MacIntyre School

Anti-Bullying
Policy and Procedures

School and Children's Home contacts
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Catherine Clifford* (Head of Education)
- **Designated Safeguarding Officers:** Jennifer Marshall*, Joanna Gondek, Louise Waters, Luke Vaughan, Abbie Staley.
- **Local Advisory Board Member with Responsibility for Safeguarding: Penny Thatcher**

* = Primary DSOs

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Contents

Contents

This Policy

This policy sets out the procedures governing the action to be taken to safeguard children and young people from bullying at MacIntyre School. Where this policy refers to MacIntyre School this includes the area of the School and on-site Children's Home and Hillside, and Woodland View the off- site Children's Home's in St Albans. It relates to issues of student to student bullying. Bullying by or of staff is covered in MacIntyre's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Introduction & Statement of Intent

MacIntyre School takes the issue of bullying very seriously. To that end we will ensure that the School, its activities, staffing and procedures are aimed at providing an environment in which children and young people feel secure and happy and in which their individual needs are met.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children and young people, so they can learn and live in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our School. We recognise the complex needs of our children and young people and that they need a great deal of support to understand what bullying is and what to do if they do not feel safe. If bullying does occur, all children and young people should be able to communicate this and to know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* School. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff so it can be dealt with.

However, we also recognise that, given the needs of our children and young people, it is unusual for premeditated, intentional bullying to take place between students (Refer to What is Bullying, below)

Definition: What Is Bullying?

Bullying may be defined as "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time and on purpose, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally". It is an abuse of power. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

There is no legal definition of bullying, however, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, e.g. because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (e.g. email, social networks and instant messenger)

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional**: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting. embarrassing (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical**: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist**: relating to race, religion or culture. Can include Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Extortion**: demanding money/goods with threats
- **Sexual/sexist**: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic**: Abuse because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Transphobic**: because of gender identity or perceived gender identity
- **Verbal**: Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber**: use of social media, messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology e.g photos and videos.

Our young people also may be vulnerable to bullying related to their Special Educational Needs, appearance, or health conditions.

Bullying, Autism, and Severe Learning Disabilities

The majority of our children and young people have a diagnosis of autism as well as severe learning disabilities (SLD). Because of the severity and complexity of their disabilities they are extremely vulnerable to mistreatment from others. Recognising that they are being bullied and being able to communicate this to someone else is very difficult for students at our School.

Children with an autism have difficulty 'reading' social situations and knowing how to engage in ever-changing social contexts. They find it hard to predict other people's behaviour and to interpret their body language and expressions to guess what they are thinking or feeling. This makes it difficult for children with autism to understand other people's intentions, and makes them an easy target for bullies. They may be especially vulnerable to bullying in the community. In an ever-changing world cyber-bullying, on-line or via mobile phones, is an increasing problem for all young people, and for the reasons described above even more so for those whose needs lie on the spectrum.

Due to difficulties with 'Theory of Mind' most children with autism have very little understanding of the feelings of others. Therefore, behaviours toward others are unlikely to be 'deliberately hurtful'. For example: Child A may frequently target Child B, not because they want to upset them but because the reaction or response from child B will be functional and meet a need.

Young people with autism can make direct, literal comments but have no intention of causing upset to others when they do so, they simply 'say what they see'. Such comments cannot be considered as bullying, but they need to be addressed so the child learns about the impact of their remarks and how to interact more appropriately.

Bullying and the needs of our children will be explored through training and staff will be skilled at understanding and addressing incidents from their knowledge of autism and SLD.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

There is considerable evidence to show that bullying has both short term and longer term impact on students. Bullying impacts on students' wellbeing, can impact on attendance and become a significant barrier to learning. Bullying is associated with lower levels of school engagement and achievement both in primary and secondary schools and can lead to mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression.

Bullying is unacceptable. Our school will respond promptly and effectively to reported incidents of bullying.

In our school community:
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Everybody has the right to feel happy and safe.
- No-one deserves to be a target of bullying.
- Students who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.

Preventing Bullying

All staff must be aware of the interaction between students and alert to direct and indirect communication of fear, distress or injury, or the need of any student to release their own anger or distress by inflicting pain on another.

All those working with students in any capacity must always model a caring approach, showing respect for others and using appropriate ways to communicate their emotions.

It is important to have a "Positive Approach" when dealing with behaviours of concern. A positive approach is about believing that, despite the presence of even severe behaviours, there is a way to help. It can also acknowledge that the person may always have behaviours of concern but that, with the right resources and environment, these can be reduced by having a focus upon improving people wellbeing, quality of life and by teaching new skills to replace behaviours of concern.

At MacIntyre School we are committed to preventing bullying. We use the following methods:

- We provide young people with clear message and expectations to promote respectful relationships, language, and positive behaviour.
- We recognise and celebrate diversity.
- We ensure that students have appropriate targets relating to behaviour.
- Our curriculum helps students to understand how to stay safe and look after personal wellbeing.
- We support students to develop the personal, social and emotional skills that help protect
- them from bullying.
- Students are taught and encouraged to report bullying incidents to staff.
- Anti-bullying student friendly policy is accessible to all (based in classrooms)
- We address online safety with students and parents/carers.
- We have defined levels of supervision for students between lessons, at breaks and lunchtime.

- Provide students with safe places and people that they can go to if they are feeling vulnerable.
- Using social stories about bullying.
- Displaying signs saying what to do if students are worried or upset.
- We encourage our young people to make complaints.
- Provide staff with robust training on anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Each student's Positive Placement Plan will identify their individual support needs to help keep them and others safe.

Reporting Bullying

The School will take proactive measures to ensure that bullying does not occur. However, if and when it does the following action will be taken:

1. The students are separated and the injured party comforted and First Aid administered if required;
2. If the child or young person exhibiting behaviour that has caused distress cannot be immediately appeased those present must remember that it is better for property to be damaged rather than people injured. If physical intervention is found to be necessary it must be specific to the student in question, in accordance with his/her guidelines Positive Behaviour Support Plan (Positive Placement Plan), the School's Positive Behaviour Support Policy.
3. Report the incident immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Officer
4. A Concerns Form must be completed as soon as practical after the incident and a informed. The incident must also be recorded on Behaviourwatch. A record of concern will be kept in each young person's folder held in the safeguarding storage
5. If actual injury or great distress has occurred, the parent/guardian and social worker of both young people must be informed as soon as practical.
6. If incidents are persistent or an injury is severe a report will be made to the First Response Safeguarding Team for children or adults as appropriate.
7. The Designated Safeguarding Officer or senior member of staff managing the incident will convene a meeting of the key staff working with both students to examine and identify ways of preventing a recurrence of the incident. They will also ensure that the positive behaviour support team and relevant team members are fully involved. The following points will be discussed:
   - The appropriateness of the victim's class and residential placement;
   - Frequency and severity of occurrences;
   - Are we confident that there is no hidden bullying going on?
   - Staff numbers in class and children's home;
   - Supervision of the students and appropriateness of placement
   - An action plan will be drawn up as part of the Positive Behaviour Support Plan to endeavour to prevent a reoccurrence of the incident(s).

8. Students are encouraged to raise complaints where they feel that bullying has/or may occur. Where students are unable to access raise the complaint themselves, staff MUST advocate on their behalf.
9. The report should be discussed by a Designated Safeguarding Officer and the person completing it within 24 hours. The outcome of the meeting must be recorded including a plan for resolving the issue

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
- All reported incidents of bullying to be recorded and investigated

- Incidents of bullying to be reviewed monthly
- Any data with regard to bullying to be reported to LAB termly, or as requested

Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
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Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
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Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
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References
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and
governing bodies July 2017
Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff. (DfE Nov 2014)
Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders (NAS 2009)
Human Rights Act 1998
The Disability and the Equality Act 2010
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
Education and Inspections Act 2007

The policy should be read alongside MacIntyre School's:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- On line Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Curriculum Policy
- Complaints Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MACINTYRE DIRECTORS
- To approve the School's Anti-bullying Policy

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD (LAB) MEMBERS
- To ensure that the School policy is regularly reviewed and conforms to relevant law and guidance
- Oversee the implementation of the policy with reference to the health and safety of children and staff and the School's Safeguarding Policy
- Keep themselves informed through regular meetings with staff and visits to the School
- To scrutinise data reporting on bullying.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM
- To oversee the implementation of the policy, including inclusion in induction and ongoing training for staff, volunteers and students on placement.
- To ensure the ethos of a caring, respectful and safe environment is evident throughout the School
- To ensure effective joint working with other agencies
- To make recommendations for any amendments
- To ensure appropriate learning opportunities, regarding bullying, are delivered to children and young people.
- To oversee the monitoring and investigation of all allegations of bullying, ensuring parents are informed and that appropriate interventions are put in place.
- To analyse data and report to Local Advisory Board on bullying.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF
- To notify the Senior Leadership Team of incidents of bullying and to follow the appropriate procedures.
- Senior managers are responsible for ensuring all staff are well supported and have the opportunity for post incident debriefings
- All employees have a duty of care that requires them to act in the young person's best interest and to treat all young people we support fairly, with respect and understanding
- All persons have a duty to report any concerns about practice to the Senior Leadership Team, or if appropriate to the Director of Education
- To respond to all children and young people in a calm and positive manner
- To provide positive role models to all children and young people, ensuring that their behaviour reflects the good practice of the school.
- To value every child and young person even if their behaviour needs a high level of support
- Where appropriate to enable and support children and young people to understand what bullying is, how it may affect them and others and how to manage challenging situations.
- To work with their team, staff in other settings, students, parents and carers to ensure that strategies are developed together and that there is continuity of approach.

RESPONSIBILITES OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT
- To follow guidance given
- To request support and advice when necessary

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
- To respect those around them and treat them as they would wish to be treated.
- To work with staff to develop a set of rules – through Class and House meetings
- To follow the School's rules
- To report all incidents of bullying to a member of staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILIES
- To keep the School informed about concerns, problems and family circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour or well-being.
- To work with staff to plan and implement individual support plans to recognise and combat bullying behaviours

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and symptoms of bullying and should investigate if they observe changes to behaviour such as: if a child -

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus / taxi
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive and intentional act carried out by an individual or group using electronic forms of communication repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves.

This may include:
- Bullying by text, message or calls on mobile phones
- The use of images to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites
- Using e-mail to bully others
- Hijacking or cloning e-mail accounts

MacIntyre School believes that all students have a right not to be bullied and that all bullying is always unacceptable. As a school we would also intervene in bullying perpetrated outside the school. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives additional legal powers to the school which relate more directly to cyber-bullying. The school has the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of students when they are off site. The Act also provides a defence for school staff in confiscating items such as mobile phones from students. MacIntyre School take these powers and responsibilities seriously and, aware that many people with autism are the victims of cyber-bullying, will use them to protect their students in and out of school.

Legal Issues
While there is no specific law relating to bullying, there are laws which are particularly relevant to cyber-bullying including:

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which has both criminal and civil provisions) makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

The Malicious Communications Act 1988, makes it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person. Under section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 it is a similar offence to send a telephone message which is indecent, offensive or threatening.

Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. A person is also guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another by means of a public electronic communications network or a message that he/she knows to be false.

Procedures
MacIntyre School puts a great deal of emphasis on educating students to be safe online. This involves both being safe and from becoming victim of cyber-bullying or a perpetrator. This is covered in all areas of the curriculum and wider pastoral system and is rooted in real life examples and practice.

Staff must be able to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and anti-bullying systems are in place to respond to it.

All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be particularly invasive into

areas that would otherwise be considered private and safe at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts. The school will always support victims and will, when necessary, work with the police to detect those involved in criminal acts. While the school will always strive to develop the behaviour of students who bully, it will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent students from committing crimes or misusing equipment.

All members of the school community will be aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

Guidance for Staff
Staff who suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident should follow this procedure:

Mobile Phones
- Ask the student to show you the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image including the date, time and names
- Make a transcript of a spoken message noting date, times and names
- Tell the student to save the message/image
- Inform the E-Safety Coordinator or the Designated Child Protection Officer team and pass all information that you have

Computers (including tablets)
- Ask the student to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the student to save the material if they can
- If possible, print off the offending material straight away
- Inform the E-Safety Coordinator or the Designated Child Protection Officer team and pass all information that you have

Guidance for Students
If you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/carer, or a member of staff at school.
- Do not answer abusive messages
- Save all abusive messages and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your parents/carer or a member of staff at school (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Never reply to someone you do not know

Guidance for Parents/Carers
It is vital that parents/carers and the school work together to ensure that all students are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying.
- Where appropriate parents should help their child understand the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying
- Parents should also help their child understand the legal issues relating to cyber-bullying
- If parents/carers believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material

Parents should contact the school as soon as possible. We will do all it can to support victims and change offending behaviour.