



Bullying is controlled in Fortrose Academy. Bullying still happens but it is decreased! Bullies are normally just as scared as the victim - Bullies normally stay in gangs!

# Bullying!

## What have you got to say about it?

A whole school evaluation  
about bullying and bullying  
type behaviour  
at Fortrose Academy

Highland Children's Forum  
2008



it is a good and fun school.

The recent Concordat Agreement (SG 2007) places a duty on service providers to listen to service users. The Crerar Review (2007) (reviewing the inspection and regulation of services) concluded that the service provider should evidence meeting standards through a process of self-assessment which includes the voice of the service user. This places a responsibility on all schools to listen to pupils as part of their self-evaluation and development planning.

The Highland Children's Forum was interested in carrying out a whole school consultation to trial a way for schools to widen pupil involvement beyond pupil councils to whole school evaluation as part of the ongoing school development process. The Children's Forum approached Fortrose Academy (who had been put forward by Save the Children (2006) as an example of good practice in involving pupils) to offer to carry out a whole school evaluation both to support the school development programme and to develop a methodology that other schools could adapt and use.

The Head teacher and Senior Management Team embraced the idea of a whole school evaluation and chose the topic of bullying (and that type of behaviour) as the key area on which they wished to hear pupils' views. Three consultation questions were set by the school:

With respect to bullying and bullying type of behaviour:

What is happening that the school does not hear about?

What is working well within school policy and practice?

What could the school be doing to improve things?

The forum's consultation worker (CW) drew up a proposal for the evaluation which was agreed with the school. The proposal involved speaking directly with pupils in the support for learning department, with the group at the XL club and with all first year groups at their Personal and Social Learning classes. This approach ensured the inclusion of some of the more vulnerable or less engaged pupils. The method and media for involving the wider school was to be decided with these young people.

Consultations were set up with the consultation worker (CW) and these individuals, groups and classes. When asked to help design the consultation, the pupils suggested that the CW speak to each of the class assemblies to explain the project and ask people to take part, then to use postcards rather than questionnaires for gathering the views of pupils. A few members of XL designed 4 postcards and a poster to advertise the project in the school. The pupils thought the consultation should be a dialogue, not just answering the questions. It was suggested that as

comments from young people came forward, some of these could be shared over the tannoy or in registration classes so that young people could take part in a discussion about the issues using the postcards.

Altogether, a total of 199 pupils took part, 141 first year pupils, 12 pupils from the support for learning department (through one to one or small group consultations), 11 XL members seen in a group plus a total of 35 postcards were completed and handed in by other pupils in the school. Due to an unscheduled HMIe visit, the dialogue over the tannoy or in registration class did not take place.

bullying by some and not by others. It would depend on how tough or vulnerable you were. Sometimes it was about being missed out by friends.

What is happening that the school does not hear about?

On the whole there is not much bullying that the school doesn't know about. There is a pecking order and first years and pupils who are different ("weird" in young people's terms) are at the bottom. When you are at the bottom of the pecking order you can be pushed a bit in corridors, not allowed to sit in some areas or on certain seats on the bus.

Bullying can be verbal or physical but in this particular school, I have rarely seen it happening.  
I have been bullied myself and I know how bad it can be.

What is bullying or bullying type of behaviour?

The pupils were asked to describe what they considered was bullying or bullying type behaviour. The general response was that it could be name calling or physical abuse and that it counted as bullying when it was more than a one off incident but went on over a period of time. Sometimes people used things they knew about your past to get at you. Some forms of teasing would be thought of as

Most people take this in their stride, for some pupils who are more vulnerable, this can feel intimidating.

There is some name calling and the terms used to be derogatory include 'gay', 'retard' and 'ginger'. While sometimes these are used by friends and in humour, they are nonetheless offensive. Pupils who are homosexual, or have learning difficulty or are red haired, could be justifiably upset that these terms are used in this way.

There are a small number of pupils who are being bullied or who are particularly vulnerable to name calling. Sometimes something follows you from primary in to the secondary.

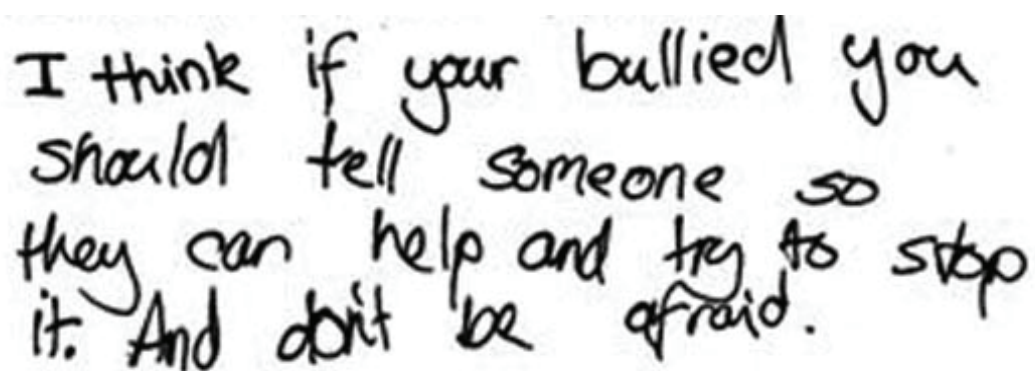
As well as recognising that some pupils might be more vulnerable to bullying there was recognition that bullies themselves may be people with problems and that it was important to try to find out why the bully shows this kind of behaviour. There was a feeling expressed that if the bully owned up and explained their problem that they should get help rather than punishment.

Sometimes friends stand up for you, sometimes they don't because they are frightened they might be next. Sometimes when friends get involved the whole thing escalates.

What is working well within school policy and practice?

Generally pupils felt that Fortrose had a good atmosphere and that the Rector liked the pupils individually and was someone who dealt effectively with bullies. Those pupils who had come from other schools reported that Fortrose had a better atmosphere than their previous schools. Teachers were often around in corridors and were generally approachable and this made some pupils feel safe.

There were very mixed reviews on the buddy system as being supportive of first years when they arrive, at the bottom of the pecking order. Those pupils who had good relationships with buddies thought they could go to them if they had a problem.



I think if your bullied you should tell someone so they can help and try to stop it. And don't be afraid.

Some pupils expressed concern about the behaviour on the buses. There were different views about the seriousness of this, even from people on the same bus. A small number of pupils do not feel safe and secure on the bus. A small number of pupils felt disliked by some teachers and picked on because of this.

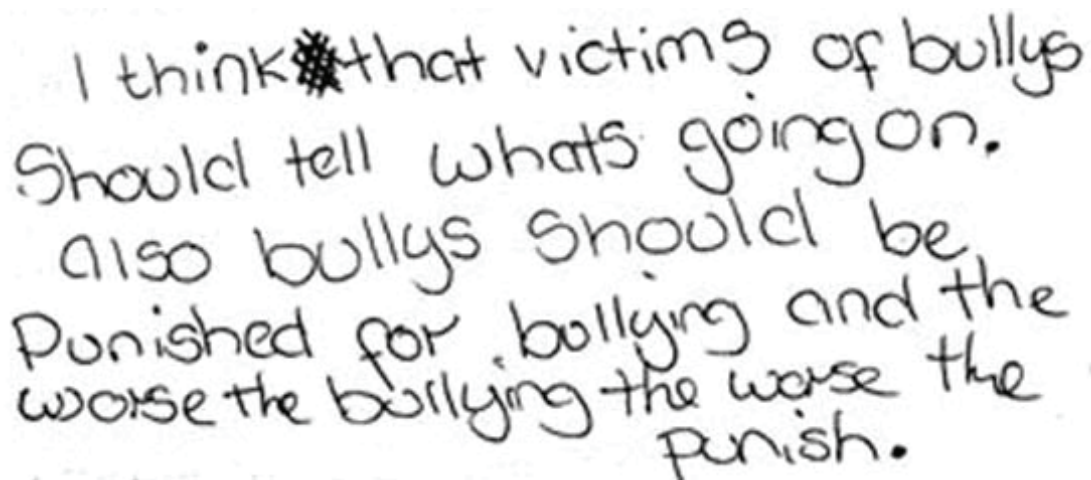
Some pupils identified that having an older brother or sister in the school was helpful in ensuring you were not picked on. The system of having buddies in first year was thought to be a good one if it worked better.

There was a lot said about whether it was right to tell or not to tell teachers about bullying or bullying type behaviour. Where bullying is serious there was a general feeling expressed that it should be reported. Some pupils thought people might not tell because they believed things would get worse. All pupils who had been bullied and had told, reported that the bullying had been dealt with and things did get better.

Where bullying was less serious the views were mixed. Many pupils did not like the idea of 'grassing' and there was a feeling that now they were getting older they should be able to take it or deal with it on their own.

What could the school be doing to improve things?

When teachers become aware of an incident or bullying type behaviour, they should seek to find out the whole story. This will include finding out what led up to the incident or behaviour. Even if someone has been in trouble before, their story should be heard and conclusions not jumped to. There was recognition that it was difficult for teachers to know who was telling the truth when not everyone told the truth all the time. There should be understanding that both the bully and the victim may have things going on outside of school which has led to their behaviour or response.



I think ~~that~~ that victims of bullies should tell what's going on. Also bullies should be punished for bullying and the worse the bullying the worse the punish.

The pupils discussed whether the punishments used by the school against bullies worked. The punishments listed were detention and eventually suspension. There were mixed views about how effective these were. It seemed to depend on the attitude of the pupil being punished, some would not be worried by detention and suspension, others would be.

Mediation could be offered, getting the different sides to see each other's point of view was good where it worked. However, where punishment was needed suspension, detention or exclusion were the only suggestions made. Improving supervision by such things as CCTV cameras in likely spots for bullying such as the bus or the toilets was suggested.



In terms of supporting pupils becoming less vulnerable, there were a few suggestions made. Learning more about difference, such as mental health or other issues, may be helpful. Helping pupils 'toughen up' was also suggested. This could either be in helping pupils become physically fitter or in building up their confidence and humour so that they could stand up for themselves. Having someone to talk to was very important, not just telling a teacher who would take action, but sometimes just someone to talk things over with, without any action being taken, to 'let it out'.

Young people also thought it would be a good idea to find out how other schools did things and share good practice.

bullying is going on that the school does not know about. When bullying is reported to the school they are effective in dealing with it. The Rector and Guidance staff received particular praise for their approach and supportiveness. Not all teachers were as supportive and some were perceived as disliking certain pupils.

Young people had some conflicting views on telling and confidentiality. Some young people felt that telling teachers was always the right thing to do; others felt that sometimes you should try to sort things out and get through it yourself.

Young people wanted their confidentiality protected if they told, but they also wanted teachers to

I haven't seen any really bad bullying. I've only seen it when there is someone in a group that gets left out or teased.

## Conclusion

The young people who took part in the consultation without exception took it seriously and offered valuable insights in to the question.

Overall the young people gave the impression that there is a good atmosphere in the school and not much

ensure they got the whole story from both sides. These two things might be difficult to deliver; to ensure the full story was obtained the person accused would need to know what they were accused of, which may indicate who had told. As long as not all pupils will be entirely truthful, at some point a subjective view might need to be taken on what has occurred.

It was very reassuring that in every case where young people had told about bullying the school had dealt with it satisfactorily.

The place identified as causing the most potential problems is on the school bus; some buses seem good others seem more worrying.

Young people who are different can be called names. The terms used in a derogatory way to put people down are terms such as 'gay', 'retard' and 'ginger'. This type of prejudice should be challenged.

Identifying solutions was difficult but ideas were put forward suggesting that people who may be more vulnerable to bullying could be supported somehow to 'toughen up'. There was also recognition that the people who bully may have problems too and that listening to them and helping them with their problems might help. A trustworthy listening ear, either from an older pupil or other adult was helpful in making young people feel supported.

What have you got to say about it? I think bullying is bad as is you tell the bully mate call u a gross and still bully you.

Recommendations (if agreed together by senior management team and the pupils in attendance at development planning):

1. Develop an agreed school process for incidents of bullying. Everyone involved should feel that they had a fair hearing which would of necessity involve staff taking time to get as full a story as possible. Both parties may need support as both the victim and the bully could be struggling with home or other issues. There was a perception that there can tend to be an assumption of guilt over particular individuals and a recognised process (and possibly mediation) could address this concern.
2. Prejudice in the school should be tackled at all levels, so that difference is understood and valued. Derogatory terms should be challenged and perhaps a fashion for less offensive terms (e.g. 'numpty?') could be promoted.
3. Young people could be empowered to help themselves. This might take the form of supporting the building of pupils' self-confidence, physical fitness and or witty come backs.
4. Naming trustworthy people (school nurse, youth worker?) who may be available to listen but who are not teachers and can listen supportively without immediately taking action or telling anyone else (unless there is risk of significant harm).
5. Improve the support offered by buddies to first years, especially those who do not have older siblings in the school or may otherwise be vulnerable.

## Summary of Comments

<p>What is bullying or that type of behaviour?</p>	<p>"Hitting someone - or like verbally - doing it everyday"          "It doesn't matter if it's one person or a whole bunch"          "People pick on you, call you names and don't leave you alone"          "Sometimes it is when older pupils pick on younger ones"          "Sometimes it might be a crowd of people who are sometimes in trouble (so you are a bit scared of them)"          "They pick on people who are weaker - or they gang up - they won't do it to someone who is strong"          "It might be someone who knew something about you and would use that to bully you"          "Sometimes might be to people who are different or a bit weird"          "Could be harassing phoning them up in sleeping hours and stuff like that or even cyber bullying"</p>
<p>Q1 summary</p>	<p>Is there bullying behaviour going on that the school does not know about?</p>
<p>Not much that is serious</p>	<p>"Not really if anything goes on the teachers find out about it - they always make a big thing about it - they always make sure if anyone is caught bullying there are always consequences"          "Some pushing around and calling names - not very serious"          "Is a sort of order, first years and weird people are at the bottom"          "I think it works well - it still happens but it is unreal how little it happens"          "There is a lot of people left out by themselves - at lunch and break they are by themselves walking around the school lonely"          "Bullying can be verbal or physical but in this particular school I have rarely seen it happening. I have been bullied myself and know how bad it can be."</p>
<p>What is going on:</p>	<p>"Well it just mainly happens in classrooms - teacher just ignores it tells them to be quiet - thinks they are just chatting - doesn't know it is bullying. It actually happens quite a lot in my classroom - people with ginger hair and stuff like that"          "One girl I know she clings to herself she tells her friends about bullying. She is crying it really hurts her"          "I don't know for certain but there is a bit of sort of offensive writing on the windows and people saying other people are gay when they are not - they use that word as an abuse - they think the person they are bullying is weak - it shouldn't really be happening but because the person is too scared to tell - it goes on"          "There's a group of boys who lock me and my friends out and calls us gay lords - they lock us out of the door down there"          "There is a lot more bullying in the school than teachers seem to think"          "Could be people living with it nobody knows"</p>
<p>Why someone might bully</p>	<p>"Someone who is bullied might get angry and lash out or bully someone else"          "Sometimes you might be mean in a crowd without really meaning it"          "It's always the case that people who are bullies - well you have got to have a reason to bully - you must be unhappy or something"          "Find out what is making the bully bully people - that's the bottom line - they are obviously unhappy or living up to friends expectations - they need a chance to say 'I'm a bully because'"</p>



## Summary of Comments

<p>Different resilience to 'teasing'</p>	<p>"Some people are sensitive so if something happens that people wouldn't count as bullying they think it is bullying because either they are going through a difficult time or they have had to put up with it all of their lives"</p> <p>"One of the reasons they might pick on you is that you are really skinny and can't stand up for yourself - so if they got a bit fitter. It can also happen to people who are over weight - but if you can defend yourself they will leave you alone"</p> <p>"The people who are vulnerable - the school should teach them not to be vulnerable - be witty and have a good come back"</p> <p>"Some people can just misunderstand what you say"</p> <p>"Hard for school - someone not worried and someone very worried by same behaviour"</p> <p>"If your mum and dad had just split up you might get upset."</p>
<p>The pecking order</p>	<p>"A lot of the older pupils might pick on first years for the first few months 'this is my line not yours' sort of thing"</p> <p>"There is a boy in my bus keeps taking my seat - but everyone says he has priority as he is a second year"</p> <p>"Lunch and so on mostly all right, intimidating groups of people sit in some areas but you just don't go in those areas"</p> <p>"Most people keep out of their road but when the first years come in it causes havoc until they know who not to intimidate or go near."</p>
<p>Sticking up for friends</p>	<p>"Sometimes if you are being bullied your friends bale on you - they don't want to be next "</p> <p>"I'd stick up for them"</p> <p>"Sometimes it ends up in a fight if friends stand up for you - then you end up bashing them"</p> <p>"Sometimes your friends will start on them if they have been bullying you"</p>
<p>Bus behaviour</p>	<p>"There is a group of boys who sit at the front of the bus, they call bus driver names, treat people like dirt and I complained. They did do something about it but it still carried on after a while"</p> <p>"Well it's usually the people at the back of the bus are being unfair to some people. They can pick on anyone they like."</p> <p>"I think it makes the whole bus unsafe as it disrupts the bus driver"</p> <p>"Boy on the bus makes racist comments like 'go plant a bomb'"</p> <p>"There are stupid things on the bus but that is all they are stupid - a little fight will break out but next day they are all friends it is annoying people are arguing and we have to put up with it but the next day they are friends again"</p>
<p>Relationships with teachers</p>	<p>"It depends - some teachers you get on with some you don't - but there is fairness and respect"</p> <p>"Sometimes a teacher might pick on you - not answer when you ask a question"</p> <p>"Sometimes a teacher doesn't like you and always gives you in to trouble"</p>

Q2 Summary	What does the school do well just now in tackling bullying?
Atmos- phere of school	<p>"School tries to make a good atmosphere - got a bully box - they get kids to write things when they are bullied and that and put them down - I'm not sure what happens after that."</p> <p>"Atmosphere - most of the time it is good - good relationships on the whole - getting the right support"</p> <p>"There's always people around - teachers, senior pupils- you should be able to walk around the school freely without anyone saying anything or doing anything or nitpicking - this is your school"</p> <p>"The attitudes of the people - that matters - if you have a teacher with a bad attitude"</p>
Settling in 1 <sup>st</sup> year - buddies	<p>"They are just kind of friendly - at the beginning they came everyday - but they don't come anymore"</p> <p>"I didn't even know I had one! Well he never turned up"</p> <p>"I don't think there is any point in buddies they don't even do anything"</p>
Action of Rector	<p>"If someone tells something is done- you hear people being called to the rector - he handles that quite well - if there has been a fight he involves the police and that - was a group - ages ago - it was taken seriously and that was good."</p> <p>"The headmaster likes kids and kids get on well with them."</p>
Telling someone	<p>"You don't grass sometimes because people who bully you know it has got to you and they bully you more"</p> <p>"Yes definitely - I always tell - they do sort it out. I should tell the next time."</p> <p>"It's happened to me personally - I told guidance about it and it stopped that was the last time they did it and we are sort of friends now - the school made her understand what she did and said was not acceptable - 'would you like to be in her shoes' - then it stopped."</p> <p>"I think some people don't tell- they are scared of the bully"</p> <p>"I think people should make up their own minds who they tell - if they tell their friends not to tell they should not tell - should be able to tell adult - if they want to- if it gets out of hand - physical hurt -- I might tell my mum to tell their mum."</p> <p>"I wouldn't really tell if it was me I would stick up for myself- there is no point telling it will get worse -better just to deal with it there and then."</p> <p>"I don't think I'd tell. I'd maybe tell my brother - or a friend"</p> <p>"It is all right to tell the teacher but we are now getting to an age where it is a bit weird to tell. They should sort it out themselves"</p> <p>"Yes it is good but the rector has to not tell who has grassed someone up"</p>
Detention Suspend- sion	<p>"Detention is quite good, staying in at lunch - they sit and do homework- or punishment. Some people just boast about it though"</p> <p>"Some punishments are good but just don't work with the pupils who don't take it seriously"</p> <p>"Depends how serious it is - they will be put on detention for a while if it is serious they get suspended - it is effective - no one wants to be sitting in at lunch time"</p> <p>"This school suspends bullies"</p>

Q 3 Summary	What could be better?
Find out the truth	<p>"Sometimes people jump to conclusions. They don't really go in to depth too much. They should try to find out what happened - not just that incident but should try and find out about everything."</p> <p>"Well there is the thing that if you hit back they'll just take you to SMT and they will always believe the older one as they are older than us."</p> <p>"If you have a bad reputation already they will believe the other person"</p> <p>"Go more into the depth of it in the past - as soon as there is one accusation they are adamant that it has been you - they don't look at what has gone before"</p> <p>"Need to do more listening "</p>
Guidance	<p>"If you go to guidance and tell them you don't hear if they have done anything - they should tell you if they have done something"</p> <p>Message to guidance teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Don't say it will be confidential if you won't keep it confidential"</li> <li>• "Whoever listens - listen to both sides"</li> </ul> <p>"If someone owns up and has problems - less punishment"</p>
Learning about difference	<p>"Well no I don't have any ideas but you shouldn't judge each other just by looking at them - like red haired people just because well they are red haired. I have experienced a lot of bullying in my time because I acted differently to them."</p> <p>Is there something we could do to help people understand about difference?</p> <p>"They should try to get to know the person and see that they are not who they think they are"</p> <p>Should we explain difference and help them understand in life skills or something?</p> <p>"Something like that would help I'd like to see more people understand like if someone was picked on for their culture - they need to understand their culture or the colour of their skin - or if someone has some sort of mental disability they need to understand this that they are not mad or something. Yes that would help it might reduce the bullying."</p>
Help you stand up for yourself	<p>"They could teach you how to defend yourself - they could teach boxing - take it out on a punch bag if you are angry - if you stand up for yourself - then they won't bully more"</p> <p>"The people who are vulnerable, the school should teach them not to be vulnerable, teach them good come backs - be witty and have a good come back."</p> <p>"Usually it helps if you have a sense of humour - you just be sarcastic and put up with it - but there are people who don't know how to take a joke"</p> <p>"My parents had an idea when I was being bullied at primary - my parents got me a small punch bag and I could punch that all day long."</p> <p>"Make people more confident - teachers should make them more confident - people could be shy their whole lives - it is better not to be shy. Once they do</p>

Letting it out	<p>"You can grin it off in the day you can tell someone at home - they don't do anything but it just feels better to tell"</p> <p>"Talk to your dog"</p> <p>"You could write it in your diary if you had that"</p> <p>"Or write a letter and don't post it"</p> <p>"Getting your feelings out is important"</p> <p>"I sometimes tell the youth worker - she doesn't do anything but it takes some of the weight off your shoulders"</p>
Buddy System	<p>"We got these like buddy people but they don't come to us much now - it would be good if we had a permanent one of them - for the whole of first year - maybe once a week at registration"</p> <p>"I think it's quite good if you are being picked on -if you can tell tons of older people and they come along to people who are picking on you - they don't know who you know and they stop doing it"</p>
Ideas on punishment	<p>"If you get suspended more than once - should be a number of times that you get expelled after"</p> <p>"Should get detention or yellow slips"</p> <p>"Get a month's detention"</p> <p>"Get banned from the bus if you've done anything wrong"</p> <p>"Suspend people for more days and give them homework"</p> <p>"Should get a punishment for bullying but if you own up why you were bullying I don't think you should get a punishment - maybe you are getting domestic abuse at home that has a big part to play in it."</p>
Increase supervision	<p>"Make more teachers watch over the bully"</p> <p>"CCTV cameras on the bus"</p>
Share good practice	<p>"Could speak to other schools share ideas- for best solution - best five ideas"</p>
Mediation	<p>"Should bring two people together to settle the arguments"</p>