

## National Thematic: Bullying

The purpose of this national thematic is to evaluate the approaches taken by schools to record and monitor incidents of bullying. HM Inspectors will provide a national overview of the approaches adopted in their national report

We will use the information below to draw out national messages and potential case studies of practice worth sharing.

### Record of visit (ROV)

- The ROV contains all information gathered in relation to the work. Any other materials should only be retained in line with our records management policy.
- The ROV should be completed in line with confidentiality, information security and Freedom of Information policies.
- The ROV must be completed timeously and sent to [REDACTED].

Establishment/Setting	Kyle Academy	
Date/time of visit	Thurs 15 September 2022	8.30am – 4.00pm
HMI	[REDACTED]	
Date ROV submitted	[REDACTED]	

### Key contextual information (200 words)

School roll	837 young people
Composition	Non-denominational secondary school
Demographics (SIMD, ethnicity, ASN)	SIMD 1-4: 8.5% FMR: 11.8% Minority ethnic: 4.26%
Leadership structure	The headteacher is supported by 3 depute headteachers (DHTs). There are 4 principal teachers of guidance (PTG), 1 principal teacher of pupil support (PTPS) and 12 subject principal teachers (PTS).
Bullying incidents logged on SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities module	[REDACTED].

### 1. Approaches schools have taken to record incidents of bullying (400 words)

The school's 'Anti-bullying and Respect' policy was created in February 2020 and is reviewed annually in August. Senior leaders led a consultation on bullying involving pupil and parent councils. Parents requested staff develop a summary document to help parents understand key messages. The policy reflects GIRFEC and 'Respect for All' national guidance. It offers a clear definition of bullying. However, the policy inaccurately defines bullying as behaviours which are experienced on an ongoing, repeated basis. The policy offers a well-defined holistic framework for staff to address bullying and challenges inequalities. It has a strong focus on protected characteristics and other prejudice based bullying and the impacts of bullying. The process of monitoring bullying is clear and involves an annual analysis which is returned to the local authority. The policy does not currently offer information on how all stakeholders should report bullying. It would also benefit from further reference to children's rights.

A minority of children and a majority of parents did not know how the school investigates incidents of bullying. A majority of children and parents did not know how the school records

bullying. The headteacher is considering how to promote further the policies and procedures used by the school to offer greater clarity to the school community.

The DHT for pupil support and PTG are responsible for logging incidents of bullying on the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities Module (BEM). PTG have received appropriate and helpful professional learning on using the BEM system. [REDACTED]. The DHT reported that staff are more confident using SEEMiS pastoral notes for recording information and feel there are issues with the use of BEM. Staff feel they duplicate records by using both systems and that SEEMiS pastoral notes offers more opportunity to gather all relevant information about a young person in one location. Staff plan to review the current system and consider how it can be used to review and monitor bullying incidents. The DHT reports BEM is easy to use and staff like the headings on the system of “Person(s) experiencing” and “Person(s) displaying”. Staff like that BEM avoids unnecessary labelling of young people as ‘bullies’ or ‘victims’.

## 2. The arrangements for monitoring incidents of bullying (400 words)

Staff who have concerns about a young person can make a wellbeing referral to PTG. Staff use regular review meetings to identify and monitor relationship issues between young people. PTG discuss issues during weekly guidance departmental meetings and monthly year group conferences with senior leaders. Staff record action points in the minutes of these meetings which supports the review of progress over time. PTG also use ‘Team around the Child’ meetings to identify young people requiring additional support with bullying issues from partner agencies. Partners such as the Campus Police Officer and Educational Psychology have been used effectively to support issues, including community conflicts and young people feeling isolated in school.

PTG share information relating to relationship issues with all staff. This allows all staff, including pupil support assistants (PSA), to monitor young people and ensure situations do not escalate. PTG maintain regular contact with parents to offer reassurance and updates on relationship issues. A few parents highlighted the positive communication with school staff and a few parents and young people talked about the visibility and accessibility of senior leaders. They feel reassured by their consistent presence. Senior leaders and staff accepted they needed to consider further a young person’s right to confidentiality when discussing issues of bullying.

Senior leaders use different sources of data to identify trends and patterns of bullying behaviour. Senior leaders helpfully analyse the Scottish Government Health and Wellbeing Census to identify bullying trends, including an increase in name calling, cyber bullying and young people using social media to arrange/encourage school fights. Senior leaders also use local intelligence and behaviour monitoring systems to identify issues. This includes young people’s inappropriate use of mobile phones to take pictures of others without their permission. Senior leaders have appropriately sought to respond to these patterns through a range of approaches. These include: assemblies focusing on relevant themes, reviewing the mobile phone policy, adapting the personal and social education (PSE) course, and offering targeted work to groups of young people. A few young people feel the school’s response could be more targeted at the young people who behave inappropriately. These young people feel frustrated by assemblies reinforcing expectations which they consistently meet.

Young people repeatedly raise the issue of ‘grass culture’ when discussing bullying. They feel a majority of young people do not report bullying for fear of being labelled as a ‘grass’. Staff talked about an increase in young people trying to fit in with peers since periods of lockdown.

This is resulting in an increase in young people accepting name calling and verbal bullying from their peers. When discussing how the school should deal with bullying, a few young people and parents talk about seeking further punitive measures and consequences for bullies. Senior leaders are considering how to develop all young people and parents' understanding of relational approaches. They are considering restorative practice training for young people and parents to help with this.

### 3. The effectiveness of measures taken to respond to incidents of bullying and in supporting children and young people. (400 words)

Senior leaders and staff adopt highly-effective and proactive approaches to ensuring a school culture which has a zero tolerance towards bullying. Staff maintain a relentless focus on the school's vision and values, with a particular focus on respect and valuing diversity, and ensure the values are reflected in all contexts of learning. Staff use daily personal support time (PST) and the PSE curriculum to explore relevant themes such as equality, the protected characteristics, and challenging discrimination. Young people in S6 are timetabled to S1 and S2 PST and act as buddies to their peers. Staff recognise the important role these young people play in role modelling positive relationships for their younger peers.

Senior leaders establish a theme of the month, covering areas such as community and respect, which are regularly explored in assemblies. Staff also organise week long events targeted to raise young people's awareness of diversity, including dyslexia and autism awareness. Staff and young people have used Holocaust Memorial events successfully to explore the bystander effect and reinforce young people's responsibilities towards one another. These support most young people to feel safe in school. It is leading to most parents reporting the school promotes respect and positive relationship, and that staff treat young people with respect and fairness.

Staff are responsive to relationship issues between young people and take appropriate action, such as restorative meetings, to address them. Staff are also responsive to young people who require additional support. Staff offer safe spaces during intervals and lunchtimes for young people who are struggling to establish or maintain positive relationships. These include well-attended LGBTQ+ groups, wellbeing groups in the school library, and various clubs/activities offered. A minority of staff have been trained in mental health first aid. These staff offer targeted work with young people experiencing relationship issues. This work develops the young people's resilience skills. Support staff have access to a good range of professional learning including anxiety management, restorative practice, suicide prevention and self-harm. They feel that this helps equip them to deal with a variety of issues including bullying.

Young people are positive about how staff listen to and involve them in decisions relating to the school. The pupil council supported the development of a merit system. A few young people are trained as wellbeing mentors and deliver assemblies and support staff to review wellbeing support across the school. Senior leaders should continue to expand approaches to ensure the voices of all young people are heard. They should consider how to promote their complaint processes to ensure all young people can offer feedback on their experiences.

**Effective practice worth sharing if applicable**

Senior leaders were asked to provide a case study which reflects the school's proactive approaches to promoting a school culture which does not tolerate bullying behaviours. This is achieved through a relentless focus on the vision and values and the effective use of daily personal support time/PSE, themes of the month, use of assemblies and the role modelling offered by senior pupil buddies and those in leadership roles (including ambassadors). These approaches support a strong sense of community, positive relationships and care and compassion between young people, and between young people and staff.