



MONKSEATON HIGH SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Monkseaton High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

School Ethos and Values

At Monkseaton High School we strive to foster an inclusive culture where everyone is treated with respect, and staff and students feel safe and secure. It is an expectation therefore, that staff and students always behave in both an appropriate and socially acceptable manner.

As a school we aim to promote excellence and respect for all through our ethos of Equality, Opportunity, Inclusion & Achievement.

Our Vision is to create an inclusive community of confident learners with a strong collaborative ethos, underpinned by high quality teaching and learning, honesty, and respect for others. We want our students to be ambitious, confident, hardworking and happy.

The Governors of the school require that the school's policies and values should reflect the highest moral standards and, in particular, they will not tolerate bullying or other anti-social behaviour. The policy on anti-bullying is embedded in the ethos and values of the school as well as procedures for promoting a positive culture for learning.

The effects of bullying on an individual can be extremely traumatic, affecting both the education and broader life of the student. We have a zero-tolerance approach towards bullying. Our anti-bullying policy aims to help create a positive and caring ethos where everyone is valued and respected as an individual, and where everyone feels safe and secure in a way which enhances their social and academic development.

Principles:

We view bullying as a serious issue. All staff, parents and students must be aware that bullying will not be tolerated, and we will make every effort to ensure that bullies are dealt with appropriately through suitable education and restorative work.

We aim to cultivate a climate of positive support in school which encourages students to realise that they do not have to tolerate bullying, and that they must inform someone if they are being bullied. The causes and impact of bullying will be addressed through our comprehensive Personal Development curriculum, including assemblies.

Students must be confident in the knowledge that they will be sympathetically listened to, and that action will be taken which is prompt but sensitive to their concerns.

Equally important is that we support all students including the person responsible for bullying so that they can recognise that their behaviour is wrong and help them make better choices. We always do this work, but we may have to put other strategies in place to support all parties.

Sustained, wilful and deliberate intent to cause harm will be dealt with as according to our behaviour policy. If a parent feels that the issue is causing significant risk or harm and is happening outside of school or online, we would advise parents to report issues to the Police.

Main Aims of Policy:

- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and on off-site activities.
- To support everyone in the actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied.

- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying.
- To promote an environment where students are able to tell someone about bullying.
- To promote positive attitudes in pupils.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour which makes people feel uncomfortable or threatened. There is a deliberate intention to instil fear or anxiety. Bullying is defined by the Department for Education as ***“behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”***. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017).

Bullying can include: name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online bullying or cyberbullying. This can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive, humiliating or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying can be a form of child on child abuse and can be abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

Bullying may be prejudice or hate-related. The school recognises its role in promoting an understanding and inclusive environment for all in terms of ‘protected characteristics’.

Bullying can and does take different forms and can include:

- **Verbal** - examples include: name calling, teasing, insulting, making offensive comments, writing unkind notes, sending inappropriate notes, threatening or intimidating, hurtful remarks including discrimination with regards to disability or of a homophobic, transphobic, racist or sexualised nature.
- **Emotional** - examples include: being unfriendly, excluding individuals from social groups, tormenting, spreading rumours.
- **Physical** - examples include: hitting, kicking, pushing, punching, taking or hiding belongings, damaging property.
- **Cyber/Online** - examples include insults and comments spread via social media/text or other new technologies, sending threatening text messages or emails, setting up hate sites, posting abusive, humiliating or threatening messages via social media/online, sending abusive images or videos, making nuisance calls or upskirting.

Most of these have the following in common:

- It is repeated over time
- It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour
- There is an imbalance of power making it difficult for the victim(s) to defend themselves

What does not constitute Bullying?

It is important to understand that bullying is not an odd occasional falling out with friends, occasional name-calling, banter, arguments, or when the occasional ‘joke’ is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out, disagree with others, or say things because they are

upset or angry. When such problems or conflicts of this kind arise, it is not always classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development and resilience to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, conflict, disagreements with others and the odd name calling or childish prank or jokes. We must help students to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships and build resilience.

We do not, however, deem this as acceptable, and we take all incidents which undermine the safety and well-being of students seriously and challenge any unacceptable behaviour.

School response to reports of bullying:

We recognise that bullying, especially if left unaddressed can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.

By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, our schools can help to create safe, disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential. One of our aims is to lead students towards an understanding of their own feelings, as well as the feelings and sensitivities of others.

Students, parents/carers, governors and staff will be informed of our anti-bullying policy and procedures through media such as the school website, induction procedures and the School Prospectus.

The school will work to ensure that all students, staff and parents/carers are aware that:

- Students have the right to be safe at school and that bullying is unacceptable. The causes and impact of bullying will be addressed through our comprehensive Personal Development curriculum including assemblies.
- Telling someone in authority about bullying is the right thing to do.
- All reported incidents will be dealt with sensitively and as a serious issue.
- Clear procedures will be followed when bullying does occur and that problems will be addressed, as appropriate.
- We will take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the school's attention, which involves or affects students, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online.
- Sanctions (as identified within the Student Behaviour Policy) and support for individuals will be implemented. For persistent offenders or incidents considered as serious, a pupil could face a fixed term or permanent exclusion.
- Responses to allegations of bullying will be made with due regard to considerations of safeguarding and confidentiality/information sharing. Any bullying issues involving safeguarding concerns will be referred to the DSL.
- In cases where parents/carers report issues to the Police, the policy of the school is to cooperate with any subsequent Police investigation by sharing with them any relevant information held by the school.
- Other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the Police (if a criminal offence is thought to have been committed) or other local services including Early Help or children's social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken on CPOMS.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous support.
- Offering a swift opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or specialist children's services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Pupils who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to the service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with the school's behaviour policy; this may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, specialist children's services, or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), as appropriate

Zero-tolerance means making it possible and safe for anyone to report bullying and that it is never ignored, minimised or excused. Zero-tolerance in practice requires taking all allegations seriously. It does not mean that the same actions will always be taken if a report is upheld; instead there should be a range of options with proportionality being a principle in determining consequences. Having a zero-tolerance means taking a proportionate and appropriate response to every alleged incident. It does not necessarily mean the use of sanctions in all cases.

Where incidents of bullying occur outside of school our options may be limited but we will investigate as far as is practical if there are repercussions in school.

One-off incidents may not fall within the definition of bullying, however, they will always be investigated and dealt with in a consistent way.

Online/Cyberbullying:

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet provides new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Cyberbullying can take many forms and can impact upon a young person's wellbeing and can influence behaviour in school. Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside of school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and we will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying.

Schools cannot monitor students online outside of school hours. We use our pastoral newsletter and Twitter (X)/Instagram accounts to share information with parents on how to do this so they can work with their child/children to reduce the likelihood that students can become the victim or be responsible for the bullying. We advise that parents are aware of the age 13 limit in the use of apps/websites and we encourage parents to monitor access to popular sites once students reach this age. We have a comprehensive Personal Development curriculum that both teaches students how to stay safe online as well as the law and issues that surround the person who chooses to initiate and engage in such activities.

In school, we endeavour to block access to inappropriate websites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering and monitoring systems. We regularly audit ICT communications and the security arrangements we have in place.

We encourage any student being bullied to report it immediately and to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation. We will take all available steps, where possible, to identify the person responsible and to prevent the circulation of anything offensive. We may identify and interview possible witnesses. We may request the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene the school behaviour policy. We may deem it necessary to contact the service provider and the Police. We may also confiscate and search students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and DfE guidance '*Searching, screening and confiscation at school*' guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully.

We will apply our usual behaviour and bullying policy in such situations but dependent on severity we may feel this requires a children's services or Police referral if we believe that a child may be at risk of harm.

Prejudice Related Incidents:

'A prejudice-related incident is any incident which is perceived to be prejudice-related by the victim or any other person.' This definition was first recommended as a working definition for racist incidents by The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has since been extended to cover all incidents related to the protected characteristics set out in The Equality Act 2010. It informs people how to respond when they become aware of an incident and ensures that the incident is investigated. Importantly, it ensures that people are listened to.

The most common prejudice-related incidents take the form of prejudicial language, ridicule and jokes and verbal abuse. This type of incident is typically based on someone's prejudice towards another because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender. It is our policy to challenge any such language used by students, staff or parents that may be perceived as 'prejudice related' language.

Pupils and staff are more likely to speak up about prejudice if they know that they will be taken seriously. The onus is not just on the target to speak up.

Any sanctions will follow our Student Behaviour Policy. We also work closely with other statutory agencies to provide help, support and education to those who carry out or are affected by a prejudice-related incident.

Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate, based on a person's actual or perceived race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or transgender status is considered a hate crime. Courts

have a duty to increase the sentence of any offence (for example assault or criminal damage) which is aggravated by prejudice. Students who perpetrate bullying motivated by hate within school or in public places can be taken to court and cautioned, fined, sentenced to a community order or even receive a prison sentence.

Responsibilities:

The Headteacher has a legal duty to develop procedures to prevent bullying among students. The Headteacher will consider the reports with the SLT to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled with a view to improving the school's strategies. The Headteacher will provide a termly report to the Governing Body.

The Assistant Headteacher i/c Pastoral will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems and will ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help all parties. They will keep and consider reports on serious incidents, and provide a termly report, with statistics, to the Headteacher.

Heads of Year and Faculty will be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice. Careful consideration will be given to all evidence and circumstances before sanctions are decided. This will involve the pastoral Year Leader or Form Tutor discussing the incident with the parents/carers of both parties at the earliest opportunity.

Form Tutors will be responsible for liaising with the Year Leaders over any incidents involving pupils in their form, and will actively support the anti-bullying programme in the tutorial programme.

All Staff will:

- Know the policy and procedures.
- Deal with incidents according to the policy.
- Never let any incidents of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity.

Linked Policies

This policy is based on DfE guidance "*Preventing and Tackling Bullying*" July 2017 and supporting documents. It also takes into account the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education".

This Policy on bullying behaviour is linked with and reinforced by other school policies and practices such as:

- **Student Behaviour Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
- **Child on Child Abuse Policy**
- **Complaints Procedure**