

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY: GUIDELINES FOR PUPILS



These Anti-Bullying Guidelines provide guidance to the pupils, staff and parents/carers of Mearns Castle High school on preventing, responding to and reducing bullying behaviour.

The aim of this policy is to stop bullying behaviour and encourages everyone to work towards ensuring a bullying free environment. Mearns Castle High School is strongly opposed to bullying and is committed to ensuring that all pupils feel safe and respected. The responsibility for achieving this aim lies with every member of the school community, i.e. all staff, pupils and parents.

What is bullying behaviour?

Bullying is a misuse of power. Bullying is the wilful desire to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone else. The victim is subjected over a period to repeated acts of aggression, which may involve physical or verbal attacks, name-calling, malicious gossip, exclusion, damage to or theft of property, or coercion into acts, which he, she or they does not wish to do. Bullying may also occur with no conscious desire to hurt, when the bully does not realise that what they say or do constitutes bullying. The bully may also be attempting to be humorous at the expense of another pupil.

As “Respect Me” states- 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”.

Bullying behaviour includes:

- Writing something offensive about someone, using graffiti, notes, letters, text messages, e-mails and social media.
- Taking and/or sending offensive or humiliating photographs.
- Verbally abusing someone by insulting him, her and them- name-calling, making threats, spreading malicious rumours, using sarcasm.
- Physically hurting someone by hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, spitting, tripping up, etc.
- Damaging or hiding personal property such as books and clothing.
- Excluding someone by making sure, they are isolated from their friends and peers.
- Humiliating someone because they are seen to be “different”, e.g. they are individual in their style of dress, come from a different culture or religious background, have a different set of values, etc.
- Laughing at/mockingly someone, even if you feel there is something which is funny – if it could embarrass or upset them, it is bullying behaviour
- Racist behaviour such as name-calling, making racist jokes, offensive mimicry, etc.
- Making comments of a sexual nature including those about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty.

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- Homophobic and transphobic behaviour, whether through the derogatory use of the spoken word (e.g. name-calling, making jokes or using the word 'gay' in a negative way), through the written word, or by insinuation or offensive mimicry, for example.
- Targeting pupils with special needs or disabilities by insulting them, name-calling, making threats, spreading malicious rumours, using sarcasm, etc.
- Bullying behaviour can be displayed by two people towards each other, for example two-way name calling, both are displayed unacceptable bullying behaviour.

If you experience bullying behaviour:

DO

- Tell the bully to stop the bullying behaviour.
- Talk to someone that you can trust, for example a parent, any teacher, your pastoral support teacher, a friend.
- Report it in a way you feel most comfortable - scan the QR code, complete an online form or tell one of Anti-bullying Ambassadors
- Write down what has happened. Always be honest and stick to the facts.

DON'T

- Feel you have to deal with the problem by yourself.
- Retaliate in a like manner.
- Try to use violence against the bully.
- Be dishonest; if you exaggerate, this casts doubt on your version of the story.

What does our school do to prevent bullying?

Mearns Castle High will work to create a positive and supportive ethos. A culture that encourages respect, values opinions, celebrates differences and promotes positive relationships will make it difficult for bullying behaviour to occur or be tolerated. This may include particular approaches such as:

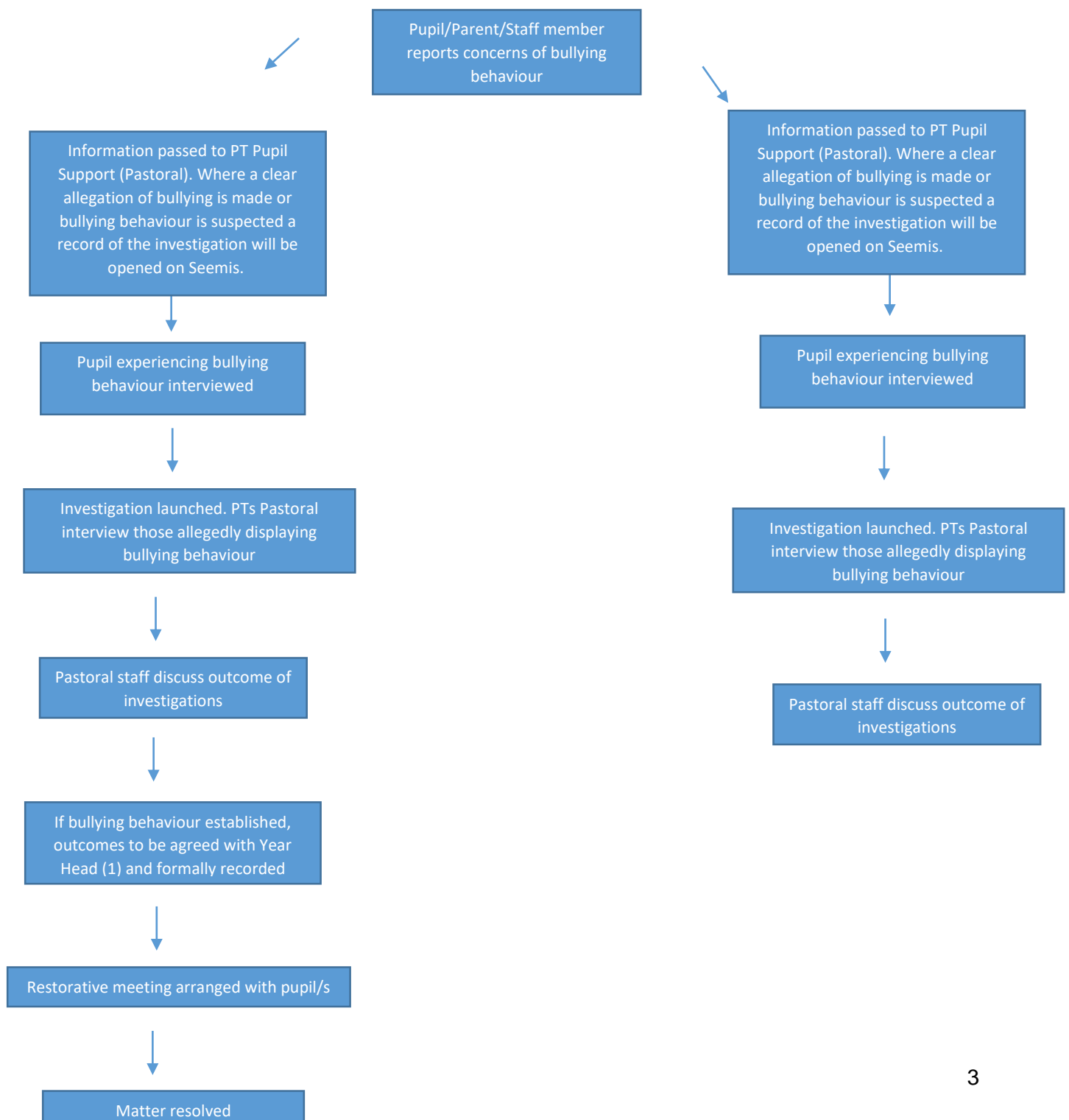
- Buddying or mentoring - S6 buddies offering support and guidance to new S1 pupils.
- Peer mediation.
- Anti-bullying Ambassadors identifying vulnerable pupils and taking steps to remedy this.
- Anti-bullying campaigns, posters, assemblies.
- Anti-bullying focus group who work closely to monitor and discuss issues
- Creating motivational ways to engage pupils and raise awareness of bullying within our PSE programme and Citizenship
- Involving the Pupil Council.
- Encouraging pupils to report bullying incidents using 'worry' boxes and the school Intranet, use of QR codes.
- Discussing the impact and legal consequences of cyber bullying, supported by

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campus Police Officer who will discuss Hate Crime and provide support in situations of bullying behaviour.

- Continually reviewing processes and approaches within the school.
- Pupil Support and SLT monitoring peer issues and facilitating restorative justice practices.
- Involving the Head teacher or police, when necessary.

In some situations the Head Teacher, Mr. Clark and/or the Campus Police Officer will be involved. These are the steps we take to deal with bullying in our school:



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- 1) If bullying behaviour has been established this will be recorded and an outcome agreed with the Year Head which may include disciplinary consequences, parental meetings, and restorative action. This will be formally recorded.
- 2) If any instances of bullying behaviour/being prejudice/involving a hate incident the Head Teacher will be informed for consideration to be given to any relevant Police action.
- 3) The pupil experiencing bullying behaviour will receive feedback and will be encouraged to re-report any further instance. The PT Pupil Support will follow up with a further conversation following a one week period.
- 4) Parents will be kept informed throughout the process.

How We Support Pupils and Their Families:

- Each incident is dealt with on an individual basis.
- Accusations will be dealt with as discreetly as possible.
- We will listen closely in a non-judgmental way and identify what will help most to improve the situation
- We will discuss and agree next steps with the person experiencing bullying behavior in order to ensure they maintain their sense of agency and feel respected and listened to.
- Any other investigation deemed appropriate, such as interviewing witnesses, will be carried out sensitively.
- Parents of the pupils directly involved will be contacted.
- Pupil Support and SLT work closely with pupils and their families.
- Restorative meetings between pupils can be considered to resolve issues.
- Instances of bullying are recorded and in some cases (racist incidents) reported to ERC Education Department.

Cyber bullying:

Cyber bullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones, tablets, social websites, photographs, email, text messaging and the internet, to upset someone else. It can be particularly unpleasant as it can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.

The school community wants to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment. Any member of Mearns Castle High School responsible for cyber bullying within school can expect to be subject to the school bullying sanctions.

Measures to prevent cyber bullying:

DO

- Always respect others on-line.
- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself.
- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- Think before you send.

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DON'T

- Post any comment or picture on social networks that could be misconstrued.
- Stand aside, as not helping can be as harmful as bullying
- Retaliate or reply!
- Become involved in social networking sites when underage.

What to do:

- Tell someone - your parents, your Pupil Support Teacher, a prefect or a teacher.
- Be aware that a school is a community; merely being outside the school does not remove you from this community
- Talk about cyber bullying in tutorials, assemblies and lessons.
- Look out for "Report Abuse" buttons on websites, particularly if you see something that concerns you.

Anything written on the internet can be permanent. The school, future employers, Universities, parents or friends can see it at any time. Remember that once you post something on the Internet, you lose control of it. It might be there forever.

What Support Can Mearns Castle High School Offer You?

MCHS pupils and parents can contact a range of people in school who are able to help them if they feel unhappy for whatever reason.

Pupil Support Teachers:

PT Pupil Support Teacher	Year Groups
Mrs Brophy	S1
Mr Gilroy	S2
Mrs Hamilton	S3
Mr Gouch	S4
Mrs Crilley	S5
Ms Oram	S6

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Year Heads:

Year Group	Year Head
S1	Ms Mortimer
S2	Mr Donnelly
S3	Mr McGarry
S4	Mrs Mitchell
S5	Mr Harrison
S6	Mr Hale

Head Teacher - Mr Clark

Campus Police Officer – Mr K Akram

Other Supports:

- Class teachers
- S6 Buddies for S1 Pupils
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Youth Counsellor

Other Sources of Help

Anti-bullying Network: 0131 651 6103 or www.antibullying.net

Bullying Line for Young People in Scotland - a free, confidential and anonymous helpline for any child or young person concerned about bullying on 0800 1111

LGBT Youthline: 0845 113 0005 or www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/respectme

Think U Know: Advice about cyberbullying and a place to report online abuse.
www.thinkuknow.com

The internet is a great source of information on bullying behaviour. Below are a selection of websites that have useful sections for both parents and pupils:



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www.kidscape.org.uk

(click on Advice and scroll down to Parents and Carers or Children & Young People.)



www.bullying.co.uk

(click on Young People or click on Parents to get advice.)



www.respectme.org.uk

(click on Information and Advice then choose Parents or Children. There is also a great section on Cyberbullying.)



www.stopbullying.gov

(scroll down to Get Help Now and you can call the helpline "Lifeline".)