



## Working Together to Support Equalities and to Combat Bullying

### OUR SCHOOL'S VALUES AND BELIEFS

Gracemount High School is a *Level 1* Rights Respecting School, committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all, understanding and valuing diversity and works actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying and discrimination. We have a clear vision and values system consisting of: Aspiration, Mutual Respect, Being Valued, Instilling Resilience, Tolerance & Fairness, Individual Responsibility, Optimism and No Barriers to Successful Learning. *Our visions and values system was developed with the ethos of the UN Conventions on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) in mind and* we believe that students and staff have the right to learn and work in a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and confidence for all.

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.

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 UNCRC includes a number of Articles that link directly to anti-bullying and we believe that by being a rights respecting school it will help us create a positive ethos of respect between all of our school pupils, teachers and support staff.*

### DEFINITIONS

#### **Bullying**

Bullying is NOT a normal part of growing up and should be challenged – bullying behaviour can make you feel frightened, threatened, left out or hurt. Bullying behaviour is an action either physical, verbal, social or psychological which hurts someone or group of people because they are perceived to be different. *Article 19 of the UNCRC states that all children should be protected from harm including physical, mental or emotional harm and it is a key aspect of being a rights respecting school.*

Bullying is abuse of (assumed) power. People who are bullied are affected by what someone else has done. The response to this is likely to be one of loss of power to stop it and fear that it will happen again. Feelings include loss of dignity or self-belonging. Bullying is also a breach of children's rights under several articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through emails, instant messaging and social networking websites.

### **Equalities**

We use the legal definition of 'equalities' which gives protection to people who have specific characteristics - for example anyone belonging to the LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, etc) community or from a minority ethnic group or disabled or old. It also includes 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 poor backgrounds are also included as equalities groups. *Article 2 of the UNCRC focuses on non-discrimination and states that every child no matter who they are have the rights.*

### **Unintentional bullying**

Bullying is not always intentional. Sometimes a person can **feel** that they are being bullied when the other person has not meant to bully them. It is how a person feels about their situation that is important. School staff will take seriously the worries of any young person who feels that they are being bullied.

Quarrelling, 'falling out' and fighting are not bullying unless a person feels powerless to stop what is happening to them. Learning to deal with conflict and respecting the views of others are an important part of child development and we work hard to help young people develop skills to cope with these situations. The school ensures that they discuss bullying at a wider level rather than just encourages pupils to tell someone about it.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Head Teacher (Ross Hunter) is responsible for introducing and implementing this policy. He is also responsible for nominating an Equalities Co-ordinator (Michelle Gordon, DHT) who is familiar with council equalities guidance. However, all staff, all pupils and their parents/carers 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 young people 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.
- Seek support during the entire process and keep reporting incidents if there is no improvement

Teachers are expected to:

- Treat all allegations seriously
- Follow procedures in place
- Monitor and record incidents accurately

## Gracemount High School Anti-Bullying & Equalities Policy (Sep 2017)

- Follow council initiatives and guidelines including updating the policy regularly including being aware of the most recent updates in the policy and ensuring a focus on professional development – i.e CIRCLE doc
- Be vigilant in the classroom and create a positive and inclusive environment
- Where possible have a presence at classroom doors and in the corridors to help support a positive and inclusive environment around the school
- Ensure relevant people are aware – including parents/carers
- Check in with the pupil to ensure they are feeling supported and the incident/s are no longer occurring

Parents/Carers can help by

- Supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Supporting pupils to report concerns to the relevant person.
- Updating the school about any incidents they find out about
- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community.
- Discussing with their child's Pupil Support Leader any concerns that their child may be experiencing
- Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of school including modelling their own positive behaviour in school as well as in the community

The Senior Leadership Team is expected to

- Monitor and report annually on the implementation of this policy.
- Supervise the review and updating of this policy at least every four years.
- Be an active part in serious bullying issues
- Ensure a robust enhanced p7 transition programme is in place to highlight any potential concerns regarding bullying behaviour

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

As a Rights Respecting School, we are committed to dealing appropriately to all incidents raised. In spite of our determination to eliminate bullying, we recognise that there may be times when parents/carers feel that we have not dealt effectively with an incident of bullying and we ask that this be brought to the Head Teacher's notice. If the Head Teacher cannot resolve these concerns and parents/carers remain dissatisfied, then the matter can be referred to council as described below. We are also pleased to receive compliments – feedback from parents when things have gone well.

#### **Advice and Complaints Service:**

<http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/educationcomplaints>

### **COMMUNICATING THIS POLICY**

- We advertise our anti-bullying, equality and diversity policy on the school web-site
- We share this at assemblies and in PSE lessons at regular points each year
- School staff can access it on the shared drive
- The policy will be shown on posters around the school
- A leaflet is available for pupils/parents/carers/partners summarising this policy

## **EVALUATING AND REVIEWING OUR POLICY**

We evaluate this policy using the following measures:

- S2 City of Edinburgh Council bullying questionnaire
- The number of incidents recorded over a year
- Focus groups and questionnaires with pupils where pupils are encouraged to be honest
- Feedback from the Pupil Council and groups across the school including the Rights Respecting School group and the LGBTQI+ group
- Feedback from the parent council
- The policy and procedure will be reviewed every 4 years

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Prevention**

- We remind pupils at least twice a year about how our school deals with bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Periodic poster campaigns will be used to remind pupils that bullying and discrimination are not acceptable, and tells them what to do if they are bullied.
- 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 in health, police and the voluntary sector including MVP and the Health Opportunities Team.
- The school holds diversity and anti-bullying assemblies regularly and consistently so there is a clear message
- A pupils' comments box is held in the library for concerns to be raised
- Training opportunities are promoted to staff and parents that explore the development of attachment, empathy, resilience and problem solving skills.
- There is a buddy system where every S1 pupil has an S6 buddy in their registration class.
- The school has the Level 1 Rights Respecting School Award and is working towards achieving level 2.
- The school has a whole-school nurture approach which all pupils are made aware of
- Break and lunch times are supervised by staff and prefects to be alert to bullying and discrimination
- Our staff are supported in accessing professional development opportunities that increase their awareness and understanding of bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
- Restorative practices are embedded within our school ethos and values.

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 promote 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 Equality, Diversity and Anti-Bullying Policy across a range of school subjects.
- Supervised break and lunch club identified pupils can access.

## **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
- Counselling
- Involvement of other agencies and partners in health, police and voluntary sector such as the Health Opportunities Team, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS
- De-escalation strategies
- Physical separation of person/people bullying, where necessary and possible
- Time out in Ambition/Cool-Down as agreed and support from Pupil Support staff
- Appropriate sanctions
- In extreme cases, Child Protection procedures will be considered
- Exclusion from school is not itself a sanction or punishment for bullying behaviour and will only be used as a last resort

### **Our support to pupils who are bullied or discriminated against:**

- Pupils will be consulted at all stages to ensure they are involved with how the situation is being dealt with.
- 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
- We work in partnership with parents/carers at all stages to ensure that their child is supported appropriately.

- We follow up with pupils who have reported bullying to ensure that there have been no further concerns.

#### **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 work restoratively to help pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We consider appropriate sanctions.
- We advise pupils responsible for bullying that we check to ensure that bullying stops.
- Where both parties are willing, we facilitate restorative meetings so that relationships can be repaired.
- We work in partnership with parents/carers at all stages to ensure that their child is supported appropriately.
- We work with pupils who have been involved in bullying others to ascertain the sort of support that they need.

#### **REPORTING AND RECORDING INCIDENTS**

Pupils who feel that they are experiencing bullying, or are worried about someone else who is being bullied should report this to their Pupil Support Leader or their Year Head.

Staff should report any bullying concerns to the appropriate Pupil Support Leader or Year Head. They can also complete a Wellbeing Concern Form.

Where bullying has been substantiated, or in any case of bullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, faith, economic status or sexual orientation, incidents are recorded using a City of Edinburgh Council form and stored on the shared drive. We report to the council annually on this matter.

#### **Cyberbullying 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.
- Discuss agencies who could help to support pupils/families including Childline/Respectme
- Consider additional support including the support of the police School Police Link Officer (PC Mark Dickson)
- Contact other schools where appropriate

#### **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 IMPACTS 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 experience a particularly positive or negative impact. We keep a record of this 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 pupil council.

### **GATHERING AND MONITORING INFORMATION**

Our school routinely monitors the attainment of pupils by ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, Additional Support Needs and whether they are Looked After.

We also monitor attendance and exclusion of pupils and discuss appropriate supports we can offer to help support with this.

We examine our annual records of incidents and survey information

We are aware of our local demography, through pupil census data

We use information from surveys of pupils' views and opinions

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