



Strathesk
Primary School

'Let's Stop Bullying'

Confident Happy Children: a leaflet for parents of pre-school and primary school children

by the Scottish Government 2014 in conjunction with Strathesk Primary School



Bullying in schools is a serious issue. Children often experience difficulties in their relationships with others, and sometimes have experiences that make them feel hurt or damage their confidence and self esteem. Parents can help children meet the challenges of growing up so that they overcome difficulties, including being bullied or bullying others.

This leaflet provides information for parents to consider how to help and support their children to be confident and happy in their relationships with others.



Learning for Life

There are some useful life skills that you can help your child learn. These will help them:

- **become confident in themselves**
- **be strong when faced with bullying**
- **avoid bullying others**
- **recover from setbacks quickly, showing resilience**

Talking About Feelings

Children often need encouragement to talk about the way they are feeling. You can help your child to understand and cope with their emotions by talking openly about both positive and negative feelings (such as pride, satisfaction, anger or jealousy).

"By giving your child familiar and comfortable words and expressions to talk about how they are feeling, you are equipping them to release and resolve feelings. Bottled up feelings can get out of hand, and your child may end up hurting other people or feeling upset themselves.

Talking about feelings helps you and your child to think about how to cope with them better; it helps you work out ways of calming down when angry or frustrated; and helps them understand that it's OK to cry when upset, as well as laugh and smile when happy."



When parents and children feel comfortable talking about feelings together, parents may get to know much more quickly if their child is experiencing difficulties that require adult help.

Getting on With Others

"Getting on with others takes practice. It starts within the family, as children learn to share, take turns and make compromises. A firm, fair and consistent approach to this at home means there are no surprises for children when faced with a variety of situations outside the home.

Children can benefit from opportunities to be with children of a similar age in school and out of school, where they can practice making friends. All children are different, and some may require the reassurance of being with a parent in new social situations while they develop confidence."

Children who have difficulties in making friends and behaving well socially may benefit from help and support at school. Schools may have learning programmes that help children develop social skills. Parents should approach their child's teachers if they have concerns.

Problem Solving

"Learning to keep trying, even when things are difficult, is a quality that will help children in all aspects of life, particularly in relationships."

Learning in schools focuses on encouraging children to look at problems in different ways, and think of different solutions, before trying one they think will work. As a parent, you can help your child apply this approach to everyday social life."

Parents can also help children to deal with issues such as bullying by regarding it as a problem that can be solved - working with the school to look at the situation from all angles, and considering with children different options for solving the problem. Children who are being bullied must not feel that the problem is theirs to solve alone. But they may feel more respected and supported if their views are heard while the problem is being addressed.

Your child may not always be part of the problem, but he or she can often be part of the solution, by helping others.

Positive Expectations

"As parents it is important to show that you expect your children to behave well towards others. By showing that you appreciate positive behaviour and that poor behaviour towards others should be improved, you are setting important boundaries for your child and at the same time you are acting as a good role model."

Children should also be able to expect others to behave well towards them and they need the skills to show others when they are not happy with the way they are being treated. Sometimes, they may need help with this, to develop assertiveness."

The Fresh Code



Support When Things Go Wrong

If your child is being bullied

All parents hope that their child will tell them as soon as there is a problem. But unfortunately, this doesn't always happen. It may be because the child feels confused, they feel it is their own fault, or they are worried about how their parents will react.

Signs of bullying may include:

- a change in behaviour or mood
- obvious signs of physical hurt or damage to belongings
- unwillingness to go to school
- more clingy or more emotional than usual

Any child can experience bullying - deliberate words or actions by other people to hurt them emotionally or physically. All children should know that they will be supported if they feel hurt, that they will be helped to solve the problem, or that someone will take action to stop the bullying.

Children who feel confident of this will be more willing to tell someone, and will recover more quickly from their hurt.

Your support:

- Make time to spend with your child - be in a position in which they can easily tell you about things.
- Listen and let your child know you care.
- Hear his or her feelings about what has happened.

Your help to solve the problem:

- Help to sort out all the facts of the story - **slowly and calmly**. Try to ask what/when/where/who questions e.g. 'What happened?' 'Who was there?' This allows your child to give you detailed information without you 'leading' them towards an answer. Questions such as 'Was it X again?' 'Did she/he hit you?' can pressure a child towards what they may perceive as an adult expectation. It also closes the outcome to 'yes' or 'no' thereby losing some of the valuable detail.
- What does your child want to happen next? Involving your child in finding a solution can be empowering, and strengthen their ability to cope if a similar situation ever arises again.

Take action:

- Be prepared to take action by speaking on your child's behalf to the school. Don't take matters into your own hands - the school should be a partner in sorting out the situation. Share all the facts that you know honestly and fairly.
- Keep on speaking up for your child until the matter has been resolved, but **allow the school reasonable time to find out more and respond to you and your child.**

- Take action which reassures your child, rather than embarrasses them. Keep calm and show fairness and respect to everyone involved.
- Understand that after investigation, it may be that your child possibly did not report the whole truth. This can sometimes be because children say what they think we as adults want them to say about a situation, especially if there have been a history of incidents or the child has been given 'leading' questions e.g. 'Was it X?' 'Did he/she hit you again?' Questions which remain 'open' and serve to seek further information usually gather more accurate data.

If Your Child Is Bullying Someone Else

No parent wants to hear that their child is involved in bullying someone else. Unfortunately, it does happen, although some incidents will be more serious than others. Try to accept the reality of the situation, and look to support both your child and the school to solve the problem. By doing this you are re-enforcing positive expectations you have set for your child, as well as supporting him or her to work through personal issues which may have been the cause of the bullying behaviour.

Your support:

- Listen to what others are telling you about your child's behaviour. Calmly ask your child's opinions and feelings about the situation.
- Continue to show your child that you care about them. It is the behaviour that is the problem, not your child, and behaviour can be changed.

Help to solve the problem:

- Consider reasons why your child may have bullied others. Is your child feeling insecure, or are there any other problems? You need not make guesses about this on your own. Ask your child and others who know your child, including school staff.
- Help your child to take responsibility to put things right. It takes courage to apologise, so show that you are proud of them for doing so.

Take action:

- If bullying has taken place outside school, the staff may appreciate being informed that you know your child was involved and that you want to help sort things out.
- Make sure you show others that, even though your child's behaviour has been disappointing, he or she still deserves to be treated fairly and with respect.

Schools, positive behaviour and anti-bullying

You or your child should be able to speak to any member of staff in the school, if your child is involved in bullying incidents or if others are being bullied. The school should then take the same steps as a good parent; be supportive, help to solve the problem and if necessary take action to stop bullying.

You can also expect the school to follow the FRESH code:

- The school must hear all sides of the story - other young people may have different views about what is going on. The school will try to be **fair**.
- The school should treat all of the pupils involved with **respect** and dignity.
- The school will try to **engage** the pupils and parents in solving the problem.
- The school has a responsibility to ensure all pupils are **safe** while at the school.
- The school should discuss openly and **honestly** any bullying or other problems with parents of the pupils involved.

It is worth remembering that some incidents may happen to or from school, or may not be seen by an adult. In these situations schools are forced to rely on child testimonies. It is not always possible to reach a full understanding of what has occurred and so schools will then do their best to support all the children involved and monitor situations closely.

Schools are expected to have a number of measures in place to promote positive behaviour:

A positive school ethos and clear school values – The school should feel welcoming and caring.

Rules and rewards – Clear school rules for both pupils and parents. Good behaviour is recognised with rewards such as certificates, and parents can help by showing appreciation.

Anti-bullying policy and guidelines – All schools should have an anti-bullying policy which states how the school will prevent and respond to bullying.

Tackling discrimination – The school should help pupils to learn to treat others equally and to challenge prejudice.

Additional support – Sometimes pupils need extra help to learn or to cope with school life. Additional help should be discussed and planned with parents.

Complaints – School handbooks should explain how parents can make a complaint if they feel the school has let them, or their children, down.

Parents have a responsibility to help schools meet the needs of their children. If anything happens in your child's life that may affect their learning, relationships or general well-being, such as an upset in the family, tell the school.

Strathesk's Approaches to Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying

Problem Solving

Some schools are trying new approaches called restorative practices, which involves children in solving problems.

Learning Programmes

Cool in School is a learning programme that helps children to learn communication skills, to express their feelings assertively and to solve problems.

Circle time

Involves children in their class groups sharing feelings, ideas and views.

Buddying Schemes and Prefects

Between older and younger pupils help to develop peer support.

Pupil Councils

Pupil councils give children a voice in school decision making with individuals representing a class' views. This gives children ownership and therefore increased commitment to school developments.

Motivating Resources

From specialist resources for children who need that little extra support to whole school resourcing, to motivate large groups of pupils e.g. playground games.



Strathesk School Rules



Strathesk School Values

- The importance of life-long learning skills and attitudes in a changing society
- A partnership between pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.
- Achievement for all
- Respect and responsibility
- Our health and well being
- Our environment and community
- Equality and Citizenship
- Creativity, independence and choice
- Celebrating success

Strathesk Mission Statement

‘ A school where every child is provided with learning opportunities of the highest quality which nurture their ambitions and where pupils are encouraged to achieve their full potential academically, physically, socially and personally.’

