respectme

Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

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Introduction

When reviewing or drafting your anti-bullying policy and putting it into practice there are a number of stages to go through.

Stage One – Drafting/reviewing Your Policy
Stage Two – Implementing your policy into practice
Stage Three – Monitoring your policy
Stage Four - Evaluating your policy

The Better Policy Making Approach is a modernisation of policy making prompted by the 1999 Modernising Government White Paper. This approach advocates a holistic and joined-up approach; looking beyond institutional and policy boundaries with the aim of linking together as many policies and initiatives as is relevant. Anti-bullying strategies can link with ethos building, curriculum areas for schools, 'Journeys to Excellence' and 'How good is our school?' It can also link to Equality and Diversity policies and the Inclusion Agenda.

respect*me* advocates the adoption of the Better Policy Making Approach when developing or reviewing anti-bullying policies and procedures. Policies developed using this approach are more likely to be successful, as those implementing and receiving the policy have greater ownership due to being consulted on issues and having a greater level of participation in the development of the policy itself.
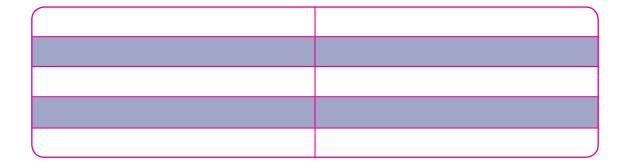
Any policy is only as successful as its implementation. The ethos of the policy must be embedded into day to day practices of the organisation to make any real difference. To ensure this is all working effectively, it is important to have robust monitoring and evaluation procedures in place.

Within this, there are a number of actions to consider. This checklist is a guide to keep you on track and aid you in this process. respect*me* suggests that you record comments and notes for each point, so that when it comes to reviewing your policy again, you can learn and reflect on what has gone before.

This checklist will be available on-line for you to update and collate your information, within the myrespectme section of our website.

Further details on all stages can be found at www.respectme.org.uk

Lead member of staff and other staff who are involved in this process with contact details:

Should you have any questions about anything in this process, please call respectme on 0844 800 8600 for advice and guidance.

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Action	Date Completed
Stage One – Drafting Your Policy	
Formed a working group	
Read the policy	
Consulted partners	
Equality and Diversity Impact Assessed	
Identified strengths and weaknesses	
Made appropriate changes to policy	
Pulled policy together and further consultation	
Planned for implementation	
Stage Two - Implementation	
Conducted evaluation of existing practices	
Devised procedures and guidelines for	
· Staff	
· Children and Young People who are experiencing or witnessing bullying behaviour	
· Children and Young People who are displaying bullying behaviour	
· Parents and carers	
Training needs identified to ensure everyone feels prepared and ready to implement the policy	
The anti-bullying policy has been launched within the organisation	
A copy of the anti-bullying policy and the procedures have been communicated to	
· Staff	
· Children and Young People	
· Parents and carers	
· Other Services	
Profile Kept High	
Stage Three - Monitoring	
Nominated a member of staff to undertake monitoring	
Monitoring on-going and data being collated	
Date set to evaluate findings	
Stage Four - Evaluation	
Data analysed	
Working group set up to explore findings	
Reviewed existing practices using data from monitoring	
If required, implemented appropriate changes to practices	
Date set for next review of anti-bullying policy and practices	

The following information takes each of these above actions and expands on what should be included at each stage. Use the above as an overall guide to your progress.

Stage One – Drafting Your Policy

Action one - Formed a working group

Form a policy review working group. From a Better Policy Making perspective it is vital that this group is as diverse as possible. The group should include at least - a receiver of the policy (a young person and a parent if possible), a policy implementer (this may be a teacher, worker or other member of staff depending on your organisation), a member of senior management and a member of the community (for example a community police officer, a community planner or a youth worker). These people can meet as sub-groups if this is more appealing.   The person who originally wrote the policy does not have to be a member of the group.

It is likely that you will have easy access to these people and the development of this group presents an opportunity for innovation. If your organisation is a secondary school then maybe you and the cluster primaries can review your anti-bullying policies together. If your organisation regularly uses a building not belonging to you then the owner or convenor of the building may wish to be involved (as may any other agencies that use the building).

A lead person for the policy should be named and it would be helpful to assign roles to each of the group members, if possible, to exploit individual skills, areas of interest or areas of expertise. If the current policy has measures for evaluation it is also important to note these.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Action Two - Read the policy

As a group, take time to get to know the current anti-bullying policy. An open discussion should be encouraged on the general feel of the policy and how successful the group considers it to have been to date. Then, decide as a group how you are going to consult others to determine the success of the current policy. Try at this stage to write an estimated timeline of the review process and how often the group is likely to need to meet. This will depend entirely on the size of your organisation and your commitment to consultation.

As an organisation, you may not have a documented paper policy but you will be dealing with bullying incidents as they arise. Good or bad, these practices are an organisational policy, they just aren't written down.

Action Two (b) – Equality and Diversity Impact Assess your policy

There is a legal requirement for all public bodies and those who are contracted to deliver public services to ensure they impact assess their policies and practices regarding equality and diversity issues.

Equality and diversity impact assessments are designed to ensure that there is no discrimination, direct or indirect, in the design, development and delivery or procedures and practices. They help to ensure that diversity is promoted and integrated into everything an organisation does.

For further information and links on Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments, please visit
www.respect*me*.org.uk

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Three - Consulting partners

Those involved with devising, implementing and receiving the policy need to be consulted in order to gain a perspective on how the current policy has performed - has it achieved what it was designed to achieve? This consultation can be done in a number of ways. You can issue questionnaires, embark upon one-to-one or group interviews, arrange for open group discussions, invite people along to a question and answer session or arrange a video box on your premises. One approach might not suit everyone you wish to consult, so a variety of approaches may need to be developed.

Consultation needs to be properly managed and steps should be taken to avoid tokenism. One person from the Policy Review Working Group could be named as the person responsible for ensuring that the results of the consultation permeate the policy review process.

Carefully consider what you want to ask your consultation group. The Working Group must decide how far they want to implement suggestions made through consultation. It is also important at this stage to plan how the Working Group is going to feed those results back to those involved in the consultation process.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Policy through to Practice – **Getting it Right**

Action Four - Equality and Diversity Impact Assessed

It is a legal requirement that you do an impact assessment on new or revised policies for likely impacts on children and young people from equality communities. The language, tone and accessibility of the current policy must be considered. respect*me* would advocate the use of an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment. This will guide the Working Group on its consideration of the impact or potential impact of the policy upon various, relevant sections of society and potential impact on children's rights. This will go someway to highlighting strengths and weaknesses and potentially explaining the successes or failures of the policy within different sections of society.

The Working Group will have to respond to the issues raised by the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (Action 2b) and it is vital that this is evidenced.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Five - Identified strengths and weaknesses

Armed with the information from the consultation and from the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment, the Working Group must then identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy. Questions that the Working Group could consider asking are:

- How and why the policy was originally developed? Who was involved etc?
- How was the policy promoted and circulated to staff, children and young people, parents and other relevant adults?
- What lessons can be learned from the above?

Policy into practice must be considered at this stage. Considering the consultations, how successful was the implementation of the policy? Reference must again be made to the original aims of the policy. Questions that the Working Group may consider are:

- Has the policy been successful in achieving the original aims, i.e. has there been a reduction in bullying or a rise in reporting of incidents or a positive impact on school ethos?
- Has the policy been integrated into everyday use?
- Are staff implementing the policy consistently?
- Was awareness of the policy at an acceptably high level?
- Does the policy sit comfortably with other relevant policies?

Have the requirements of the policy been met, e.g. have the reporting forms been suitably completed and passed to relevant departments/staff?

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Action Six - Made appropriate changes to policy

The Working Group is now at a stage where they can consider putting together a draft of a new policy based upon the review work carried out to date. It may be worth considering legislative, cultural, managerial and political changes that have occurred since the original policy was developed. Depending upon the amount of time that has passed since the original, these changes may be many. If one member of the group can be tasked to do this then the workload can be reduced for the group as a whole. In undertaking this, the policy can also be 'future-proofed' to some extent by being aware of coming legislative changes etc.

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon which may not have been addressed in any former policy but it is worth giving thought to your organisation's stance on this and including it in your reviewed policy. For further information on cyberbullying visit www.respect*me*.org.uk. Within the myrespect*me* section there are cyberbullying e-learning modules.

In an effort to reduce bureaucracy, the Working Group may choose to identify other policies which are natural partners to an anti-bullying policy, those which have recently been reviewed are best. The group can look at reducing duplication and ensuring consistency by marrying policies together. An anti-bullying policy should refer to and link with policies concerned with health, safety and well-being, child protection, equal opportunities and rights, behaviour and support and parental involvement.

The Working Group should review the current practices for:
- reporting and monitoring bullying allegations
- informing parents and police, if necessary
- short and long-term support for those experiencing bullying behaviour
- dealing with those found to be displaying bullying behaviour

Do the consultation findings agree? Is there a need for staff members to be trained on new strategies or to update or extend training on existing strategies? Is there a cost implication for this and can it be met? respect*me* can provide further information, training and e-learning on strategies and practices for all of the above areas.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Seven - Pulled policy together and further consultation

Going through the previous six steps should enable the Working Group to make effective changes to the Anti-Bullying policy. At this stage a draft policy should be pulled together and published for the group. It is worth considering further consultation at this stage. There will be a number of individuals and organisations who would be able to input to and comment on a draft of the policy. These may include people who were invited to be members of the Working Group but declined - partner organisations, councillors, community activists, more senior members of the organisation or a select group of children and young people and/or parents.

When pulling your policy together, the information should ideally sit under various headings. Examples of what may be included can be found in Appendix One.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Action Eight - Planned for implementation

Any input from the second consultation period should be discussed and changes made as appropriate. A decision should be taken on when the next review of the policy should be made. The Working Group may want to consider including dates for staff training etc.

At this stage, the organisation needs to plan for awareness-raising of the policy, its existence and its implementation. The Working Group may choose to reduce in size at this point.

A full plan should be drawn up which identifies who needs to know about the policy and how best to get the information across to the diverse groups. The above process should ensure that there is a high level of ownership across the organisation and further community and this should be promoted further by activities which ensure that the policy is welcomed, understood and embraced by all.

Finally, the whole process of review including consultation findings and the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment should be documented and stored for archive.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Stage Two - Implementation

Action One - Conducted evaluation of existing practices

Discussion on implementation and practice will have already begun at the consultation process along with the strength and weakness analysis of reviewing current policies. As before, you may not have a documented paper policy and set of procedures but you will be dealing with bullying incidents as they arise.

It is important that an honest evaluation is conducted into what does and doesn't work at the moment. It is also essential to take this a stage further and ask why. This isn't about apportioning blame, it is about learning lessons from previous practices and moving forward to make sure the implementation of the new policy is as successful as possible.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Two - Devised procedures and guidelines

Either within the policy or as separate guidelines, organisations should clearly lay out the procedures that they expect to be followed when bullying incidents or behaviour occurs.

Procedures and guidelines should be devised for all staff, children and young people (including those experiencing bullying behaviour, bystanders and those displaying bullying behaviour.) and parents and carers. This will provide uniformity for all concerned and allow for consistency in the approach and measures used, ensuring that everyone is being treated fairly regardless of who is dealing with the situation.

All guidelines should begin by reiterating the organisational stance on bullying behaviour and then provide further practical advice and guidance. Examples of what may be included in guidelines are within Appendix Two.

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Three -Training needs identified

Training should be provided to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in relation to the anti-bullying policy. This guidance is essential so that everyone feels prepared and ready to implement the policy and the measures identified within it. For further information on the free training that respectme provides, visit www.respectme.org.uk

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Action Four - Communication

Everyone the policy will have an impact upon should be made aware of what is expected of them in their role and of any changes to procedures and practices.

This can be done collectively to begin with by having an anti-bullying policy launch: perhaps holding a conference and event where everyone is informed and the organisational stance on bullying is explored and clearly stated.

Staff - All staff should be made aware of the policy and procedures as part of the induction process. Encourage individuals to speak to colleagues within their own departments to discuss how this will affect them and their role. Keep it on the agenda for team meetings and perhaps have an on-going working group to discuss what is working and what is not. Policy information and training should be part of any induction for new staff.

Parents and carers - Parents and carers should also be made aware of their responsibilities and the expectations the organisation has of them. They should be fully aware of what will happen if a bullying incident involving their child occurs and of their responsibilities in relation to this. This can be done through parents' meetings and conferences, by asking the children and young people to develop information leaflets that will be sent home to parents and carers, by sending letters detailing the procedures to follow and including this information in any handbook or website.

Children and Young People - The organisational stance should also be communicated to children and young people. This can be done through conference days or assemblies or non-school equivalents where bullying can be discussed and the message that bullying is never acceptable, reinforced. The procedures for reporting could be displayed in posters around the building or as a section in the induction or welcome pack.

Other Services - Ensure other services such as educational psychologists and welfare officers understand the policy and procedures so that they can recognise behaviours that may constitute bullying or signs that someone is being bullied. This may include a drop in attainment levels, truancy or absence due to fear of attendance because of bullying.

Notes:

E.g. training conducted

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Five - Profile Kept High

It is important to highlight the profile of the anti-bullying policy and its overarching messages and ethos in every day workings and relationships. This can be done using a number of methods:

- Ground rules or a pledge visibly displayed
- Role-play and drama
- Art work
- Literature
- Visual reminders – posters and badges
- Workshops
- Discussions
- Peer Mediation
- Bullying Boxes
- Natural consequences
- Increasing supervision in 'hotspot' areas

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Stage Three - Monitoring

Monitoring will allow you to gain invaluable feedback to discover if the policy and procedures are effective and are working in practice. It may be beneficial to appoint a member of staff to facilitate this process to ensure that monitoring and evaluation is taking place and that all evidence is collated. The perspective of everyone the policy impacts upon should be considered. Monitoring can be on-going and can be carried out in various ways:

- Recording bullying incidents or concerns at a central point
- On-going working groups to discuss experiences of implementing the new policy. Documenting the positives and challenges that staff are facing
- Having it on the agenda at student council meetings and parent meetings for discussion
- Questionnaires to discover the true nature and extent of the impact of the policy. If you conducted questionnaires at the beginning of your policy review, these can act as a comparison
- Focus groups can be used to share and compare experiences of implementation. Discussions can also identify both common themes and differing opinions and allow for solutions and strategies to obstacles or issues to be explored
- One-to-one interviews can extract personal experiences of the interventions being used – has bullying stopped? This method is useful to explore personal and sensitive information
- Comments which are deposited in the suggestion or bullying box

To ensure that this process is successful, you must ensure that all staff, children and young people and parents or carers are made aware of the monitoring and evaluating methods and how they can contribute to the gathering of information.

Action One - Nominated a member of staff to undertake monitoring

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Two - Monitoring on-going and data being collated

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Three - Date set to evaluate findings

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Stage Four - Evaluation

The information gathered from monitoring can then be used to review the existing policy. Although it is recommended a policy review takes place every three years, if issues are highlighted with specific practices or procedures these may need to be re-visited so amendments can be made.

Regardless of what is highlighted, it presents the perfect opportunity to refine your practice. Examples may include:

- Re-launch of the policy and the organisational stance on bullying behaviour
- Further training

Action one - Data analysed

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Two - Working group set up to explore findings

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Three - Reviewed existing practices using data from monitoring

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Four - If required, Implemented appropriate changes to practices

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Action Five - Date set for next review of anti-bullying policy and practices

Notes:

Proposed completion date: **Task completion date:**

Appendix One

An anti-bullying policy should have the following topic headings:

A policy statement: This would lay out the organisational stance on bullying behaviour.

Examples:

" ***** Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all people in its educational establishments"

 "Every pupil has a right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from victimisation and fear".

"Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them."
[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19]

The ****** Association is committed to this ethos and seeks to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the prevention of all forms of bullying among Members."

Definition of bullying: It is up to each individual organisation to devise or adopt their own definition of bullying behaviour. It is important that this is done through consultation. Different organisations have different behavioural expectations and therefore may have different boundaries and thresholds on what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Included in this we would expect to see:
- What does bullying look/feel like?
- What forms can bullying take?
- A recognition of prejudice-based bullying (racism, homophobia, disabilist, sexist etc)

Expectations: What does the organisation expect of its members? This section is likely to outline basic rules of behaviour: respectful relationships etc. There is likely to be overarching organisational expectations that would be highlighted here. This section should not be confined to expectations of children and young people but should also include expectations on and responsibilities of staff, management and parents/carers.

Prevention of bullying: What the organisation is committed to doing in order to raise awareness of and prevent bullying. This section has to reflect how the organisation will:
- aim to promote a culture where bullying is unacceptable, including role modeling behaviour from staff etc.
- plan any pro-active strategies that will be employed (anti-bullying weeks/days, assemblies, posters to be displayed, parent's nights, staff training etc)
- ensure safety of stakeholders i.e. staff supervision etc.

This section should also highlight how the policy fits with other relevant, existing policies.

Action: What will the organisation do when faced with an incident or accusation of bullying behaviour? This is the place to lay out
- all of the strategies that the organisation has decided to employ in relation to dealing with bullying concerns allegations/incidents.
- When, how and if parents/carers will be informed
- the monitoring and recording procedures that will be used
- what follow up support mechanisms are in place to support those involved with bullying behaviour

Appendices: Any further information should be attached to the policy. This may include:
- information leaflets for young people, parents etc explaining the policy
- monitoring and reporting pro-forma(s)
- evidence of consultations and impact assessments carried out

Appendix Two – Guidelines and Procedures

All guidelines should begin by reiterating the organisational stance on bullying behaviour and then provide further practical advice and guidance. The following highlights examples of what procedural guidelines may include:

Staff

- Who and when should I inform?
  - Within my organisation
  - Parents and carers
  - Police
- What methods can I use to intervene?
  - With the group
  - Person being bullied
  - Person displaying bullying behaviour
  - How should these be applied?
  - Relationship with other policies e.g. discipline policy
- Where and what should I record?
  - Types of behaviour
  - Monitoring forms that should be completed
  - Where this information will be stored
  - Who should have access to the information
  - Length of time the information should be kept on file for
  - Follow-up information
- What if I am unsure?
  - Contacts within the organisation to ask questions
  - Further help and resources e.g. details for respectme, ChildLine
  - Further training on measures

For children and young people being bullied

- Who and when should I inform?
  - Main point of contact
- What methods can I use to do this?
  - Adults to approach
  - Peer mediation
  - Bullying boxes
- What will happen next?
  - How the organisation will deal with the incident
  - Interventions that may be used
  - How the child or young person will be kept informed/involved
- Will my parents be informed?
  - When will this happen?
  - What the parent or carers involvement will be and why
- What if the bullying hasn't stopped?
  - Who to contact
  - Further steps that will be taken
- What if I require further support?
  - Additional support within the organisation
  - Resources for further information

Policy through to Practice – Getting it Right

Appendix Two – Guidelines and Procedures (contd.)

For children and young people displaying bullying behaviour

- What will happen if I display bullying behaviour?
  - Interventions that will be used and when
- Will my parents be informed?
  - When this will happen
  - What format this will take
- Where will this be recorded?
  - What will it say?
  - How long will it be kept?
  - What if my behaviour changes?
- What if I require further support?
  - Contacts within organisation
  - Further resources e.g. respect*me*, Bullying Line

For parents and carers

- Who should I contact if I have concerns?
  - Main point of contact
- What will happen?
  - Explanation on measures that will be used
- How will I be kept informed of progress?
  - Details of how information will be communicated, e.g. through letters, meetings, telephone calls
  - What stage this will happen at
  - How parents and carers can request appointments and meetings and with who
- What if I am unhappy with what is being done?
  - Methods that can be used to share concerns
- What if I or my child requires further support?
  - Contacts within the organisation
  - Further resources such as respect*me* or ParentLine

For bystanders to bullying incidents

- Who should I tell if I'm worried about something?
- Can I do it anonymously?
- Will it be recorded?
- Will I be in trouble if I don't tell?
- Will there be any support for me?
- Will people know it was me who told?
- Will my parents be informed?
- Will I be expected to do anything to make it stop?

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The Scottish Government