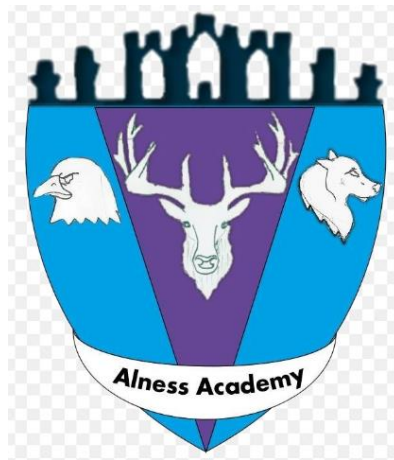


ANTI-BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING POLICY



Reviewed Aug 2025

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Links to other policies:

This policy coordinates with:

- Relationships
- Highland Council Safeguarding and Anti Bullying

Statement of Principle

Alness Academy seeks to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which the school community can develop and grow making full use of their potential and range of opportunities available.

In line with our guidance to students (Ready, Respectful and Safe) Alness Academy expects everyone to be treated with respect and understanding, empowering the school community to participate in any activity free from intimidation. Alness Academy will not tolerate bullying and as a school community will support each other to address this.

Therefore, where the safety or welfare of a Alness Academy member is threatened it is the responsibility of the school community to ensure that all are listened to, reports are taken seriously and acted upon in a timely pre-defined manner.

Scope of this policy and links to other policies

This policy includes:

- Bullying of pupils by pupils within school

This policy has links to the following school policies and procedures:

- Relationships Policy
- Highland Council Anti Bullying Policy

Policies are available at the following link:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19358/anti_bullying_-_guidance_for_schools

Objectives of this policy:

It is Alness Academy's intention that:

- The entire school community (including parents) should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- The entire school community should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- The entire school community should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is :

- Repetitive, wilful and persistent and is sustained over a period of time. It can be carried out by an individual or group

Bullying can take place between students and can be carried out by individuals or groups, face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods.

Bullying is not children falling out with or arguing with friends.

Bullying can be harmful to all involved, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. Bullying behaviour fits into one of two categories:

emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. However, the method by which people bully may fall into one or more of the following:

- Physical – Kicking; hitting; pushing; taking/damaging belongings etc
- Verbal – Name calling; taunting; mocking; offensive comments etc
- Emotional/Psychological – Indirect gossiping; excluding people from groups; negative body language and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours - “indirect” bullying
- Cyber – Use of technology; telephones/mobile phones (e.g. text messaging, phone calls, taking/sending photographs); computers (e.g. emails, social network sites, creating abusive websites)

People are bullied for a variety of reasons – and sometimes for no reason. Specific types, reasons or motives for bullying can include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to SEN and/or disabilities
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or gender identification issues
- Bullying of young carers, looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances, sexist or sexual bullying

See Appendix 1 for detailed definitions of bullying, signs of bullying and advice for students and parents / carers.

Children and young people who are being bullied often find it difficult to tell someone. Part of this difficulty can stem from their uncertainty about what will happen if they do tell. By making available clear guidelines, we can go some way to overcoming this difficulty. Hence, it is acknowledged that the responsibility for dealing with bullying is shared between the whole school community. This will lead to the best outcomes.

All staff are aware of their responsibility to listen and to take seriously any allegation of bullying and report appropriately to ensure the full investigation of all incidents.

Alness Academy will not tolerate bullying and as a school community will support each other to address this.

All Staff have the responsibility to:

- Provide an environment where students feel safe and secure.
- Act as a role model for anti-bullying.
- Emphasise through teaching, everyone’s right to attend Alness Academy free from fear and intimidation.
- Encourage a positive attitude towards reporting incidents.
- Listen to both the alleged victim(s) and perpetrator(s). They should be listened to, taken seriously and informed of what will happen, referring incidents to the appropriate Head of Year, and the relevant Principal Teacher for Guidance (**See Reporting and Recording**).
- Respond positively to what you have been told.
Inform the appropriate Principal Teacher for Guidance and HOY.
- Adopt a Restorative attitude
- As appropriate, refer parties to the correct Head(s) of Year.

Online Safety Roles and Responsibilities - Cyberbullying

The Principal Teacher for Guidance will

- Ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance on the use of technology safely and positively both in school and beyond including how to manage their personal data and how to report abuse and bullying online.
- Plan and deliver a curriculum on online safety in computing lessons which builds resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others online.
- Plan a curriculum and support students in delivering a curriculum on online safety which builds resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others online.

Roles and Responsibilities of Depute Headteacher (Pastoral) / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Ensure that all policies relating to safeguarding, bullying including cyberbullying are reviewed and updated regularly
- Ensure that all staff know that they need to report any issues concerning bullying and cyberbullying to the appropriate Principal Teacher for Guidance in the first instance.
- Ensure that parents/carers are informed and attention is drawn annually to the anti-bullying and cyberbullying policy so that they are fully aware of the school's responsibility relating to safeguarding pupils and their welfare. The Cyberbullying Policy is available at all times on the school website.
- Ensure that daily student notices have a weekly Online Safety reminder and advice (to staff, Childline or the www.thinkuknow.co.uk website).

All Students have the responsibility to:

- Act in accordance with the school Relationships Policy.
 - Report perceived bullying.
 - Adopt the school no tolerance stance on bullying in school and on school transport.
 - Follow advice from IT and PSE lesson in relation to being 'Ready and Safe' reporting bullying and following the guidance for Online Safety.
- Report concerns related to bullying or cyber bullying to the Pastoral team or any adult.

All Parents have the responsibility to:

- Work with the school to establish a 'One Team' attitude and be a role model of positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Parents/carers can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- Parents/carers should also explain to their children legal issues relating to bullying and cyberbullying.

- If parents/carers believe their child is the victim of bullying and cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving the offensive text on their computer or on their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything.
- Parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible and speak with the Principal Teacher for Guidance to report the incident. If the incident occurs outside of school / outside of the school day, you may be advised to contact to the Police.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are informed of the anti-bullying and cyber-bullying policy and resources are shared with children and the procedures in place in the Anti-Bullying Policy to deal with all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying.

Reporting and recording

To be actioned within 24 hours (where possible)

1. A child/young person reports an incident. (either victim or witness) Child/young person completes a statement form.
2. The Staff member to whom the incident was reported discusses this with the child/young person /witness.
3. Staff member to record the incident of bullying on the Anti Bullying Module of SEEMIS.
4. Parents/carers informed of investigation.
5. Principal Teacher of Guidance to record on Pastoral Notes that investigation is underway

To be actioned within 48 hours (where possible)

1. Further investigation required as deemed by the HOY and consultation with Principal Teacher of Guidance.
2. Parents/carers updated on investigation.
3. Following further investigation completion of Anti Bullying Module entry on SEEMIS by HOY / Principal Teacher of Guidance
4. HOY agrees action plan and intervention strategies informing HT.
5. Review sanctions with SLT Lead in accordance with Relationships Policy.

Guidance for Staff in relation to Cyberbullying

Guidance on safe practice in the use of electronic communications and storage of images is contained in the Highland Council guidance documents. The school will deal with inappropriate use of technology in line with the Highland Council policies which could result in disciplinary procedures.

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

Mobile Phones

- Ask the student to give a brief description of what the message contains – if it is a **written** message, ask to see this; if it includes **images**, ask the student for a brief idea of the image. Please do not access images of a sexual nature, if the student indicates this is the case, the staff member should take the phone and give it to the DHT Pastoral immediately – **DO NOT LOOK AT THE IMAGE** and refer to the guidelines in Highland Council Policy - **Summary of Education Scotland advice on dealing with sharing nudes**.

- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate **written** text message and images that can be viewed
- Record the incident on SEEMIS under the Anti Bullying Module.
- Normal procedures to interview students and collect statements will then be followed.

Computers

- Ask the student to give a brief description of what the message contains – if it is a **written** message, ask to see this; if it includes **images**, ask the student for a brief idea of the image. Please do not access images of a sexual nature, if the student indicates this is the case, the staff member should take the phone and give it to the DHT Pastoral immediately – **DO NOT LOOK AT THE IMAGE** and refer to the guidelines in Highland Council Policy - **Summary of Education Scotland advice on dealing with sharing nudes**.
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate **written** text message and images that can be viewed
- Ask the student to save the material of a written nature and any images that are not of a sexual nature after the initial conversation regarding the above protocol
- Print off the offending material immediately
- Make sure you have all pages in the correct order and that there are no omissions
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Principal Teacher of Guidance and pass on the relevant information
- Record the incident on SEEMIS under the Anti Bullying Module.
- Normal procedures to interview students and collect statements will then be followed.

Outcomes and Intervention

The relevant parties will be offered mediation or separate discussions to clarify and resolve the situation. In such instances the DHT Pastoral will be used for advice or support.

In more serious cases the schools Behaviour Policy will be followed and HoY involved – this may involve a range of sanctions. The Head of Year will continue to monitor the situation until all parties have been supported and are happy with how the incident has been dealt with and have moved forward positively without further incident.

Prevention and Awareness

As part of our ongoing commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils, we at Alness Academy have developed the following strategies to promote positive discipline and discourage bullying behaviour. The strategies include those to highlight Online safety and prevent cyber-bullying:

- Restorative Approaches/mediation
- Anti-bullying week
- PSHE programme and Inspire Days e.g. Show Racism the Red Card' workshops
- Specific curriculum input on areas of concern such as internet safety
- Parents information evenings/website area
- Nurture groups for vulnerable S1 and S2 pupils

- Prefect System
- Anti-bullying campaigns through PSE lessons
- Anti-bullying topical discussions during Registration time
- Assemblies

The Principal Teacher of Guidance will work on prevention and awareness on an individual or small group basis, in liaison with the Head of Year.

All external agencies which support the school will be made aware of the school's anti-bullying policy and will be expected to support it as necessary.

Involvement of pupils

We will regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying. Student Voice will be used to review the policy.

Liaison with parents and carers

We will:

- Make sure that key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats.
- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.

See **Appendix 2** for a list of Supporting Organisations for Students, Staff and Parents / Carers.

Safeguarding/Wellbeing

If a member of staff has any concerns in relation to the child's welfare/wellbeing the member of staff should speak with Designated Safeguarding Lead, or appropriate team member.

Equality and Diversity

All developments are intended to ensure that no-one is treated in any way less favourably on the grounds of age, race, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, sex, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion/ belief or political/ other personal beliefs.

Complaints

All complaints should be raised with the school in the first instance with Principal Teacher of Guidance. The details of how to make a formal complaint can be found in the School Handbook (p7).

Definitions of bullying and Signs of bullying *Source: www.nspcc.org.uk* Bullying

can take different forms. It could include:

- Physical bullying: hitting, slapping or pushing someone
- Verbal bullying: name calling, gossiping or threatening someone
- Non-verbal abuse: hand signs or text messages
- Emotional abuse: threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- Exclusion: ignoring or isolating someone
- Undermining, constant criticism or spreading rumours
- Controlling or manipulating someone
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls

The following types of bullying are also a hate crime:

- Racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- Bullying someone because they have a disability

Cyberbullying can include:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Shaming someone online
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Encouraging young people to self-harm
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.
- Sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations

Signs of bullying

No single sign will indicate for certain that your child is being bullied, but watch out for:

- Belongings getting “lost” or damaged
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously “ill” each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever is bullying them)
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping

- Bullying others

Anti-bullying advice to students

- Tell someone you can trust; a friend or a member of staff you can talk to.
A problem becomes smaller if it is shared.
- Walk away but with a direction – friend or staff member. It's hard to bully someone who walks away from a situation.
Walking away is a sign of strength.
- Stay with a group of friends.
Try not to be on your own at the times you do not feel safe.
- It often helps to keep a record of what is happening and when. Keep any information you've been sent or passed.
- Don't be embarrassed to ask for help.
We all need help sometimes.
- Try to support anyone you know who is being bullied.
- Ask your parents, carer, a friend, a brother or sister, to speak to someone at Alness Academy if you can't.

Anti-bullying advice to Parents / Carers

- Talk to your child on a regular basis, so any problem is easier to share.
- Listen to what they say – and believe it.
- Encourage your child to feel good about themselves, realising that we are all different and equally important.
- If you believe your child is being bullied, or is a bully, talk to other adults at home or at Alness Academy. Don't stay silent.
- If your child is a victim assure them that it is not their fault and that you are going to do something to help
- Be realistic in your expectations if Alness Academy has agreed to sort it out. On-going problems take time to resolve.
- Be co-operative with Alness Academy. Without a good working relationship between parents and the school the situation could deteriorate, which won't help you or them.
- Always remember that children can't solve bullying on their own. They need the support of parents/carers and Alness Academy.

Appendix 2 Anti-Bullying Policy Supporting Organisations and Guidance

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- DfE: “Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2017”, and “Cyber bullying advice for headteachers and school staff” November 2014” and “Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying” November 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- DfE: “No health without mental health”:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nohealth-without-mental-health-a-cross-government-outcomes-strategy>
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBT

- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-ofpractice-0-to-25>

Racism and Hate

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.theredcard.org