

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **Equality Statement**

At Ullapool High School we will work with and develop each child to reach their full potential. We seek to maximise opportunities for all our young people regardless of gender, race, sexual identity, disability, religious or political beliefs.

## **Rationale**

Bullying can take place in the community at large; in the home; in the workplace; online and also in a school. National, Regional and School Policy seeks to eliminate all forms of bullying. Pupils must learn in an atmosphere in which they feel secure and equally valued without fear of harassment from any sector of the school population.

This can only be achieved with the total support of parents, pupils and all staff who must buy into the values and ethos of our school.

Our aim, when we encounter bullying behaviour, is to effect a positive change. As such we will follow the evidence of research that tells us that restorative approaches, in the long term, promote the required changes in individual behaviour that is required, as well as making a significant impact on the health and well-being of all parties involved. It should be made clear here that punitive sanctions can and will be part of a restorative approach but the evidence is clear that excessive punishment is not only ineffective but can in many situations be counter-productive.

## **Our Process**

We will seek to educate our pupils about the harmful effects of bullying behaviour, both on the 'victim' and on the perpetrator.

We will provide opportunities for pupils to report incidents in as clear and non-judgemental fashion as possible, utilising trained peer mediators where necessary.

We will listen carefully to what has happened, investigate and make a decision on how to best proceed. We are not trained investigators however, and as such the major part of our energies will not be spent on the past (which cannot be changed) but on future actions (which can).

We will make decisions based soundly on this need to modify future behaviour, and we will work with all parties concerned, including joint meetings to make these changes happen.

If, as a school, we see no major improvement in any given situation then we will seek to involve outside agencies to make use of their expertise and resources, and we will also consider periods of exclusion for the perpetrator(s).

We will provide support for all parties involved.

The school provides lessons on anti-bullying, which includes recognising the signs and what to do to make it stop. We also educate our young people in safety online, which also deals with 'internet' based forms of bullying. We work with agencies and their resources to provide these lessons E.g RASASH, Police, CEOP, Mental Health, LGBT Youth.

### **Definition**

It is difficult to come up with an all-encompassing definition of bullying. Playground rough and tumble and pupil 'banter' are part of everyday life and do form part of building the resilience of any individual.

However when aggressive, deliberate and premeditated intent is displayed by an individual pupil or group of pupils to inflict physical, emotional or mental suffering then bullying behaviour is being displayed. This is particularly pertinent if it is over a period of time and against the same person/group (though not always so). Any behaviour, which is the improper use of power in order to intimidate, threaten, cause distress or hurt others, is bullying behaviour.

### **Identifying Bullying**

The school is always on the look-out for potential bullying situations:

- a) HURTFUL COMMENTS e.g. concerning appearance, home situation, race, religion, sexual identity etc.
- b) THREATS/INTIMIDATION e.g. to beat up, to demand money etc.
- c) DAMAGE or THEFT e.g. of or to the clothing, equipment or belongings of a pupil.
- d) PHYSICAL ASSAULT e.g. pushing, shoving, tripping, beating up etc.
- e) ISOLATION e.g. deliberately not including or not talking to a pupil
- f) CYBER-BULLYING e.g. using social media as in a), b) or e)

## **Awareness of Bullying**

We have a great history of positive relations at this school, let's all take a responsibility in keeping it that way.

### **Pupils**

In order to help eliminate bullying behaviour:

- a) be alert to what is going on around them
- b) be sensitive to the needs of others
- c) be aware that watching and doing nothing rarely improves a situation and can suggest support for the bullying actions.
- d) speak out, or let someone know of any behaviour that worries you.

### **School Staff**

All staff within the school have a major role to play in tackling bullying behaviour. The most important part of this is to be alert to the potential and to act on any suspicions. This can be by direct intervention following the school's policy or by reporting concerns on to Guidance or the Head Teacher.

Situations in which to be particularly alert include pupils:

- a) new to the school
- b) different in speech or appearance
- c) who have low self-esteem
- d) who are nervous
- e) demonstrating tantrums or loss of control
- f) turning up late for registration or class
- g) lingering at the end of a period, especially before breaks or at close of school
- h) who attend erratically
- i) who show a deterioration in work, sometimes sudden
- j) who become withdrawn
- k) showing signs of being isolated
- l) failing to produce dinner money

Teachers also have a critical role in modelling acceptable behaviour.

## **Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers obviously know their child really well and will be amongst the first to notice changes in behaviour or mood in their children. It is important to note that not all changes may be the result of bullying but it is important that parents/carers feel that they can contact the school at any time if they have concerns or worries.

Some signs or behaviour at home that may indicate that your child is being bullied include:

They may:

- a) be frightened of walking to and from school
- b) be unwilling to go to school
- c) show a pattern of headaches and stomach aches
- d) beg you to drive them to school
- e) change their route to school
- f) begin to do poorly in their school work
- g) be reluctant to go on the school bus
- h) seem quiet and withdrawn when getting off the bus
- i) lose or have damaged personal or school possessions
- j) come home hungry (due to 'loss' of dinner money)
- k) suddenly have different friends
- l) ask for extra money, (maybe even take it), lose pocket money
- m) have mood changes, (depressed, withdrawn, lose confidence)
- n) have difficulty with sleeping, eating, talking to you
- o) insist everything is fine despite obvious problems to you
- p) self-harm
- q) be on their phone a lot/ or stop using their phone
- r) not be willing to discuss texts/messages and being upset after receiving them

If a parent/carer becomes aware of situations outwith school that are causing concern then sharing with guidance staff will help the school in dealing with any situations that may arise.

## **Further Information and Advice**

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<http://respectme.org.uk/>

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

## **Dealing with Bullying**

### **Pupils**

#### **If you are being bullied:**

Tell someone straight away. Do not try and be brave and put up with it. Do not think it will just go away – you do need help from a friend, teacher, parents or anyone you really feel you can talk to. Bullying is not normal behaviour so do not put up with it.

#### **If you see bullying:**

Tell someone at once. If you do not it can suggest that you support the bully and that you think what they are doing is O.K.

Do not put up with bullying in your group of friends. If their behaviour makes you uncomfortable tell them, don't join in.

### **Staff**

#### **Dealing with a reported incident**

If a pupil reports an incident, listen and see if there is anything you can do to help. Report as soon as possible to their Guidance Teacher

#### **Dealing with an immediate incident**

Take the incident seriously.

Remain calm; take control of the situation. An emotional reaction may further distress the pupil.

Take action as quickly as possible to find out what happened.

In your own class you will, of course, deal with an incident. Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated in Ullapool High School.

Reassure the victim(s): don't make them feel either inadequate or foolish. Support their decision to tell you.

Tell the pupil(s) what you will do next.

Pass on the information to the Guidance teacher of those involved.

*(This policy has been rechecked in the light of the publication of Respect for All in Nov 2017 by the Scottish Government and found to uphold the values therein)*

