

MAESTEG SCHOOL

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Headteacher / Pennaeth: H. Jones B.A. (Hons) N.P.Q.H.

At Maesteg School, our pupils, staff and governors define bullying as:

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

It can be verbal, physical, or psychological. It can happen online or face to face.

(Antibullying Alliance)

As a school community we know that there are distinctive elements to bullying behaviour; these include but are not limited to:

- **intention to harm** – bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm. Those who bully others are often skilled at knowing exactly how to humiliate or hurt their target, picking on key aspects of their appearance, personality or identity that produces the effect wanted. They seek out the area in which they have power over their target.
- **harmful outcome** – someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally. They can be isolated, humiliated or made fearful. Their sense of self-worth is reduced
- **direct or indirect acts** – bullying can involve direct aggression such as hitting, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours, revealing private information about someone, or sharing intimate images with people for whom the information/images were not intended.
- **repetition** – bullying usually involves repeated acts of negative behaviour or acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, such as a fight, is not usually considered bullying. Yet any incident can be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour which develops subsequently. That is why incident records are so valuable
- **unequal power** – bullying involves the abuse of power by one person or a group who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, popularity, or psychological resilience.

As a school community we recognise that bullying behaviour can take many forms:

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- **Prejudice related** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;

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- **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.
- **Indirect** - sly or underhand actions carried out behind the target's back or rumour-spreading
- **Relational aggression** - bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's additional educational needs (ALN) or long-term illness, targeting their family's social status, isolating, or humiliating someone or deliberately getting someone into trouble.

As a school community, we also understand that some behaviour, although unacceptable is not bullying. It is our priority to deal effectively and efficiently with conflict between pupils, so it does not become a bullying issue. The following would not be considered examples of bullying behaviour.

- friendship fallouts
- a one-off fight
- an argument or disagreement.
- A one-off physical assault.
- Incidents of "banter".
- A one-off incident of hate crime.

As a school and wider community, we do not tolerate bullying of any kind. We work hard to ensure that Maesteg School is a happy, caring and learning environment. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent occurrences of bullying. Our staff will deal with any such incidents immediately and effectively. We encourage all our pupils to tell a responsible adult either in school or at home about any incident of bullying. However, we understand pupils' concerns that telling an adult might make the bullying worse. In such cases, we encourage our pupils to reach out to forms tutors, using the SKODL platform.

To enable our school community to eradicate conflict and bullying incidents, we promise to:

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- To record all incidents of bullying and relationship conflict. Assistant Progress Leaders, Progress Leaders and SLT links will record on SIMS and follow up incidents with regular check-ins with affected pupils.
- To inform parents of all incidents of bullying and relationship conflict.
- To offer an initial restorative approach so that pupils can speak openly about incidents of bullying and relationship conflict.
- To impose relevant sanctions on the bullying behaviour, which might lead to a meeting with our Police Liaison Officer, Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE), or Permanent Exclusion (PE).
- To offer support to all pupils (whether perpetrator or target) to come to terms with what has happened and how to move on from incidents.
- To ensure that all pupils understand what we mean by bullying and relationship conflict.
- To publicise to all pupils what they need to do if they have been the target of bullying behaviour and to signpost help.

BULLYING IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL ISSUE

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
- Health and Wellbeing sessions and lessons
- Anti-bullying Week
- Embedding the theme of antibullying throughout the curriculum.
- Focus on developing Emotional Intelligence across the curriculum
- The embedding of Internet safety in Digital Competency lessons and across the curriculum.

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

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What to do if you think your child is a target of bullying behaviour

Parents and the school community working together is the key to the success of antibullying. The School communicates our antibullying message through the school website, InTouch Communication, and the school's social media platform. Our teachers also develop close, working relationships with all parents and carers.

We would like to suggest that as parents:

- You take an active role in your child's education by asking how their day has gone, who they spent their time with at lunch etc.
- You know your child. 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. Retaliation is often sought by bullies.
- Encourage your child to ask for help at school.
- Inform the school yourself if you feel your child may be a victim of bullying. Contact your child's Form Tutor, Assistant Progress Leader, or Progress Leader.
- 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.

What to do you are experiencing bullying behaviour.

There are several ways you can report incidents of bullying: the important thing is that you 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 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
- Talk to your form tutor, or Progress Leader if you prefer.

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- Remember that the school does not tolerate bullying, and we will deal with bullying, but the school must know about it first.
- Ask your parents or carers to contact the school to tell your Form Tutor/ Progress Leader what is happening

PROCEDURES

- Report bullying incidents to any member of staff.
- 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: **Rights, Respect, Equality Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools Welsh Government 2019.**)
- The incident will be recorded, and an investigation undertaken
- Coping strategies will be planned for the victim to avoid the situation
- Parents will be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Bullying behaviour will be treated extremely seriously.
- 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 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 in consultation with parents and governors.

Our Year 10 pupils who make up the AYPD Wellbeing Team have helped launch the new bullying policy at Maesteg School. This video is their own creation, reflecting the pupils' thoughts and ideas about Maesteg School's stance on anti-bullying, watch it here: [Anti-bullying video](#)