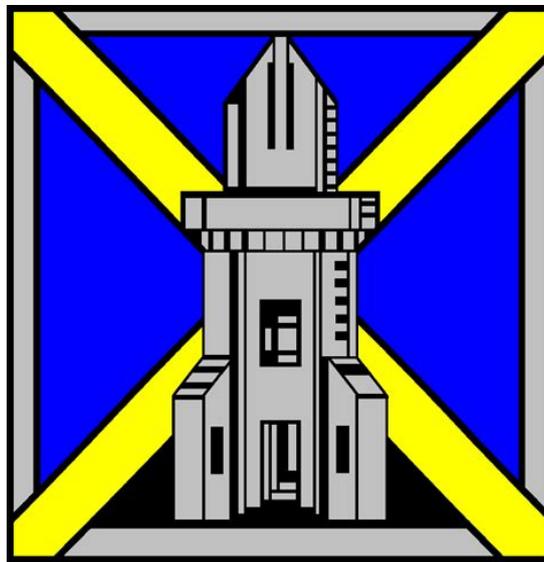


Mearns Academy

Policies and Procedures



Anti-Bullying

Article 28 "Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights."

Introduction

All children and young people have an entitlement to learn in an environment in which they feel valued, respected and safe and free from all forms of abuse, bullying or discrimination.

This policy sets out Mearns Academy anti-bullying policy within the context of: **'Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People'**

This policy also reflects the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child, where health and wellbeing is a central aspect of the curriculum and is the responsibility of all staff.

What do we mean by bullying?

There are many different definitions about what constitutes bullying, but it is not helpful to define bullying in terms of behaviour.

Bullying is behaviour **and** impact – never one on its own. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. It is behaviour, actions or attitudes that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out.

This can include: Being called names, teased, put down or threatened; Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked; Having belongings taken or damaged; Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you; Receiving abusive messages electronically; Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves; Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be.

This can harm people physically or emotionally. This is not an exhaustive list and it is important to consider impact, intent and persistence when defining bullying behaviour.

When talking about bullying, it is important **not** to label children and young people as **"bullies" or "victims"**. Labels can stick for life and can isolate a child, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour. Reference should be made instead to **"those experiencing bullying behaviour" / "those displaying bullying behaviour"**.

All children and young people need help to understand why bullying behaviour is wrong in order that they can change it. Within Mearns Academy we will endeavour to use **restorative approaches** to support all staff and young people.

In some cases, children or young people may not be aware that they are displaying bullying behaviour. They perhaps model the behaviour of adults or other children and young people. They may not understand that it is wrong because they have never been taught otherwise. **It can be the case that one child says something unpleasant to another, but this is not always a case of bullying behaviour.**

Why do those displaying bullying behaviour do what they do?

The real motivation is likely to be the wish to gain power or respect or take out one's frustrations on others. The need to do this through bullying may arise from a number of factors. They may be someone who:

- feels inadequate in some way;
- is unpopular or insecure (but some may be quite secure);
- is underachieving academically (but some may be quite able);
- is himself/herself the victim of bullying behaviour;
- has ASN and may struggle with their understanding of social norms and what is appropriate behaviour.

How can we recognise those experiencing bullying behaviour?

Anyone at some time may experience bullying behaviour. However, there are children who seem more vulnerable. This may be because they seem different in some way.

- are different in appearance;
- are physically different (smaller, have a disability, etc.);
- are different in speech;
- are different in background;
- over-react (in some entertaining way);
- are anxious or nervous;
- have low self-esteem;
- are perceived as belonging to a different group -
 - racial
 - ethnic
 - academic ('swot')
 - social ('snob')
 - or have any other additional support needs.

However, there are many children in such categories who do not experience bullying behaviour.

What can the school do to tackle bullying?

An anti-bullying policy must address both prevention and response.

In this there will be a role for:

- Teaching Staff
- Support Staff
- Pupil Support Workers
- Guidance Team
- Senior Leadership Team

It will involve:

- the ethos of the school;
- the curriculum;
- extra-curricular and enrichment activities;
- school code of conduct;
- communication with parents etc.
- restorative approaches



What can we do to prevent bullying behaviour?

The school can address the prevention of bullying behaviour in a number of ways.

Ethos

At Mearns we aim to ensure:

- the development in school of a positive and caring ethos in which all members of the school community are valued and supported as individuals
- opportunities are created for parents and others in the wider community to be involved in the life of the school and the programme for improvement
- that thorough and ongoing evaluation leads to improvements in the quality of service we provide
- that all members of the school community are encouraged to achieve all they can and that such achievements are recognised and valued.

Our values are reinforced in a number of ways, including:

- Involvement of Pupil Council in updating our values and sharing concerns
- Prefect system
- Restorative approaches and solution-focused approaches
- Our code of conduct Be Respectful, Be Responsible & Be Safe
- Visual reminders such as posters or school screen displays
- Discussion as part of PSE
- Featuring bullying at school assemblies

What we do about the child who is displaying bullying behaviour?

Children who are displaying bullying behaviour will need help and support to help identify the feelings that cause them to act this way and develop strategies to cope with these feelings differently. All behaviour is communication. It may well be that the bullying behaviour of the child may stem from an unmet need it may well be that a plan would be appropriate.

How do we respond to bullying behaviour?

When an incident of bullying behaviour is reported the following procedure should be followed.

1. Record the Incident
2. Speak to the individuals involved having honest dialogue
3. Speak to parents
4. Utilise Restorative approaches
5. Monitor the situation
6. Review and increase response accordingly

Communication and Publicity

The school has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that pupils and parents are aware of the policy.
- Ensure that they know what to do if the problem arises.
- Ensure that they know what steps the school takes to prevent bullying behaviour.
- Help tackle the problem by letting pupils and parents know how they can contribute.

Publicity is pursued by the following means:

- Assembly
- Mearns Academy Parent Council
- School Website
- Other forms of social media

We aim to be a school community recognised as a centre of excellence for learning, teaching and the care and welfare of all who learn and work here. In our day to day work we exhibit the values of fairness, honesty, respect, working together and communication.
