

Positive Relationships: Anti-bullying policy

Why do we have an anti-bullying policy?

Our school vision is:

Dalkeith High School: Enabling all young people to succeed in a respectful, inclusive and stimulating environment.

For this to be a reality, we need to work together to ensure that all young people are safe in school and are able to get support if things go wrong.

Scotland's national anti-bullying charity, **respectme**, has worked with the Scottish Government to produce a guide called *Respect for All* which contains up to date advice on recognising and dealing with bullying behaviours. All schools are expected to have an anti-bullying policy that takes account of this advice.

You can read about *Respect for All* here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying-scotlands-children-young-people/>

According to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*, every child and young person has the right to an education, and a right to feel safe. These rights can be disrupted when a person experiences bullying behaviour. Therefore, all adults in school have a responsibility to ensure that bullying behaviour is recognised, challenged, and dealt with appropriately.

You can read about the UNCRC here:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

We don't all have to be friends with each other, and we don't all even have to like each other; but we do need to work together respectfully and share space in a safe way.

How do we encourage a safe learning environment in our school?

- Every pupil is a member of a school House (Buccleuch, Dalhousie, Lothian or Melville) and each House has an assigned Pupil Support Leader (PSL) and House Head who get to know pupils well
- Every member of staff helps to ensure good order in the school by being visible in corridors and social areas, greeting pupils at the start of lessons, dealing with any issues in class promptly, and dismissing classes in an orderly fashion
- Many of our learners, including our Pupil Leadership Team and Peer Supporters, act as positive role models and demonstrate what we expect from all in our school community
- Positive relationships across the school are supported by restorative practices, which focus on recognising where things have gone wrong, and working together to put them right

What is bullying behaviour?

Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out and it can happen face to face and online.

Bullying can include one or more of the following behaviours:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked, having objects thrown
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out, or having rumours spread about you
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images
- Behaviour which makes people feel they are not in control of themselves
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be

Most people think of bullying as being something that happens repeatedly, or over a long period of time. However, a one-off incident can also be described as bullying. This is because the negative impact of the incident might last a long time.

People experiencing bullying can lose what is called their 'agency'; their sense that they are in control of themselves and their situation. This can make them feel anxious and stressed, which might impact on their learning.

Is bullying against the law?

There is no legal definition of bullying, so bullying itself is not a crime. However, there are a number of existing laws which can be used to prosecute those involved if this is seen as the best course of action. There are laws to respond to e.g. physical assault, sharing images online without consent, and bullying based on prejudice (sometimes known as 'hate crime').

What should pupils do if they feel they are being bullied?

There are lots of ways to respond to dealing with bullying behaviour. Some people might be confident enough to shrug it off. Some might have friends they can rely on to support them. Some will want to talk to the other people involved and try to sort it out. There are no right or wrong answers and, if you're experiencing bullying behaviour, it's important that you get the chance to share your thoughts on what should happen next.

We would recommend talking through the situation with a trusted adult in school or at home and thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of different courses of action.

What should pupils do if they think someone is being bullied?

The important thing is not to be a bystander. Not everyone will feel comfortable getting involved at the time, but it's important that anyone who witnesses bullying

behaviour brings it to the attention of someone who can help. This might be a teacher, another adult in the school, or a pupil.

How will the school respond to allegations of bullying?

Staff will take the time to listen to the concerns of pupils and to investigate any possible incidents of bullying. The next steps will depend on the nature of the bullying behaviour and on the views of the person experiencing it.

Using restorative approaches, we would expect the person responsible for bullying behaviour to acknowledge wrongdoing, consider the harm they have done, and engage in trying to repair relationships when possible.

In some cases, where there has been repeated bullying behaviour or a particularly serious single incident, the school will make use of formal disciplinary procedures and involve parents/carers as appropriate to ensure everyone is working together to deal with the situation.

Where it seems that a crime may have been committed, we involve our community police officer to advise those engaging in bullying behaviour and to take action as appropriate.

When a bullying incident has been identified, it will be recorded on SEEMiS, the online management tool, in order to help us identify any patterns or particular areas of concern.

Where can I find out more?

The link below takes you to useful resources for young people and parents/carers:

<https://respectme.org.uk/>

You can also find copies of our Positive Relationships and Restorative Practices policies on the school website:

<http://dalkeith.mgfl.net/positive-relationships-in-the-classroom/>

<http://dalkeith.mgfl.net/restorative-practice/>