MARR COLLEGE

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
JUNE 2022

Contents

1.   Rationale

Marr College Core Values

CARE

Community Ambition Respect Equality

At Marr College we want our young people to feel welcome and safe and able to build positive relationships with their peers and with adults. We aim to be an inclusive, caring, welcoming and friendly school and have high aspirations for all our learners. We CARE about all our young people and support each other's wellbeing and aim to provide a supportive environment that promotes mutual respect.

2. Our Vision for Marr College

We strive to make Marr College a caring school and a centre of excellence for learning in our community. We are proud of our heritage and together we nurture and encourage all learners to be ambitious and develop the knowledge, skills and attributes to thrive and achieve in our ever-changing world.

Our learning, our leadership and our improvements are focused on bringing this vision to life in all that we do at Marr College. This Anti-bullying policy has been created with the input of staff and student focus groups and from feedback provided by parents and carers.

> *Proud of our past, ambitious for our future.*
>
> *Together, we are Marr*

Our Aims

To **develop the capacities** of our young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.

To **create a positive, caring school ethos** that promotes inclusion and equality and fosters a strong sense of belonging where everyone feels valued and respected.

To **raise attainment** through developing a culture of ambition and achievement, providing active and engaging learning experiences that meets the needs of our learners, enhances their critical thinking skills and supports and challenges them to take personal responsibility for their learning.

To **create a dynamic and innovative curriculum** that inspires and encourages creativity and provides learners with the knowledge, skills and attributes to thrive in our ever-changing world.

To ensure our teaching and learning is of the highest standard and harnesses the potential that **digital learning** offers.

To develop close working **relationships** between school, home, partners and the wider community, promoting participation and actively involving parents in supporting their child's learning.

To promote and **celebrate achievement** and enrich learners' experiences through culture, sport and encouraging creativity, innovation and enterprise.

To **empower** our school community to develop leadership at all levels, working with our students, staff, parents and partners to evaluate the quality of education we provide and build on our **capacity and capability to improve.**

To support staff to be self-reflective and access high quality **professional learning** that leads to improved outcomes for all our young people.

To ensure all young people are supported towards achieving a **positive and sustained destination.**

3. Definition of Bullying

In Scotland we describe bullying as behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or demeaned.

- Bullying is defined by its impact on the person/people affected as a result of the intended or unintended behaviour and actions of others. Bullying behaviour impacts on the wellbeing of those affected and results in a reduced sense of self-esteem and a negative impact on wellbeing. Bullying behaviour is typically characterised by the individual's involved perceiving difference between themselves and others.

- Bullying can be expressed through physical, emotional, verbal or intimidating behaviour or in the form of marginalisation. People can be bullied on the grounds of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, nationality, religion or other real or perceived difference.

> **Definition of Bullying:**
>
> Bullying is both behaviour and the impact it has on the other person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this their 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. It is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out and it can happen face to face an online.   **Respectme**

- Bullying can be subtle or it can be overt. It can cause short-term suffering for the pupil who experiences bullying behaviour or it can have long-term effects.

4. What does bullying look like?

Bullying behaviour can include:

- Name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening;
- Ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours;
- Pushing, hitting, tripping and kicking;
- Taking and damaging belongings;
- Online bullying: sending abusive texts, email or instant messages
- Intimidation and extortion e.g. taking someone's lunch money;
- Making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied; and
- Targeting someone because of who they are or are perceived to be.

respectme is Scotland's anti-bullying service and its vision is of a respecting, just, equal and inclusive Scotland in which all children and young people can live free from bullying and harassment and are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Marr College shares this vision and promotes a culture where bullying behaviour is not acceptable. We are committed to establishing a caring, learning community where all members are valued and everyone has a responsibility to promote respect, openness, honesty and understanding.

5. Who is bullied?

Many individuals are bullied as a consequence of prejudice-based bullying behaviours:

- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or beliefs
- Gender reassignment
- Care Experienced Young People
- Young Carers
- Young People living in deprivation (Socio-economic)
- Body image
- Sectarianism

  More information can be found at:
  https://respectme.org.uk/bullying/prejudice-based-bullying/

6. Why does bullying behaviour happen?

There are a number of variables that could lead someone to bully:

- They are in a culture that supports/accepts bullying
- Seeking to gain control and power over a situation
- They are modelling what they have seen in other environments
- They may have been bullied themselves
- Bullying others to prevent it from happening to them too
- They are not aware of its effects or impacts of bullying
- They don't perceive their behaviour as bullying
- Prejudiced views
- All behaviour communicates feelings. Bullying behaviour is no different

7. Signs of bullying occurring

- Change of friendship groups
- Lack of friends
- School rejection
- 'Illness' at certain times or on certain days
- Change in standard of work
- Withdrawal/sudden lack of confidence
- Severe cases of depression

8. Impact of bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviours do not only impact bullied individuals but also families, organisations and culture/society.

Impact on individuals

- RAW (Resist Acquiesce Withdraw)
- Anticipation of bullying
- School attendance
- Eating disorders
- Violence towards others
- Suicide
- Limited aspirations
- Self-harm
- Depression
- Bullying behaviour
- Wellbeing concerns emerge (SHANARRI)

Impact on families

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Anticipation
- Strained relationships
- Helplessness
- Concerns regarding authority figures/establishments
- Aggression in the household
- Isolation

9. LGBT Bullying

At Marr College we work to prevent LGBT bullying in the same manner as any other form of bullying. As a result, we will respond to LGBT bullying in the same way we do for all other observed or reported incidents.

LGBT bullying can extend to any individual in our school community. Behaviour of this nature can include:

- Being singled-out, treated differently or subjected because an individual identifies as LGBT or are assumed to be LGBT.
- Being subjected because family members identify as LGBT.
- Being "outed" without permission.
- Spreading of rumours/ spreading hearsay with malicious intent.
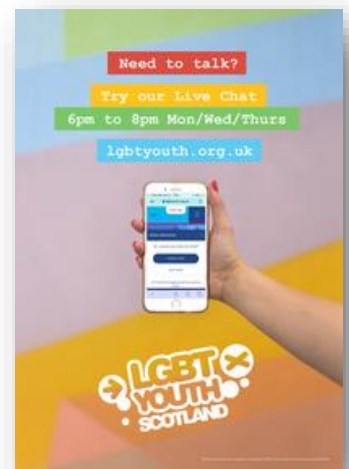
Staff, pupils, parents and carers are expected to challenge inappropriate use of language such as "that's gay", silence only encourages homophobic/ biphobic and transphobic language. No individual should be subjected to bullying-related language, and as a school we do not tolerate it.

At Marr College we work to exercise discretion and respect when responding to LGBT bullying incidents. We also have a duty to respect a young person's confidentiality. Any LGBT bullying incidents are expected to be referred to the appropriate Principal Teacher of Guidance using SEEMIS. The young people involved will be spoken to, sanctions will be issued and, where necessary, parents/ carers will be contacted. In addition to this, we work in close partnership with our Campus Police Officer to ensure the safety of all individuals and seek their professional input regarding issues that warrant potential charges of Hate Crime.

We have a thriving Marr Allies group who meet weekly on a Thursday lunchtime in room 135. This is a safe place where LGBT young people and LGBT allies can meet with like-minded peers. The lead teacher of the group will take appropriate action if a bullying incident is disclosed by a student. Every year Marr Allies deliver LGBT Rights workshops to S1 students. A key focus of the workshop is LGBT bullying and the impact of this on the lives of LGBT people and their families. All year groups also receive anti LGBT bullying input during assemblies and Personal Support as part of LGBT Youth Scotland's Purple Friday which takes place in February each year.

10. Guidance Regarding Online Bullying

The following information is sourced from content from **respectme**, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service, website.

What is online bullying?
Online bullying is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through emails, instant messaging and social networking websites. Texts, messages or images are sent or posted on sites, which hurt, intimidate or embarrass another person. The identity of the person carrying out the online bullying can be hidden from the person targeted. Online bullying is no different from any other forms of bullying behaviour; the behaviour is the same and the impact is no less devastating. Advances in technology are simply providing an alternative means of reaching people.

For young people the internet is something that allows them to connect with friends and other young people at any time of the day or night. This means that online bullying can happen virtually anywhere, and is no longer confined to the classroom or playground. Young people can be targeted in their own homes, in their bedrooms and personal spaces where they should feel safe and protected.

Most young people do use technology responsibly. Disconnecting mobile phones or the internet will not make bullying behaviour stop. All adults need to take an active interest in the way technology is being used by young people and connect with them at home, at school and in our communities.

Mobile phones

Most people are familiar with the use of mobile phones and the ability to send and receive text messages, but the additional features that many mobiles have these days, such as picture messaging and video recording, provide an additional way of communicating. Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and airdrop technology also provides a way of connecting and exchanging information between mobile phones, laptops, PCs, printers, digital cameras, and video game consoles. This makes it much easier for large groups of people to view information in a very short space of time.

Social networking sites

Social networking websites are increasingly used by young people (and indeed by many adults) as a way of communicating and building relationships, or making new friends online. Sites such as Facebook are online 'communities' of people who share interests and activities, and communicate through the use of messages, videos, discussion groups and blogs, which are similar to online diaries. It is a place where people can create a personal network that connects them to others.

11. Expectations and Responsibilities

Head Teachers and Senior Leaders of Schools and Other Educational Establishments.
All Head Teachers and managers of schools employed by South Ayrshire Council shall:

- Be responsible for ensuring that their establishment has comprehensive, clear policies outlining preventative measures and a range of strategies in response to bullying behaviour that are in line with authority guidelines.
- Consult with and familiarise staff, young people, parents and carers, including Parent Council members, with the content of these policies, encouraging them to be active partners in minimising bullying and its impact on young people.
- Ensure that key staff undergo mental health and suicide prevention training, so as to be well-equipped in the appropriate language required to assess risk and support all young people; encourage all other staff working in schools to undergo awareness raising training.
- Regularly monitor and ensure training of all staff about bullying behaviour and responding to bullying.
- Insist upon all incidents of bullying reported or witnessed being recorded as soon as possible and responded to in accordance with anti-bullying policies, with actions taken and outcomes being recorded.
- Liaise as necessary with outside agencies to address the needs of individuals.
- Regularly monitor, whilst auditing annually, in consultation with staff and young people, about bullying incidents and the effectiveness of staff responses to minimise the negative impact on the young person.
- These monitoring duties may be delegated to a promoted member of staff e.g. Depute Head Teacher, who shall follow up incidents and ensure that these have been addressed in line with the schools agreed policy.
- Provide appropriate annual data when requested by the Director of Education Services.

**Expectations and Responsibilities of all staff and Principal Teachers of Guidance**

- Listen to and record information from staff, young people and parents/ carers
- Consider the views of the young person
- Assess if remedial action can be taken to resolve the situation
- Consider if a wider investigation will be required
- Liaise with parents/ carers and, where appropriate, wider agencies
- Communicate with staff to seek their support in minimising the impact of bullying in the classroom environment
- Review SEEMIS referrals. (SEEMIS is a digital tracking software used to gather and organise data, such as attendance, qualifications, reports and referrals)
- Collate Bullying Incident Forms
- Track and record incidents using SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module
- If appropriate, update chronology/ staged intervention paperwork/wellbeing applications
- Keep in regular contact with young people and ensure an outcome is reached and agreed on by all parties involved

Expectations and Responsibilities of Young People

- Follow guidance detailed within the school's anti-bullying policy
- Participate in any consultation regarding anti-bullying
- Treat your peers with respect
- If you think you are being bullied seek help by confiding in someone you trust
- Discuss and agree what options are available.
- If the bullying is online there are many useful strategies that can be used
- Be aware of what you post and share online, and treat people with the same respect as you would if they were in the room.
- If you see someone else being bullied report it to a trusted adult
- Use items such as 'worry' or 'bully' boxes or digital tools (e.g. QR Code Posters) for sharing concerns
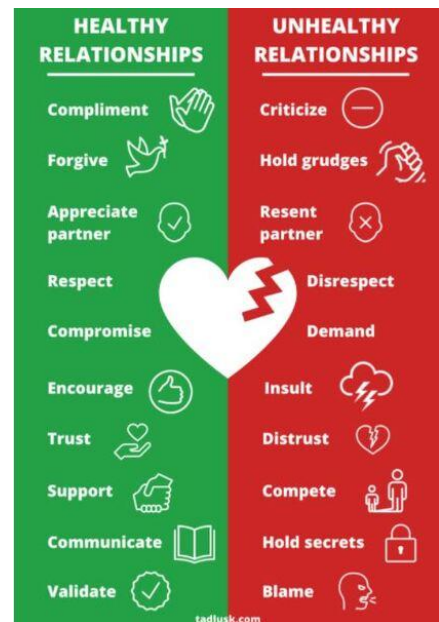
Expectations of Parents and Carers

- Familiarise yourself with the schools anti-bullying policy
- Actively listen to your child or young person when they tell you about a suspected bullying incident
- Stay calm
- Take a lead from your child as to what pace to go at. This will help restore their feeling of being in control
- Ask them what they want you to do
- Explore options together; there is never one single answer
- Telling young people to 'hit back' is a common response but not necessarily the best or safest option
- Contact the school and ask for an appointment
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve the situation. Don't expect the situation to be fully resolved at the first meeting, that won't always be possible
- Keep channels of communication open until the situation is resolved
- Participate in any consultation regarding anti-bullying
- Attend any training offered on anti-bullying

12. Legislation

Staff, pupils and parents all have a duty in relation to bullying, and expectations in this regard are indicated in:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/
- Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright
- Children and Young People Act (2014) http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/6827/0

Within the UNCRC bullying is clearly a breach of Children's Rights. The UNCRC is at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos and article 2 states (without discrimination):

"the convention applies to every child whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, no matter what type of family they come from."

Article 2 (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.	**Article 3** (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.	**Article 14** (freedom of thought, belief and religion) Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.
Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights.	**Article 29** (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.	**Article 42** (knowledge of rights) Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

Under the UNCRC, all young people have the right not to be discriminated against or treated unfairly; to be treated in their best interests and to have their rights respected, protected and fulfilled. Young people have the right to say what they think and have their opinions taken into account; to get and share information and to think and believe what they want, as long as this is not damaging to others. Young people have a right to meet together and join groups as long as they do not stop others.

They have a right to respect their rights, freedoms and reputations. They should have a right to privacy and protection from attacks against their way of life, good name, families and homes; and they have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically and mentally. Young people have a right to an education which encourages them to respect their own and other cultures. Bullying behaviour goes against many of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child articles and may prevent children and young people from enjoying their full rights and developing their full potential in learning and in life. In Marr College we believe school is an environment where young people's dignity should be respected at all times and where personality, talents and abilities should be encouraged to shine and be celebrated.

The Equality Act 2010

This act provides protection from discrimination, harassment and victimization based on a range of "protected characteristics". These characteristics are defined in the Act as:

- Race;
- Sex;
- Disability;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religion or belief;
- Age;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity; and
- Marriage and civil partnership

In addition to the Protected Characteristics covered by the Act, there is an expectation that other groups will be considered, for example:

- Care experienced young people;
- Young carers;
- Young people living in deprivation; and
- Body image issues

More information can be found at:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-schools-scotland

13. Responding to Bullying

Our approach to bullying is rooted in, and clearly reflects, our values of community, respect, ambition and equality. Responses to bullying also focus on developing resilience and promoting positive relationships between young people.

At Marr College we look to prevent bullying through:

- Educating young people during Personal and Social Education classes
- Through wellbeing scans in Personal Support at the start of the day
- Assemblies
- Online through digital platforms, such as Teams
- School website
- Restorative practices
- Health and Wellbeing programmes
- All staff aware of the school's approach to managing incidents

The focus of this work is to attempt to help young people understand the impact that bullying has on people. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying behaviour and there are consequences for young people who engage in bullying behaviours.

When an incident takes place, we look to act quickly and work with those involved to bringing it to an end:

- We listen to the young people involved and interview any witnesses
- Staff will report incidents to the relevant Guidance teacher and Head of House (DHT)
- Guidance teachers work together to speak those involved
- We communicate with parents/carers
- Staff work together with the young people involved to bring the situation to a positive end in which both parties feel listened to, and respected
- We discuss if there is a need for further support for those involved
- Log incidents on SEEMIS
- If action is required to be taken, we make it clear that the behaviour shown is unacceptable
- We identify appropriate consequences for the young person or persons displaying bullying behaviour

To bring the incident to a close

At Marr College we use a restorative approach that involves both parties and Guidance staff. We look to help and support the young person experiencing this behaviour and also to help educate the young person displaying this behaviour and look at the reasons for their behaviour.

Repair and rebuild – restorative questions:

THE FACT	What happened? What were you thinking at the time?
THE CONSEQUENCES	How did this make you feel? Who else has been affected?
THE FUTURE	What should we do to put things right? How can we do things differently in the future?

14. Consultations

Learner Voice

A series of S1-S6 student focus groups met in October 2021 to support a review of our Anti-bullying policy. The group identified additional ways in which to prevent and manage incidents and how to restore relationships.

Some of these are currently in use and others should be considered as part of the approach to address bullying:

- More awareness that Marr College as a school takes bullying seriously through use of posters, screens and banners to promote anti-bullying

- Use of senior pupils to promote positive attitudes towards others and to develop a caring and supportive approach to others
- Senior pupils delivering lessons on bullying behaviours
- Use of a designated space to inform that bullying is taking place
- Digital solutions, such as a Microsoft Form for pupils to fill in and send to a Guidance teacher
- A safe place for young people to go to
- Staff to be visible to help stop incidents occurring
- Education on how to use social media more responsibly
- A club for young people that are and have experienced acts of bullying
- Consequences, including detentions and restorative duties within the school
- Minor incidents recorded and dealt with to stop them developing
- Make sure young people know they can talk to any staff member
- Monitor young people who display bullying behaviours
- Posters at school/House doors
- Reminders through Personal Support

Consultation with pupils and parents.

After the learner voice focus groups, we consulted with pupils, parents and staff through Microsoft Forms and received positive feedback on the policy and several suggestions that could improve our approach to prevention, dealing with and ending bullying behaviour.

These include:
- **Improving awareness and make information visual around the school.**
  Launch of the Anti-Bullying policy with posters displayed around the school, information on the school website for all to access and twitter/press to promote the new policy.
  Specific use of Personal Support and PSE classes to continually raise awareness

- **Senior pupil involvement.**
  Seniors will be involved in leading PSE lessons and activities during Anti-bullying week in November.

- **Reporting of bullying behaviour.**
  New Microsoft Form specifically for reporting bullying to Guidance teachers. Clear instructions for learners and staff to report incidents. Students felt that the best way to find out how to report bullying behaviours would be in their PSE class.

- **Support groups**
  S6 Mental health Ambassadors will continue to run drop-in sessions

- **Visible staff**
  This has always been a practice of the school, with a rota for teachers to volunteer to help supervise at interval and lunch.

- **Restorative practices.**
  This is a very well-developed part of working with young people and bringing bullying to an end at Marr College. This was incorporated into the lessons in June to build awareness.

15.   Policy Review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and wellbeing.

When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- Feedback from pupils
- Feedback from staff, including our Campus Officer
- Feedback from parents
- Records of bullying and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the local authority or other relevant organisations

Further information and advice

- If a child is being bullied and would like to speak to an adult in confidence, they can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111
- ChildLine - ChildLine's website has a bullying section for young people and adults. Visit www.childline.org.uk
- As a parent, if you are worried about your child and would like further information or advice, you can visit www.parentlinescotland.org.uk
- Respectme - Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service. This website offers practical advice and guidance for adults on addressing bullying behaviour. There is also a section specifically for children and young people offering practical advice on what to do if they're being bullied. Visit www.respectme.org.uk
- Further information on homophobic bullying and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people – LGBT Youth Scotland: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk
- Childnet International works in partnership with various organisations to help make the internet a safe place for children. Visit www.childnet.com
- CEOP - The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre website provides information and advice for online safety. Visit https://ceop.police.uk
- For further information on children's rights and the work of UNICEF around the World www.unicef.org.uk