

GRANGE ACADEMY

Anti Bullying Policy

Grange Academy's Values and Beliefs

All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. The school's values are: respect, responsibility, resilience, excellence and ambition. In Grange Academy we strive to create a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based on these shared values across the school community. Staff and pupils who feel happy and safe in school are more likely to be successful and confident learners & contribute effectively so they are able to reach their full potential.

At Grange Academy, we strive to ensure that we treat all service users, staff and volunteers with respect and provide a positive and safe space to access services and work in. We are aware that there may be additional barriers to accessing support for people who identify as having a protected characteristic. These are outlined in the Equality Act (2010):

- Age
- Disability
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership status

In addition to these, Grange Academy also recognises that care experienced children, young carers, non-binary people, people with English as an additional language and low socio economic status may also experience disadvantage, prejudice and discrimination and we will endeavour to address this.

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying and discrimination as these are never acceptable. It is an abuse of power and relationships and at Grange Academy we actively foster good relations between diverse groups and people.

This policy is written for Grange Academy but embraces the wider East Ayrshire Council's "*Education, Diversity, Anti-bullying and Equality Policy and Procedure.*"

Action against discrimination

We can do something voluntarily to help people with a protected characteristic. This is called 'positive action'.

Taking positive action is legal if people with a protected characteristic:

- are at a disadvantage
- have particular needs
- are under-represented in an activity or type of work
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- At Grange Academy we also expand these protected characteristics to include pupils undergoing gender transition and transgender identities in general. In addition, our anti-bullying policy is designed to ensure and protect the equality of those of particular faith groups, Care experienced Children, Young Carers and children and young people from poor socio, economic backgrounds.

Bullying

Bullying is an abuse of power that is defined by its effects. Bullying behaviour can harm people physically and/or emotionally. Although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, through actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these.

People who are bullied are upset by something someone else has said or done to them or about them. They are likely to fear that this will happen again and feel powerless to stop it. Bullying is a breach of children's rights under several articles from the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Cyber-bullying is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through emails, texts or social network websites.

Bullying behaviour takes many forms, for example:

- racist abuse
- sexist abuse
- harassment
- homophobia
- biphobia
- transphobia
- sectarianism
- sending abusive emails, text messages or making abusive comments on social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp or Snapchat)
- assault
- forcing people to do things against their will (e.g. stealing)
- damaging or stealing property
- malicious notes or gossip

- teasing, cold shouldering/social isolation and being 'picked on'
- personal remarks about body image/appearance, disabilities, learning needs, family or social background
- any other behaviour which makes the victim or other people around them feel frightened, unhappy or isolated.

Why do some people become involved in bullying behaviour?

The reasons why pupils may get involved in bullying behaviour are many. Some examples include:

- to impress or establish leadership amongst a peer group
- to create a group identity by attacking an outsider
- pressure to conform – punishing non-conformity
- lack of social skills
- jealousy
- have been bullied themselves
- family and/or social problems
- lack of education or understanding of the impact of bullying

Those who carry out bullying actions or are at the receiving end may display certain behaviours, for example:

- deterioration of work
- faked illness
- erratic attendance
- low self esteem
- loss or lack of self respect
- isolation
- desire to remain with adults
- uncharacteristic behaviour or acting out to impress, e.g. showing off or aggressive behaviour

The Prevention of Bullying and discrimination

The Head Teacher is responsible for introducing and implementing this policy at Grange Academy. However, all staff, pupils and parents have an active part to play in the development and maintenance of the policy and in its success.

We are proactive at Grange Academy and there are many things that we do within the school to promote positive relationships. Bullying as a topic is covered extensively in PSE within the broad general education (S1-3) to ensure pupils are familiar with the school policy. We teach about rights and responsibilities and treating others with respect.

We begin our work during the primary – secondary transition. By the time pupils begin their education here they are aware of what we expect of them in terms of respect and how we treat one another.

During the life of every pupil at Grange Academy the stress on mutual respect, trust, equality, and fostering positive relationships is ongoing:

- There are various avenues within the school curriculum for the pupils to focus on and discuss issues connected to relationships and bullying. For example, within Personal and Social Education (PSE) not only is the issue of bullying addressed but also how to equip pupils with strategies and skills to avoid getting involved in bullying behaviour, and, what to do if they receive bullying. Further, with the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence we at Grange Academy will be working towards ensuring our curriculum reflects and values the diversity of the school and the local community. We have already done much work in this area in our approaches to the celebration of the cultural diversity at the school.
- Themed assemblies and events for pupils, with input from many different agencies, to target specific issues - for example, a focus on cyberbullying by our Campus Police officer.
- Pupil Council: Grange Academy has representatives from each House on the Pupil Council (Bruce, Douglas, Graham and Hamilton) and this forum is used by pupils to raise concerns and suggest solutions. Pupil House Captains also regularly report concerns from their peers during focus group meetings.
- LGBT Champions Group: In 2022 we introduced our LGBT Champions Group, consisting of staff and pupils. This group links directly with the SLT and the Pupil Council, supported by staff at LGBT Youth Scotland. Its focusses on working towards achieving the LGBT Charter for Schools via an examination of current approaches to promoting equality for LGBT pupils and staff at Grange Academy and making the school a safe and accepting place to be for LGBT people. One of the areas for development this year is introducing an LGBT Club for pupils, supported by staff that will provide a safe place for pupils to discuss LGBT issues and will provide guidance to the school on how best to promote equality and further prevent bullying behaviour. Specialist awareness training for staff has also been arranged via LGBT Youth Scotland.
- We have a staff team who monitor the school and playground area daily at breaks and lunchtimes. If they come across any issues then these are passed immediately to the Pupil Support Team or Senior Leadership Team.
- The Pupil Support Team can put pupils in touch with a wide variety of organisations and agencies that can offer support, advice and counselling, including LGBT Youth Scotland and

The Exchange. We have a S6 Buddy system within the school that gives support and guidance to pupils by our senior pupils.

- We give members of staff opportunities to take part in anti-bullying training that is relevant and up to date, delivered by partner agencies like LGBT Youth Scotland.
- We have also introduced the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) initiative, with staff and senior pupils developing their knowledge of and confidence in positive and safe intervention as bystanders to enhance our culture of inclusion and diversity at the school. The principles of this initiative overlap with those of our LGBT Champions Group.
- In 2023 we launched “Ready to Learn” which gives pupils access to their guidance teacher and house head every morning in the street area period 1 without appointment. Pupils can discuss concerns from the day before or the day ahead with staff so that supports can be put in place before they begin their learning.
- Staff can utilise the Seemis referral system to submit wellbeing referrals to guidance staff. This quick, efficient, information sharing system ensures bullying can be reported, recorded and stored confidentially and used to support victims and perpetrators.

What we do when bullying occurs

A child may not be engaging consciously in bullying behaviour, but its impact is still felt and this is taken seriously. The level of awareness of a child who is bullying is a significant factor in how it is dealt with. Pupils who experience bullying or discrimination will be listened to and supported. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour or discrimination will be treated fairly and consistently using a range of measures.

Dealing with Bullying

Pupils are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying/inequality and suspected incidents that other pupils may be afraid to report. When incidents happen in class, these should be reported in the first instance to staff in the department who can then escalate it up to the Principal Teacher of the department or faculty then, the Pupil Support Team. Issues out with class, both in and out with school time, should be reported to the Pupil Support Team.
- Support each other and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

Teachers are expected to:

- Treat all allegations seriously, carry out a brief, initial investigation of any allegation of bullying/inequality and report this to the Pupil Support Team or Senior Leadership Team.
- Serious incidents should be referred using the Seemis referral system which includes a detailed chronology of the events which took place, which is then referred to the Principal Teacher of the Department then to the relevant Pupil Support teacher before finally the Senior Leadership House Head.
- Be vigilant to interactions in class which they suspect are of a bullying nature and provide ongoing support to victims.

Parents can help by:

- Supporting our anti-bullying/equalities procedures.
- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community.
- Discussing with their child's Pupil Support teacher any concerns that their child may be experiencing.
- Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of school.
- Speaking to the HT if their concerns are serious and ongoing.
- Monitoring their child's social media usage and ensuring that content they are accessing is age and stage appropriate.
- We appreciate that some pupils may find it difficult to report bullying issues but pupils are encouraged to speak out if they feel that they or their friends are at the receiving end of this type of behaviour. If pupils witness it they must be encouraged to report it as this gives a clear message about the positive role bystanders can have in terms of reducing the bullying which takes place as there is an ethos of zero tolerance; these are the principles of the MVP programme and are promoted as part of this initiative. Parents/carers are also encouraged to contact their child's Pupil Support teacher in the first instance.
- We ask that pupils keep copies of any threatening or abusive notes or emails/threads, and don't delete any abusive text messages/threads. This is evidence.
- Incidents of bullying may happen out of school grounds and out of school hours but their impact can easily have an impact on pupils in school and this means it becomes an issue for staff to deal with.
- In relation to the latter point, we urge parents & guardians to contact the police if they feel an incident out of school or at the weekend merits legal attention. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's Pupil Support teacher if they have concerns or have information to pass on about out of school incidents. This allows Grange Academy staff to be better prepared and thus hopefully pre-empt possible situations.

What happens if a bullying incident is brought to the attention of staff?

- In a class a pupil may bring an incident to the teacher's attention or the teacher witnesses an incident. In general, low level incidents can usually be dealt with in the classroom setting. If a high level incident occurs then the offending pupil will be reported to the Principal Teacher of the department or Pupil Support Teacher either through phonecall, email or Seemis referral. The middle manager will then further investigate and gather evidence. The outcome of this will result in a variety of possible supports and sanctions being implemented (these will be explained below). Further, if the incident is found to be one of bullying of a protected groups outlined within the Equality Act (2010) then it will be recorded, on Seemis, within the Bullying and Equalities tab which will create a permanent record of the event.

*low level and high level incidents are subjective and based largely on the perception of the victim. All bullying incidents are taken seriously and fully investigated.

An allegation of bullying is serious and to ensure we do our job properly we have to gather evidence, primarily in the form of speaking to witnesses. With this evidence we can then take actions to deal with the pupils concerned and keep staff and parents & guardians informed.

A pupil who has been on the receiving end of bullying behaviour needs support. There are a number of strategies we use at Grange Academy:

- Staff being vigilant between any interactions with the pupil and perceived threats.
- One-to-one meeting(s) with their Pupil Support teacher or with The Exchange counselling service.
- Use peer support strategies and if the pupil wants it we can arrange a meeting with the pupil(s) who carried out the bullying behaviour for a restorative meeting.
- involvement of parent/guardian – this includes keeping them informed about what the school is doing to support their child but also what actions Grange Academy is taking with the pupil(s) who committed the bullying offence and the involvement of their parents in this process.
- We will talk to pupils who have experienced prejudice based bullying. This could include criteria outlined within the Equality Act (2010) or any characteristic unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance.
- We will ensure that any steps to resolve bullying includes them. There will be a sensitive approach to ensure that any disclosure does not 'out' the pupil to others.
- Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this their sense of 'agency'. Prejudice-based bullying is bullying behaviour motivated by prejudice, or 'perceived' to be motivated by prejudice.

Children and young people do not necessarily have to be gay, lesbian or bisexual themselves to experience 'homophobic bullying'. This type of bullying may be directed towards young people perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual young people; those that do not conform to gender norms and/or expectations; and those who have gay friends or family. Children with LGBT parents may also experience homophobic bullying. Although homophobic bullying is distinct from sexist and transphobic bullying, it is related to these forms of bullying through underlying sexist attitudes.

The term 'transgender' is an 'umbrella term' for those whose 'gender identity' or expression differs in some way from the gender that was assigned to them at birth. Gender identity reflects an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, or an identity between or outside the two.

Transgender people face significant societal prejudice, largely because they are perceived as not conforming to gender stereotypes, expectations and norms. As a result, transgender or gender 'variant' children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying. This can manifest in many ways, including transphobic and homophobic name calling or deliberately mis-gendering them. An individual may also experience transphobic bullying as a result of a perception that a parent, relative or other significant figure is transgender.

- A referral for further support from Young Person's Mentor, School Nurse service, Exchange Counselling or any other relevant partner agency.
- A pupil who has carried out bullying behaviour *ALSO* needs support. This may raise questions of 'why' as they will be seen as the pupil in the 'wrong'. Support is not the school being soft on bullying; it is in fact the common sense approach to support a pupil to see how their behaviour was unacceptable and to modify it for the better. It has to be stressed that those who commit bullying offences have often been on the receiving end of these. If a pupil has misbehaved sanctions will apply, (e.g. assault can lead to exclusion), but this is only part of the process.

Our work with pupils who bully others

- We interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately.
- We listen to their version of events and talk to any witnesses.
- We reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect it to stop.
- We seek a commitment to this end.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know they are being bullied.
- We consider sanctions available to us within the school.
- We advise those involved that the situation will continue to be monitored to check that it has not started up again.
- We contact the parents of all parties to make sure they know about the bullying – this happens at an early stage.
- If the bullying is in relation to homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying we will deal with this sensitively and ensure that we do not 'out' a pupil without their consent.

- We offer support to those who have been carrying out the bullying to ascertain what type of support they need to ensure that it does stop.

Bullying outside the school premises

We know that bullying can occur outside the school gates, in the evenings and at weekends. It can be via mobile phones, social network sites and through online gaming. The bullying may be done by pupils (and sometimes parents) from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent tells us of bullying off the school premises we will:

- Talk to the pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.
- Talk to the Head Teacher of the other school whose pupils are allegedly bullying.
- Consider additional support, (e.g. police involvement and Child Protection procedures).

Planning

We examine and use all available information to ensure that the promotion of equality and anti-bullying issues are contained within our development plans.

Equality Impact Analysis

When reviewing or creating any new policies or services within our school, we give due regard to all protected groups and consider whether any individual or group might require further support. This policy has been updated in 2023 to reflect the guidance provided to the school by LGBT Youth Scotland and as part of the school's ongoing work towards the LGBT Schools Charter. The Pupil Support and Senior Leadership staff will maintain a record of all proven incidents of bullying and of the action taken. This information can be used to inform pupils, staff and parents/guardians about trends of bullying and thus allow the school to be better informed and help plan future strategies. The policy will be reviewed regularly and updated accordingly. As part of our work towards the LGBT Charter, in 2023 we conducted a baseline assessment of our approaches to promoting equality for LGBT pupils and staff at the school; we will return to this on annual basis so as to evaluate the impact of our approaches and to seek to further improve our approaches.

Involvement

We actively encourage all our young people to participate in school and extracurricular activities and we take positive action to make sure that the diverse school population is represented in activities, surveys and our pupil council. The LGBT Champions Group is central to this approach.

Gathering and Monitoring information

We are committed to developing measures for monitoring the achievements of our care experienced and disabled pupils.

We examine our annual record of incidents and survey information.

We use information from surveys of pupils' views and opinions.

We take active steps to ensure all data held on pupils' disabilities, ethnicity, caring and looked-after status is accurate and regularly reviewed.

Resources

Here are some useful resources for young people, parents and staff:

www.respectme.org.uk

<https://lgbtyouth.org.uk/get-support/>

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/inclusionandequality/challengingsectarianism/resources/index.asp>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/young-futures/lgbtq-support>

Child Protection Guidelines – located on the school server in the staff information section

