Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

"In order to thrive and achieve their full potential, children and young people need learning environments which are safe, nurturing, respectful and free from fear, abuse and discrimination." (Scottish Government, 2017)

In Barrhead High School we strive to create an ethos where the care and welfare of all our young people is paramount. We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying and discrimination. Through policy and practice we will develop the capacity to respond to any form of prejudice based bullying, recognising the importance of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act (2010):
Age, Disability, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual orientation, Gender Reassignment, Race, Pregnancy and Maternity or Marriage and Civil Partnership status.

In addition to these, Barrhead High School also recognises that care experienced children, young carers, young people undergoing gender transition, transgender people (inc. non-binary), individuals with English as a second language and those in lower SIMD areas may also experience disadvantage, prejudice and discrimination and we will endeavour to address this.

At the heart of this policy is the recognition of the need for open communication and the involvement of the whole school community – young people, parents, teachers, support staff and partner agencies - in dealing with the issue of bullying behaviour.

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including partners, visitors and students on placement), children and young people and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young people
- ERC Standard Circulars including (8a) Bullying and Anti-Bullying, (12) Inclusion, Safe use of technology (69)

What do we mean by bullying behaviour?

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, Instagram or Snapchat), assault, forcing people to do things against their will, damaging or stealing property, malicious notes or gossip, teasing, cold shouldering/social isolation and being 'picked on', personal remarks made about body image/appearance, disabilities, learning needs, family or social background as well as any other behaviour which makes the victim or other people around them feel frightened, unhappy or isolated.

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. Prejudice-based bullying is bullying behaviour motivated by prejudice, or 'perceived' to be motivated by prejudice, and can be based on any characteristic unique to a person's identity or circumstance.

Bullying based on sexual orientation is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people. It is also commonly referred to as 'homophobic bullying' but can also be expanded to recognise the specific experiences of bisexual young people using the term 'biphobic bullying'. 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.

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 non-binary young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying. This can manifest in many ways, including 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.

When is it not bullying behaviour?

Children and young people falling out or having disagreements is a normal part of growing up and building relationships. Accidental bumps and knocks, not liking someone or expressing unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others can be painful or discomforting. It is important that they have opportunities to discuss how they feel and to develop resilience and emotional literacy in managing their relationships. Early intervention and prevention including the embedding of whole school relational approaches are key elements of an approach focused on ensuring we get it right for all of our children and young people.

Involvement in bullying behaviour

The reasons why young people 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
- 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
- isolating themselves from others
- desire to remain with adults
- out of character behaviour(s) or acting out to impress peers.

The Prevention of Bullying and Discrimination

The Head Teacher (HT) is responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy at Barrhead High School. However, all staff, young people and parents have an active part to play in the development and maintenance of the policy.

There is a whole school approach in which children and adults are proactive in creating an environment where bullying is not tolerated. Barrhead High School is a Rights Respecting Gold Accredited school meaning that the Rights of the Child are at the forefront of our everyday practice.

- There are various avenues within the school curriculum for the young people to focus on and discuss issues connected to relationships and bullying. Within the PSHE programme for S1 – S4 the following themes are looked at:

S1	S2	S3	S4
o Equalities/LGBT o Online Safety o Rights & Responsibilities o Family & Nurture	o Social Media o Disability o Anti-Bullying o Love Simon – Equalities o LGBT Week o Respecting our Community o Philadelphia	o I am Me – Equalities o Online Safety o Bullying Behaviour o Mean Girls – bullying behaviour/equality o Mental Health (eating disorders, body image and social media) o Islamophobia	o Exploited (CEOP) o Stonewall

- Each year, there are themed assemblies and events for pupils to raise awareness of specific issues, e.g. Campus PC – social media, Community Learning and

Development – relationships/parenting programme, LGBT History Month supported by TIE Campaign and LGBT Youth Scotland.

- Our Student Council is an active voice in the school to campaign for change. They have created are 4 branches focusing on – Health and Wellbeing, Wider Equalities, Rights Respecting, Eco and Learning and Teaching. There are representatives from all year groups and each form their own action plans for the sessions ahead.
- Our LGBT Equalities Group, consists of young people from S1-S6. This group links directly with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and is now a branch of the Student Council. We have links with local authority groups as well as being supported by staff at LGBT Youth Scotland. The focus of the group is to work towards promoting equality for LGBT pupils and staff at Barrhead High School and making the school a safe and accepting place to be for all.

- We have a staff team who monitor young people daily at breaks and lunchtimes. If they come across any behavioural/bullying or other issues, then these are passed immediately to the Pastoral or SLT.

- The Pastoral team and Year Group Heads can sign post young people to a wide variety of organisations and agencies that can offer support, advice and counselling.

- Young people in Barrhead High School have the opportunity to benefit from an in school pupil counsellor who they can access at any time.

- All staff have the opportunity to access relevant and appropriate CLPL to further develop their understanding of bullying behaviour and how to support young people.

- Senior pupils have the opportunity to undertake the Mentors in Violence Prevention training. Following on from this training, the MVP Mentors share their knowledge of and confidence in positive and safe intervention as bystanders to enhance our culture of inclusion and diversity at the school with junior pupils.

Dealing with Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

A young person 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. Young people who experience bullying or discrimination will be listened to and supported. Young people who engage in bullying behaviour or discrimination will be treated fairly and consistently using a range of measures.

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 the young people involved. With this evidence we can then take actions to deal with the young people concerned and keep staff and parents and carers informed.

Young people are expected to:
- Report all incidents of bullying/inequality and suspected incidents that other pupils may be afraid to report. They should do this in the first instance to their classroom teacher or Pastoral teacher.
- Share any threatening or abusive notes or messages/threads with their Year Group Head.
- 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 and to investigate any allegation of bullying/inequality witnessed. All incidents should be reported to the Pastoral teacher or Year Group Head.
- Low level incidents should usually be dealt with in the classroom setting. If a situation is more serious, e.g. racism or homo/bi/transphobia or assault then the offending young person will be sent to the Pastoral, PT/SLT for further investigation.
- The incident will be logged in the Bullying and Equalities screen on SEEMIS; the report will describe the incident and action/outcome. Incidents logged as "Being Addressed", "Not Resolved" or "Resolved" will be confirmed incidents. Bullying incidents marked as "unfounded" will be unconfirmed. At the end of each term, ERC will collate incidents recorded for statistical information only – children are not named in this record.

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 Year Head or Pastoral 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.
- Monitor use of social media.

The findings of any investigation should be reported back to the young person and their parent/carer and, where appropriate, strategies towards a positive resolution for all stakeholders should be agreed upon.

Young people who are exhibiting bullying behaviour will also be supported to:
- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people
- Repair relationships

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Equality Coordinator. All stakeholders should be part of the consultation process. We will seek the views of pupils about bullying behaviour and ensure our approaches are effective through questionnaires or focus groups.

Article 2: The right to protection against discrimination.
Article 12: The right to respect the views of the child.