



Maesteg School

Anti-Bullying Policy

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

WHAT IS BULLYING?

“Bullying is a series of abusive or aggressive acts which can hurt, threaten or frighten you. There are a lot of different types, including emotional, physical and verbal bullying, and can be as a result of a person’s age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. It is often targeted for specific reasons or it can be random. It can leave a person with low self-esteem, and leave them feeling isolated and traumatised”.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality;
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
- Cyber – texting abusive messages or rumours via mobile phone or internet, emailing abuse, spreading photo/video images via phones or internet

Staff, parents and pupils at Maesteg School work together to create a happy, caring and safe learning environment. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated. It is everyone’s responsibility to try to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Bullying may be brought to the attention of any member of staff by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or any other person.

Maesteg School is part of the Restorative Justice in Schools project. This means the School has an independent and impartial mediator available to help resolve any conflicts within the school, including bullying. It is also used as a preventative measure before a situation becomes serious.

This project has led to the establishment of Peer Mediation in the school. Peer Mediators have been trained, and help any pupil with any bullying issues like those listed above. All mediation is confidential, although of course Child Protection rules are adhered to. (Leaflets with more information are available in school and on request.)

Maesteg School is also part of the BCBC Anti-Bullying Task Group – Pilot project which means we are a school that is using SIMS to record and report all behaviour incidents. As a result of this we will be able to use data collected to inform us of any issues surrounding bullying and conflict within the school.

BULLYING IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL ISSUE

Research has shown that success in reducing bullying depends on adopting a whole school approach. As well as developing procedures to deal with bullying, the school tackles the problem of bullying through the curriculum in the following ways:

- Tutor session activities
- PSE
- Anti-bullying Week
- Drama
- Transition work
- Work in English using appropriate texts
- Focus on developing Emotional Intelligence across the curriculum
- Year 7 pupils are trained in Internet Safety

All school staff try to develop positive, supportive relationships with the pupils, and to listen to them at any time. Good communication with parents is also recognised as crucial.

The school has developed strategies at lunchtimes to avoid potential bullying issues, including trained dinner supervisors, quiet rooms, Peer Mediators and a range of planned activities.

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Parental support is often key to success in anti-bullying initiatives. The School offers information to parents by means of newsletters, the school prospectus, displays at Parents and Open Evenings and other communications. The following advice is given:

- Take an active role in your child's education by asking how their day has gone, who they spent their time with at lunch time etc.
- Look for unusual behaviour in your child, e.g. not wanting to come to school.
- Reassure your child that there is nothing wrong with him or her – it is not their fault.
- Do not advise your child to fight back, since this can make matters worse.
- Encourage your child to ask for help at school.
- Inform the school yourself if you feel your child may be a victim of bullying. Ask to speak to your child's Head of House.
- Request information on Peer Mediation and Restorative Justice available through the school and ask for these strategies to be used.
- If you feel your concerns are not being addressed, check the policy to see if the agreed procedures are being followed. If you are still unhappy, make an appointment with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

STRATEGIES FOR PUPILS

There are a number of ways pupils can report incidents of bullying: the important thing is that they do tell an adult straight away, either at home or in school. Pupils should remember that their silence is the bully's greatest weapon. Once an incident is reported, the school will record the details on a bullying document and also via SIMS which will include names, details, action taken and monitoring. The following advice should be given:

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied: it is WRONG
- Try not to show that you are upset
- Stay with a group of friends / people somewhere where there is plenty of staff supervision
- Be assertive. Shout 'NO'. Walk confidently away and go straight to a member of staff
- Talk to your form tutor, or Head of House if you prefer
- Go to one of the Peer Mediators (in The Anti-Bullying Room) or ask to use the school's Restorative Justice process
- Remember that the school does not tolerate bullying, and that bullies will be punished – but the school must know about it first.
- Ask your parents or carers to contact the school to tell your Tutor/ Head of House what is happening

PROCEDURES

- Report bullying incidents to any member of staff or Peer Mediator.
- Peer Mediators (2 pupils from each year group) will "man" The Anti-Bullying Room.
- All incidents of bullying are recorded via SIMS and subsequently reports are generated which enable us as a school to address needs surrounding bullying (In line with BCBC Anti-Bullying Task Group-Pilot Project and also under the recommendation of ESTYN Action of Bullying)
- The incident will be recorded and an investigation undertaken
- Coping strategies will be planned for the victim to avoid the situation
- In serious cases, parents will be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem. Restorative Justice will be offered at this point
- Sanctions will be placed on the bully, including (as appropriate) contacting home, detention, use of Rebuild and Reflection Room or in extreme cases, exclusion
- New pupils/staff will be made aware of this policy and how it operates

DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be monitored to ensure it is really effective. Regular reminders will be given, including at parents' evenings and other school events. The views of pupils will be sought to inform this process.

The policy will be reviewed annually.