through social networking sites and messaging apps. As communication can happen anywhere and at any time, often unsupervised, cyber bullying can be pervasive and difficult to handle. However, in essence this bullying behaviour is the same as other forms of bullying and requires similar prevention and treatment. Awareness of cyberbullying is addressed in our Personal Social and Health Education programmes.

Impact of Bullying

It is crucial to consider the impact that bullying behaviour has on a child or young person. The impact of an incident is more important than whether it is classified as bullying. Bullying is a behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed, or demeaned. Actions can affect people in different ways, and this should be taken into consideration.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

We will work to safeguard any child who may be vulnerable to bullying because of a real or perceived difference affecting them or a group to which the child is perceived to belong.

We will respond to any prejudice-based bullying, as identified in the Equalities Act 2010.

The protected characteristics which apply directly or indirectly to learners in school are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, ethnicity or nationality
- Religion or belief, including sectarianism
- Gender, including sexism
- Sexual orientation, including homophobia

UNCRC Article 2

All children have rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or a girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Other characteristics that may also lead to bullying are:

- Additional Support Needs
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Body Image and Physical Appearance
- Gypsy and Traveller peoples
- Looked After Children and Young People
- Socio-Economic Prejudice
- Young Carers

UNCRC Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Preventing Bullying

Hamilton College employs a range of pro-active, preventative strategies to reinforce the message that bullying is never acceptable.

Approaches that Hamilton College utilises to help prevent and deal with bullying are:

- anti-bullying policy
- promote a supportive learning environment that actively discourages bullying within social circles and empowers individuals to report any inappropriate behaviours
- recognition and rewards, house points, certificates celebrating good choices, achievements etc.
- Anti-bullying ambassadors
- Kindness committee
- whistle blowing mechanisms through wellbeing@hamiltoncollege.co.uk email address
- build capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people through PSHE programmes
- education and awareness of rights
- wellbeing questionnaires, termly Form Tutor and Pastoral meetings
- promotion of school values in assemblies
- wellbeing trackers and wellbeing check-ins
- events such as Health Week
- Health & Wellbeing/Life skills programmes and activities (appendix 3), including visiting speakers and discussion on case studies
- meet and greet (teachers to learners every morning) (JS)
- class based positive behaviour targets
- structured playground activities (JS)
- development of an inclusive and positive ethos and climate of respect, responsibility and positive relationships (appendices 1 & 2); and a culture where bullying and discrimination is considered unacceptable

Modelling Positive Behaviour

All staff should establish open, positive, and supportive relationships where learners feel safe, listened to, and secure in their ability to discuss sensitive issues. It is essential that adults model behaviour which promotes health and wellbeing; and understand anti-discriminatory, anti-bullying, and child protection policies.

- pupil involvement and engagement
- circle time, peer mediation, buddying and mentoring
- monitors, house captains, pupil council and playground supervision
- building resilience and developing social and emotional skills through a strong co-curricular programme
- personal support and additional support, including the availability of a school counsellor (includes key guidance staff, class teacher in Junior School)
- acting on patterns of bullying incidents through monitoring
- wellbeing and child protection procedures
- sanctions

Responding to Bullying

Our approach to bullying is rooted in, and clearly reflects, our values of Grace, Confidence, Wisdom, Compassion, Innovation, Reflection. Responses to bullying also focus on developing resilience and promoting positive relationships between young people. It is important to ensure that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels listened to and supported. It is also important to help young people who demonstrate bullying behaviour by providing clear expectations about behaviour as well as providing a range of ways to respond. This can include taking steps to repair a relationship, and where appropriate, supporting them to make amends. We aim to challenge prejudice and offer the opportunity to learn and change behaviour. Consideration is always given to any factors that may impact upon a young person's well-being including the additional support needs of those involved.

Investigating Reports of Bullying

The member of staff to whom the incident is first reported, or who has witnessed the incident, will take the incident seriously. They will inform Pupil Support (Pastoral) or the Depute Head Pastoral or Head of Junior School/Senior Teacher, who will investigate. The investigator will

- Interview the pupil(s) involved.
- Interview any witnesses to the behaviour or incidents.

- Ask the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour what they wish to see resulting from the investigation.

If the investigation necessitates action to be taken, the investigator or appropriate personnel will:

- Work with the person showing bullying behaviour to make them aware of the impact of their actions on others.
- Support the person showing bullying behaviour using restorative practices to improve their behaviour and prevent a recurrence.
- Involve members of staff, including, if appropriate, staff in other agencies, who support the young person experiencing bullying behaviour and the person displaying bullying behaviour.
- If appropriate, inform parents/carers of the incident and any action taken, seeking to work in partnership.

Disciplinary action may be taken against the pupil or learners displaying bullying behaviour, which may include exclusion.

Support for the young person experiencing bullying behaviour is given immediately following the incident and during an agreed period of review. This support will normally be provided by the pupil's Pupil Support (Pastoral) teacher or Senior Teacher in JS.

Recording and Monitoring Bullying

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded on the school's Anti-Bullying Register. The following information will be recorded:

- The children and young people involved, as well as staff or other adults.
- Where and when bullying has taken place.
- The type of bullying experienced, e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats etc.
- Any underlying prejudice including details of any protected characteristic(s).
- Consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns.
- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.

The Anti-Bullying Register is a secure, digital recording system and procedures for maintaining and monitoring the log adhere to Data Protection principles.

Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs

Children and young people with additional support needs are particularly vulnerable as their difficulties with social interaction with their peers may leave them feeling isolated or unable to report bullying.

Some children and young people with additional support needs, particularly those with communication difficulties, may find it hard to understand why they are being bullied and/or why others perceive their behaviour as bullying. They are less likely to seek help than their peers. There are many reasons for this, including communication difficulties, a feeling that they will not be listened to, or they have accepted bullying as the norm and therefore do not see the point of speaking out.

It may be appropriate to involve other agencies for children and young people with additional support needs, e.g. educational psychologists, social work. It is important to recognise that thresholds for bullying behaviour may be subtly different for those who do have additional support needs. The process of investigating allegations will therefore take into account the difficulties experienced by those with additional support needs.

Further information and advice

- If a child is being bullied and would like to speak to an adult in confidence, they can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111
- ChildLine - ChildLine's website has a bullying section for young people and adults. Visit www.childline.org.uk
- As a parent, If you are worried about your child and would like further information or advice, you can visit www.parentlinescotland.org.uk
- Respectme - Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service. This website offers practical advice and guidance for adults on addressing bullying behaviour. There is also a section specifically for children and young people offering practical advice on what to do if they're being bullied. Visit www.respectme.org.uk
- Further information on homophobic bullying and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people – LGBT Youth Scotland: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk
- Childnet International works in partnership with various organisations to help make the internet a safe place for children. Visit www.childnet.com
- CEOP - The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre website provides information and advice for online safety. Visit <https://ceop.police.uk>
- For further information on children's rights and the work of UNICEF around the World www.unicef.org.uk

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

Learners

If you are being bullied or suspect that someone else is -

Talk to someone - for example:

- any member of staff with whom you feel comfortable;
- your Guidance teacher, Form Teacher or Class Teacher (in Junior School);
- any member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT);
- a friend - and ask him or her to speak to a teacher on your behalf;
- a prefect or older pupil - and ask for help in reporting the issue.
- email your concern to wellbeing@hamiltoncollege.co.uk

The school always deals with every case on an individual basis.

No teacher will ignore bullying or immediately dismiss a pupil's concerns.

Not all allegations of bullying will warrant all, or indeed any, of the noted actions.

Any malicious accusations of bullying, if found to be untrue, will be treated seriously and may warrant disciplinary procedures.

Hamilton College vigorously promotes its anti-bullying policy through its PSE/Lifeskills programme (See Appendix 3) and through assemblies.

Remember

- try to keep calm and avoid retaliation;
- do not respond to abusive texts or messages;
- block messages from people who abuse you;
- keep a record of bullying behaviour (texts, emails, messages);
- be aware that it is not your fault that you are on the receiving end of bullying behaviour.

Parents/guardians of the child experiencing bullying behaviours

- If you believe that your child is being bullied, report the situation without delay to your child's teacher in the Nursery and Junior School or guidance teacher in the senior school.
- Allow the school time to investigate.
- Expect to be informed of the outcomes of the investigation (although not of specific disciplinary action involving other learners).
- Monitor your child's wellbeing at home and be ready to make contact again if necessary.
- Remember that not every case of alleged bullying will be found to be bullying.

Serious Cases

In very serious cases, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, the incident may be treated as a child protection concern, and it may be considered appropriate to make a report to Social Services and/or the Police.

Parents/guardians of the perpetrator

- Be prepared to speak to the school if you believe that your child is exhibiting bullying behaviour.
- If your child tells you that they are being investigated about a bullying incident or incidents, talk to them about the facts.
- Allow the school time to establish the facts.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, be prepared to come into school to discuss the issue.
- Talk to your child about their actions; support them in all attempts to change their behaviour; encourage empathy.

Action by the School

Action within Hamilton College might include:

- immediate action as appropriate to calm/defuse the situation;
- the writing of statements by all involved (or by staff where appropriate);
- pupil interviews with guidance staff/class teacher and/or members of SLT;
- guidance staff/class teacher and/or members of SLT involved in establishing the facts;

- in some cases, discussion with both/all parties with no apportioning of blame where this is deemed to be appropriate;
- mediation meetings organised by the relevant guidance teacher/class teacher if deemed to be appropriate (and with the agreement of the victim);
- support the child who displays bullying behaviour;
- monitoring of the situation, usually by guidance staff/class teacher;
- parental contact;
- assessment of wellbeing within the GIRFEC model;
- a plan of action indicating clearly any expected outcomes;
- sanctions; including possible suspension or permanent exclusion where, in the judgement of the school, this is warranted (in the most persistent / serious cases);

Legislative & Policy Framework

The legislative and policy framework in which this policy has been developed includes:

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC, updated 2012);

Curriculum for Excellence, in particular, the Health and Wellbeing Framework, (Scottish Government, 2004);

The Equality Act, 2010;

The Children and Young People Act, 2014;

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004 and 2009;

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989;

The Human Rights Act, 1998;

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act, 2000;

Corporate Parenting Policy (Renfrewshire Council 2009);

Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Technology in Schools (Scottish Government, 2013);

The National Improvement Framework for Education; and

'Respect for all – the national approach to anti-bullying behaviour for Scotland's children and young people' (Scottish Government, 2017)

Appendix 1: Pupil Positive Relationship Statement

- Treat everyone with respect
- Be friendly
- Be open-minded
- Be willing to start a conversation
- Reach out to friends if they seem withdrawn
- It's ok to stand up for others
- It's ok to ask others for help
- Be happy to reach out to the person displaying bullying behaviour as they may be suffering too
- Question friends as to why they display bullying behaviour
- Don't retaliate
- Don't be rude
- Be mindful, you don't know everyone's story
- Be responsible with your words, they are powerful
- Don't just hear people, listen to them
- Widen your friendship circle, join a club
- When given the choice between being right or being kind, chose kind

UNCRC Article 39

You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected, or badly treated.

Appendix 2: Parent Partnership Statement

- Encourage your child to respect the learning environment and the rights and values of others
- Talk with your child to actively discourage bullying behaviour
- Reinforce positive conduct within social groups, both inside and outside school
- Proactively engage with the school if you are concerned about your child's behaviour
- Listen to and support your child
- Be open minded, especially while the facts about alleged bullying are being established. Give the school time to investigate thoroughly
- Work with the school to resolve any bullying situations, including ensuring any actions deemed necessary to reconcile the situation are followed through at home
- Maintain an open channel of communication with the school following resolution of any bullying incidents

UNCRC Article 15

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Appendix 3: Anti-Bullying in the Health & Wellbeing / PSHE Curriculum

Junior School		Transitus	
The following topics are covered across J1-J6 Making Friends, Physical Wellbeing, Class Rules (Kind Hands, Kind Feet and Kind Words), Rights and Responsibilities, Citizenship, Feelings/About Me, Teamwork, Anti-Racism, Protective Behaviours, Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing/Relationships, Social Wellbeing, Inside Out– Emotions, Friendships, Ready, Respectful, Safe’ Programme, Circle Time, Consent, and Resilience Assemblies.		Relationships and Friendships Resilience Respect Diversity, discrimination, and stereotypes Self-esteem and bullying Cyberbullying Consent Social media and internet safety	
S1	S2	S3	
Bullying Online grooming Consent Conflict management and relationships Protected characteristics	Bullying Xenophobia Social resilience Cyberbullying Body image and confidence Consent Conflict management Online reputation Homophobia Social resilience	Healthy relationships Racism and discrimination Radicalisation and extremism Peer pressure Resilience Consent Conflict management	
S4	S5	S6	
Consent Internet safety	Mental health Trolling Consent	Social media and online reputation Identity theft Consent	

Appendix 4: Further Support for Learners and Parents

Other useful support can be found at:

RespectMe

<https://respectme.org.uk/>

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

Parentline (Children 1st)

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/>

ThinkUKnow

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

CEOP

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

LGBT Scotland

<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk>

SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health)

<https://www.samh.org.uk/>

Show Racism the Red Card

<https://www.theredcard.org/scotland>

Some other online resources and **mobile apps** which may be of use and which help support anxiety, stress, self-harm, and depression include:

Mood Mission

<http://moodmission.com/>

Mood Gym

<https://moodgym.com.au/>

Mood Juice

<https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Calm Harm

<https://calmharm.co.uk/>