

# **EQUALITIES AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2012**

## **OUR SCHOOL'S VALUES AND BELIEFS**

Gracemount High School is committed to Care and Excellence. All members of the school community have the right to feel happy, safe and included and expect to work in an environment in which politeness, courtesy, mutual respect and individual rights are valued. We expect every member of our school community to make a commitment to create and maintain this environment and to ensure that it is conducive to effective Learning and Teaching. Within our wider school community, we promote tolerance and understanding of one another and value diversity, recognising everyone as an individual.

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying and discrimination.

We recognise that certain individuals and groups in society experience disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination on account of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender change, looked-after status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic status or any combination of these. The majority of our pupils are polite, friendly and show consideration for others; a few do not and sometimes bullying can result.

We recognise the effects that bullying and discrimination can have on pupils' feelings of worth, on their school work and in the community. We actively foster good relations between diverse groups and individuals.

Bullying is an abuse of power that is defined by its effects. People who are bullied are upset by something someone else has done or said to them or about them. They are likely to fear that this will happen again and feel powerless to stop it. Bullying is also a breach of children's rights under several articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cyber-bullying is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through emails, instant messaging and social networking websites. Such behaviour has no place in Gracemount High School.

## **Equalities**

We use the legal definition of 'equalities' which gives protection to people who have specific characteristics – for example being gay, lesbian or bisexual or from a minority ethnic group or disabled or old. It also includes boys and girls and anyone undergoing gender change, as well as those of particular faith groups. The Equality Act 2010 defines these as 'protected

groups'. Looked-after children, young carers and children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are also included as equalities groups.

This policy is the result of work carried out by a working group in conjunction with consultation with staff, parents and pupils over a period of months.

In Gracemount High School:

Our aim is to prevent bullying occurring in the first place and to have a framework set up for dealing with incidents if they occur. Promoting positive relationships amongst young people, staff and the local community, welcoming diversity and the ethos of our school are all key to preventing bullying and discrimination.

Therefore we strive to

- create and maintain an environment in which all members of the school community feel secure
- have in place procedures for identifying early signs of bullying
- create a climate in which incidents of bullying can be reported with confidence
- establish and maintain clear channels of communication for reporting incidents of bullying
- have in place procedures for dealing effectively with bullying
- establish and maintain home/school contact with parents of pupils involved in bullying
- identify suitable areas of the curriculum and cross curricular projects where bullying, racism, sexism, disability, equality, homophobia etc can be addressed

Gracemount High School will not tolerate any form of bullying or discriminatory behaviour.

The intention is to work towards eliminating bullying and all forms of prejudice and discrimination to create a more positive atmosphere in which incidents, if they do occur, are reported. Bullying behaviour of all kinds will be challenged and the message that bullying is wrong and destructive will be emphasised.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

**Pupils** are expected to

- report all incidents of bullying and suspected incidents that other children may be afraid to report
- support each other, and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

**Teachers and support staff** are expected to be proactive both in and out the classroom by,

- displaying clear disapproval of any form of bullying
- showing willingness to listen to concerns expressed by pupils
- assuring that concerns will be investigated carefully and appropriate action taken
- being aware that some pupils will find it difficult to report bullying
- treating all allegations seriously and keeping appropriate records.

**Support for pupils/guidance staff** are expected to

- Take a leading part in promoting, amongst pupils and parents, the school's equalities and anti-bullying policy and be the primary point of contact with parents and pupils.
- Give pupils the opportunity to explore issues surrounding bullying through the PSE programme.
- Advise and support pupils involved in bullying behaviour and contact parents to seek a consistent and supportive response.
- Liaise with staff to offer information and advice on the management of individual pupils or individual pupil concerns.
- Liaise with DHT and assess circumstances of reported incident and the most effective strategy for tackling the problem.

**Parents** can help by

- Supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community.
- Discussing with their child's teacher any concerns that their child may be experiencing
- Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of school.

- Speaking to the Head Teacher if their concerns are serious and ongoing.

**The Senior Leadership Team** is expected to

- Liaise with Guidance and to investigate and assess circumstances of reported incidents. (The DHT Inclusion/Equalities ensures that any appropriate incident is recorded and logged.)
- In considering what further action to pursue, take full account of the individual circumstances of the incident.
- Monitor and report annually on the implementation of this policy.
- Supervise the review and updating of this policy and ensure that appropriate staff training is available.

## **CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS ... AND COMPLIMENTS**

Head teachers are responsible for deciding how to respond to bullying incidents and for deciding if sanctions should be used. Where sanctions are felt to be necessary, they will be administered following procedures detailed in our Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

Not all allegations of bullying can be resolved easily and, in a few cases, it may not be possible to find a solution which is acceptable to all those involved. We recognise that there may be times when parents feel that the school has not dealt well with an incident of bullying and we ask that this be brought to the Head Teacher's notice. Parents and carers who are not satisfied with the way in which the school has managed a report of bullying may refer the matter to the Department's Advice and Conciliation Service. We are also pleased to receive compliments or feedback from parents when things have gone well.

## **COMMUNICATING THIS POLICY**

An Information Leaflet for Parents/Guardians and pupils is available at the school office or on the school website:

<http://www.gracemounthighschool.co.uk/page2/index.html>

- We advertise our Equalities and Anti-bullying policy on the school web-site.
- Posters will be displayed around the school promoting our policy and also telling pupils about Childline and other sources of confidential help including the weekly Health & Well-Being drop in.
- There will be an annual campaign to promote the policy during National Anti-Bullying Week.

## **EVALUATING AND REVIEWING OUR POLICY**

We evaluate this policy using the following measures:

- The number of incidents that are reported to staff over a given period.
- Rates of attendance, exclusions, attainment and achievement of pupils in protected groups.
- Comments received in our comments box.
- Pupils' perceptions and experiences of bullying in secondary schools through periodic questionnaires.
- The number of complaints and compliments that we receive from parents.

The policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed as appropriate.

## **EQUALITIES AND ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES UPDATED 2012**

### **PREVENTION**

- Poster campaigns are used to remind pupils that bullying and discrimination are not acceptable, and tell them what to do if they are bullied.
- We regularly remind pupils about how our school deals with bullying, including cyberbullying.
- The school holds diversity and anti-bullying ('Respect') days, weeks and assemblies.
- There are public, accessible welcoming messages throughout the school in a range of languages.
- We use evaluation tools which measure ethos, relationships and confidence in schools, such as pupil well-being questionnaires, pupil focus groups and bullying surveys.
- We involve other agencies and partners including health, police and the voluntary sector.
- Pupils are supported to lead initiatives, bring in speakers and organise appropriate workshops.
- A pupils' "It's OK to Tell" comments box is in the library.
- Training opportunities are promoted to staff that explore the development of attachment, empathy, resilience and problem-solving skills.
- There is an informal buddy system, especially at transition from Primary to Secondary.
- Bullying and equalities issues can be raised through our Pupil Council.
- We annually review our arrangements for young people to raise issues confidently with staff.
- Our staff are supported in accessing professional development opportunities that increase their awareness and understanding of bullying, prejudice and discrimination.

The Curriculum for Excellence is used to:

- Increase knowledge of children's rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens.
- Provide age-appropriate reading materials and resources that provide a balanced diversity, e.g. family structures that include single parents, ethnic minorities, disabled people and same-sex parents.
- Monitor and improve where needed the attainment and achievement of pupils in protected groups to develop successful learners.

- Ensure that children and young people in protected groups are appropriately included in developing pupil participation as effective contributors.
- Build resilience and empathy in young people as confident individuals.
- Raise awareness about bullying and our Equalities and Anti-Bullying Policy across a range of school subjects.

## **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.

Some examples of our strategies are:-

- Restorative practices, including acknowledging grievances
- Involvement of parent/carer where appropriate
- Peer mentoring and mediation
- Counselling or other 1:1 support
- Involvement of other agencies and partners in health, police and voluntary sector
- De-escalation strategies
- Physical separation of person/people bullying, where necessary and possible
- Support base, safe room where feasible
- Sanctions, including loss of privileges
- Assessment of additional support needs for person being bullied or person bullying
- Referral to specific support service, such as Educational Psychologist, Education

Welfare Service, Social Work service or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

- In extreme cases, Child Protection procedures will be considered

- Exclusion from school is not necessarily a sanction or punishment for bullying behaviour and will only be used where appropriate.

Our support to pupils who are bullied or discriminated against

- They are reassured that they do not deserve this and it is not their fault.
- We assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We encourage them to talk about how they feel and try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We affirm that it can be stopped and that we will persist with intervention until it does.

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 anyone who may have witnessed the bullying.
- 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 when they are being bullied.
- We consider sanctions under our school's Positive Behaviour Management Policy.
- We advise pupils responsible for bullying that we check to ensure that bullying stops.
- We ensure that those involved know that we have done so.
- When bullying occurs, we may contact the parents of the pupils involved at an early stage.
- We follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again.
- We work with pupils who have been involved in bullying others to ascertain the sort of support that they need.

## **RECORDING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS**

- Pupils who have been bullied should report this to their Guidance teacher, another trusted member of staff or a prefect.
- Pupils who see others being bullied should report this to their Guidance teacher.
- Members of staff who witness or receive reports that a pupil has been bullied should take appropriate action then make a record on the appropriate form and pass to guidance staff or the DHT Equalities and Inclusion.
- Forms can be found on the ORB or on the shared folder.

G:\Staff\shared\Support for Pupils Referral Forms

Records are logged and kept by the DHT Equalities and Inclusion.

Annual reports of incidents are sent to our departmental equalities colleagues on request.

## **CYBER-BULLYING AND BULLYING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL PREMISES**

We know that bullying can occur outside the school gates and via mobile phones and social network internet sites. The bullying may be done by pupils 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 pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.
- Talk to the Head Teacher of another school whose pupils are allegedly bullying.
- Encourage them to talk to the police and use on line report abuse facilities.

### **PLANNING**

We strive to ensure that the promotion of equality and anti-bullying issues are contained within our development plans and are an integral part of daily learning.

### **EQUALITY IMPACTS ANALYSIS**

When reviewing or creating any new policies or services within our school, we give due regard to all protected groups. We consider whether any individual or group might experience a particularly positive or negative impact and where necessary we take steps to reduce any negative impact.

### **INVOLVEMENT**

We actively encourage all our young people to participate in school and extra-curricular activities and we take positive action to make sure that the diverse school population is represented in activities, surveys and our student council.

### **GATHERING AND MONITORING INFORMATION**

Our school is committed to developing measures to monitor the attainment of pupils by ethnicity and gender and to monitor the achievements of our looked-after pupils and of those with disabilities. We do this by:

- Monitoring attendance and exclusion of pupils by ethnicity, disability and gender.
- Examining our annual records of incidents and survey information.
- Using information from focus groups and surveys of pupils' views and opinions
- Taking active steps to ensure that all data held on pupils' disabilities, ethnicity, caring and looked-after status is accurate and regularly reviewed.

### **RELATED POLICIES**

This policy links with a number of other school policies:

- Our School Code of Conduct as found in the pupil planner
- Additional Support for Learning Policy

- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Health and Well-Being Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy

## **ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR STAFF**

### **Bullying – signs to look out for:**

- deterioration of work
- pretended illness
- isolation
- desire to remain with adults
- erratic attendance
- inability to produce dinner money
- uncharacteristic behaviour or acting up to impress e.g. showing off, becoming withdrawn, aggressive behaviour
- loss of self-respect
- low self-esteem
- emotional problems e.g. crying, tantrums

### **Why do children bully?**

#### **Social:**

- misuse of power – to impress/establish leadership
- pressure to conform – punishing non-conformity
- punishing those isolated by quarrels with friends
- help establish group identity by attacking an outsider
- enforce compliance

#### **Personal:**

- bullies look for differences to home in on e.g. – some feature or characteristic
- look for an effect – more likely if victim not self-confident
- have been bullied themselves
- extortion
- jealousy
- family problems
- lack of social skills

### **Why do children not tell?**

- loyalty – not telling on others

- fear of retribution
- lack of confidence in adults ensuring anonymity
- if it goes on long enough the victim begins to feel he or she deserves it
- awareness of adult view that as children get older they should be able to stand up for themselves
- lack of trust that adults can do anything – methods of dealing not known
- fear of not being believed
- don't want to admit it is actually happening
- don't want to worry parents, or to involve them
- not knowing who to tell

All incidents of bullying, prejudice or discrimination should be recorded on the appropriate form and submitted to the DHT Inclusion and Equality Ms Louise Sinclair

A copy of the recording form follows this policy or can be found on the shared folder at G:\Staff\shared\Support for Pupils Referral Forms