



Queen Margaret Academy

Anti-bullying 'Respect for All' Policy

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i. Vision

Queen Margaret Academy is committed to creating and sustaining a safe, positive and inclusive community of faith and learning in which young people have the opportunity to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

ii. Statement of intent

At Queen Margaret Academy, we are committed to 'Getting it Right for Every Child'. We aim to provide a safe environment, free from bullying behaviour, in which all young people can develop intellectually, emotionally, physically, creatively and spiritually.

Young people, staff, parents and carers, and partners have the right to be protected from abusive and bullying behaviours and we aim to promote ***Respect for All*** through living our values every day.

If any member of our school community experiences bullying behaviour, they should have the confidence to report it and know that the incident will be dealt with promptly and effectively. In addition, anyone who is aware of an incident of bullying behaviour or is a victim of bullying behaviour has a responsibility to report it to an appropriate member of staff.

NB This policy has been created using Respect Me's 'Policy into Practice' framework.

iii. Policy aims

Queen Margaret Academy's 'Respect for All' policy aims to:

- Prevent bullying behaviour in our school community.
- Support young people and families affected by bullying behaviour.
- Provide a secure, safe and supportive environment where young people feel able to discuss their problems.
- Build the capacity, resilience and skills in young people, parents and carers to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- Provide guidance, training and support to those working with young people.
- Create a safe working environment for staff and partner agencies.
- Ensure our approaches to tackling bullying behaviour are consistent with South Ayrshire and national guidance.

iv. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Queen Margaret Academy is a *rights respecting school*. We have secured Silver status for the RRS programme and are currently working towards our Gold award.

Bullying is a Breach of Children's Rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. The UNCRC, article 2 states (without discrimination):

"the convention applies to every child whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, no matter what type of family they come from."

Under the UNCRC, all children and young people have the right not to be discriminated against or treated unfairly; to be treated in their best interests and to have their rights respected, protected and fulfilled. Children and young people have the right to say what they think and have their opinions taken into account; to get and share information and to think and believe what they want, as long as this is not damaging to others. Children and young people have a right to meet together and join groups as long as they do not stop others. They have a right to respect their rights, freedoms and reputations. They should have a right to privacy and protection from attacks against their way of life, good name, families and homes; and they have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically and mentally. Children and young people have a right to an education which encourages children to respect their own and other cultures.

Bullying behaviour goes against many of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child articles and may prevent children and young people from enjoying their full rights and developing their full potential in learning and in life. In South Ayrshire we believe Education is an environment where children and young people's dignity should be respected at all times and where personality, talents and abilities should be encouraged to shine and be celebrated.

v. Outcomes for young people and their families

- Young people, staff, parents and carers will have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Young people, staff, parents and carers will have clear procedures to help deal effectively with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Young people, parents and carers will feel assured and supported when incidents of bullying are reported.
- Young people will be supported to develop strategies in relation to resilience, self-esteem and confidence building.
- A restorative approach will be used to challenge and support young people displaying bullying behaviour.
- Young people, staff, parents and carers will be familiar with the school's policy is on anti-bullying.

vi. What is bullying behaviour?

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on the person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term their sense of agency. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships: It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face-to-face and online.” respectme, 2015

There is no legal definition of bullying, however it can be understood as behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated. Bullying behaviours may include:

- name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening
- ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours
- hitting, tripping, kicking
- stealing and damaging belongings
- sending abusive or threatening messages through online platforms
- targeting someone because of known or perceived characteristics

Bullying behaviour can be a one off incident; intentional or unintentional; distressing and hurtful and is usually one way. Actions can affect people in different ways and whilst similarities may exist, no two cases are the same. It is particularly important to distinguish bullying behaviours from natural conflict between young people. Some of the main forms of bullying behaviour have been outlined below.

Emotional	<u>Mental</u> : when pressure to conform is applied <u>Material</u> : when possessions are stolen, damaged or hidden or extortion takes place <u>Social</u> : being ignored, dismissed or left out
Physical	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, biting or any other form of violence
Verbal	Name calling, derogatory remarks, spreading rumours, teasing, personal comments
Cyber	All online platforms and messaging services e.g. text, facebook, snapchat, instagram

vii. The Equality Act 2010

This act provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimization based on a range of “protected characteristics”. These characteristics are defined in the Act as:

- Race;
- Sex;
- Disability;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religion or belief;
- Age;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Marriage and civil partnership

In addition to the Protected Characteristics covered by the Act, there is an expectation that other groups will be considered, for example:

- Care experienced young people;
- Young carers;
- Children and young people living in deprivation;
- Body image issues.

viii. Impact of bullying behaviour

Experiencing bullying behaviour can have both long term and short effects on the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of an individual. This can in turn lead to a range of coping mechanisms and other reactive behaviour.

Low attainment

Young people affected by bullying behaviour may be distracted from their studies and are therefore less likely to achieve their full potential.

School attendance

Missing or truanting school to avoid bullying behaviour can also have a negative impact on attainment.

Isolation

For those who have experienced bullying behaviour, the fear and anticipation of further incidents can affect a person’s confidence and self-esteem. This contributes significantly to social exclusion and can result in the inability to foster and maintain healthy relationships.

Lack of ambition

A constant stream of negative, destructive comments can make it difficult for individuals to plan for a successful future.

Self harm

Individuals may use this as a coping mechanism to deal with the stress and anxiety caused by bullying behaviour.

Eating disorders

Problems with food can begin when it is used to cope in times of difficulty. Stress or anxiety can play a role in influencing the development of, and the recovery from, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.

Violence

Explosive outbursts can lead to acts of violence with severe consequences.

Depression

Bullying behaviour can make it hard to function on a day to day basis. In some instances this can lead to significant mental health problems.

Suicidal ideation

In extreme cases, bullying behaviour can result in suicidal thoughts/behaviour.

Displaying Bullying Behaviours

This could be learned behaviour from individuals who have experienced or witnessed bullying behaviour.

It is important to recognise that bullying behaviour can have a negative effect on a person's family, the wider school community and society as a whole.

<u>On Families</u>	<u>On Schools</u>	<u>On Society</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress • Anxiety • Guilt • Anticipation • Strained relationships • Helplessness • Aggression in the household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship difficulties • Negating positive ethos • Problems with peers • Lack of aspirations • Poor attendance and truancy • No regard for authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in the community • Negative role models • Negative messages in media • Problems on social networking sites • Violence and aggression • Pressure on support services

ix. Prevention and identification

Prevention

Queen Margaret Academy seeks to use a variety of methods to prevent bullying behaviour. These include:

- Challenging the idea that bullying behaviour is acceptable and part of growing up.
- Promoting strong positive behaviour messages through our school's relationship policy.
- Raising awareness of bullying behaviour through PSE classes, assemblies, posters, leaflets, newsletters, pupil voice, surveys, school handbook and anti-bullying week.
- Good adult supervision.
- Establishing and upholding a positive school ethos based on our school values of *community, ambition, respect, equity, faith and responsibility*.

Identification

Identification can be one of the biggest challenges. There is a need to create an atmosphere of openness and reporting. This can be done by:

- PSE classes where teaching staff regularly raise the issue.
- Ensuring that pupils, staff, parents and carers know who to contact to report any instances of bullying behaviour (NB this would normally be PT Guidance in the first instance).
- Consistently challenging the notion of innocent, neutral bystanders.
- In-school campaigns tied in with anti-bullying week.

x. Possible evidence of bullying behaviour

Experiencing bullying behaviour can affect people in different ways. Adults working with young people should look out for some of the following traits and act accordingly:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on the school bus
- Changes in their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacks confidence
- Starts stammering
- Runs away
- Feels ill in the morning

- Always at the medical room
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions that go missing or are damaged
- Asks for money or starts stealing
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry (lunch money stolen or won't go to canteen)
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Stops eating
- Is nervous or jumpy
- Has started bedwetting
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

NB These signs and behaviours MAY be signs of bullying but can also indicate other physical, social or emotional problems.

xi. Procedures

- When an incidence of bullying behaviour is reported it is taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
- Any incidence of suspected bullying behaviour must be reported to PT Guidance or SLT for further investigation.
- All reported incidents will be investigated promptly and logged in Seemis Pastoral Notes.
- Where appropriate parents/carers will be contacted to inform them of the incident and they may be asked to attend a meeting in school to discuss the matter in more detail.
- Where appropriate, action may be taken in accordance with school's relationship policy.
- Appropriate strategies and resources will be used in an attempt to change the behaviour of the person displaying the bullying behaviour.
- The person experiencing bullying behaviour will be given support through appropriate use of strategies and resources.
- Parents/carers will be given advice and support where appropriate.
- The situation will be closely monitored by Guidance and SLT to help safeguard all those involved.
- A member of staff who feels they are being bullied by a pupil must report this to their line manager, depute headteacher, headteacher or union representative.
- Bullying behaviour between members of staff should be dealt with through South Ayrshire Council's Bullying and Harassment Personnel Procedures.

xii. Response

Responding to an individual who is experiencing bullying behaviour and responding to those who are reporting the behaviour on another's behalf:

- Do not panic and keep an open mind.
- Remember your initial reaction is vitally important.
- Listen – give the individual your full attention.
- Meet in a comfortable place with no distractions.
- Assure the individual that bullying behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in school.
- Assure the individual that they are entitled to feel safe at all times.
- Show the individual that you are taking their concerns seriously.
- Gently encourage them to talk and takes notes i.e. who was involved, when and where.
- Let the individual speak without interrupting them as far as possible. You may have to ask questions to clarify the information they have given.
- Avoid collusion and try not to make false promises as you've only heard one side of the story.
- Listen – what do they want you to do?
- Keep the individual involved and up to date with progress and recent developments with the case.
- Record details on pastoral notes and seemis anti-bullying log

To the person displaying the bullying behaviour:

- Take action based on evidence e.g. witnesses accounts, text messages, physical injuries.
- Deal with the behaviour through the school's relationship policy.
- Listen and take time to discover the reasons behind the bullying behaviour.
- Do not label the individual a 'bully'
- Be prepared to discuss prejudicial attitudes that may be behind the bullying behaviour.
- Address what is happening behind the behaviour even when the behaviour has stopped.
- Refer to support agencies as appropriate.
- Invite parents/carers in to school as appropriate.
- Record details on pastoral notes and seemis anti-bullying log

xiii. Strategies

A variety of strategies/activities that can be applied as appropriate include:

- Restorative practice
- Peer mediation
- S6 'Respect Me' ambassadors
- Buddying & mentoring
- PSHE programmes
- Counselling and therapeutic practice
- Assemblies
- Extra curricular activities
- Flexible curriculum

xiv. Conclusion

Bullying behaviour is never acceptable. It is not a normal part of growing up and it does not build character – trust, acceptance, consistency and safety build character. It is however an ever-present problem in schools and the wider community and we all have a responsibility to challenge it.

By living our values everyday, and making a commitment to uphold the principals and guidance in this policy, we hope that Queen Margaret Academy can significantly reduce the number of reported cases and protect our young people from the pressures and stress associated with bullying behaviour.

xv. Monitor and review

Incidents of bullying behaviour are logged using Seemis Pastoral Notes and recorded for the Local Authority. The school's anti-bullying policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in order to monitor its effectiveness.

xvi. Legal position to anti-bullying behaviour

Whilst the aims and objectives of this policy should not necessitate the use of formal legal measures, depending on the facts and circumstances, including the severity of the behaviour, remedies of a formal legal nature, both civil and criminal, do exist.

Under Criminal Law these could include, but are not limited to, offences under the Communications Act 2003 in respect of the communication of offensive or indecent matters electronically for example by text message or email; the offence of racially aggravated harassment in terms of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and Breach of the Peace.

xvii. Support organisations

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
respectme	www.respectme.org.uk 0844 800 8600
Childline	Bullying, abuse, safety and the law Childline 0800 1111
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline	www.kidscape.org.uk 0845 1 205 204
Bullying Online	www.bullying.co.uk 0808 800 2222