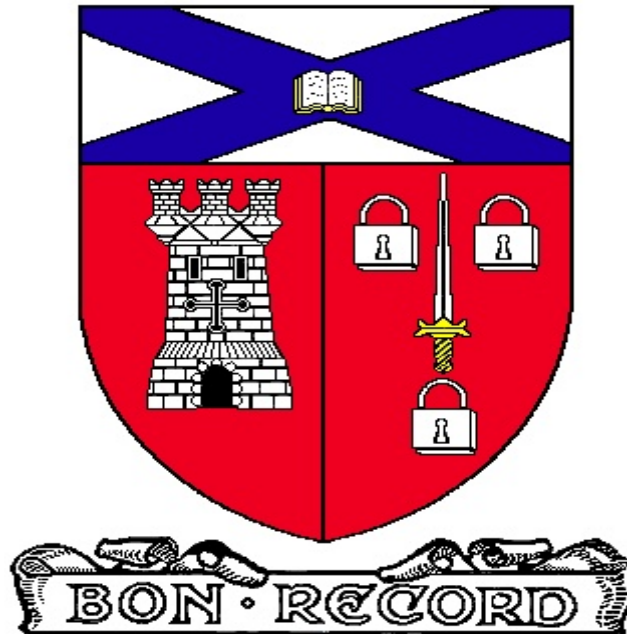


ABERDEEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL



ANTI – BULLYING WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY

December 2007

1. Rationale

Aberdeen Grammar School aims to maximise the achievement and attainment of all pupils. To enable pupils to meet this aim the school has to be a caring, safe and secure environment with supportive personal relationships, between pupils and between staff and pupils. The school staff are committed to providing such an environment in which bullying is unacceptable. The support of pupils and parents is essential to reducing and preventing bullying.

This anti-bullying policy is linked to the school's Better Behaviour Better Learning whole School Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and the Learning and Teaching Policy. It also supports the meeting of the 4 school aims.

This policy relates to the bullying of pupils and not staff. Aberdeen City Council's personnel policies apply to bullying and harassment amongst employees.

2. Aims of This Policy

- a) to clarify the term bullying and outline the forms it can take.
- b) to raise the awareness of bullying with pupils and set out procedures and assistance for identifying, preventing and responding to bullying.
- c) to raise the awareness of bullying with parents and set out procedures and assistance for identifying, preventing and responding to bullying incidents.
- d) to raise the awareness of bullying with staff, teaching and all support staff (clerical, technician, janitorial, catering, and pupil support assistants) and set out the procedures for preventing incidents of bullying.
- e) to state the procedures for staff in responding to incidents of bullying.
- f) to foster a school ethos which will discourage bullying and promote positive self esteem and self worth in pupils.
- g) to outline the procedures for monitoring and evaluating this policy.
- h) the ultimate aim is to end the bullying in the school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Teaching Staff

- Teachers should build relationships with pupils, which will encourage pupils to approach them for help in the event of bullying taking place.
- Provide a positive personal example through their positive relationships with each other and with pupils.
- Use praise to recognise achievement and good behaviour.

- Use opportunities within and out-with the curriculum to promote the idea that the rights and needs of others must be respected and that there is no place for bullying.
- Be alert to the possibility of bullying at all times.
- At period changeover times release pupils from classrooms into the corridor in an orderly fashion and, where possible, supervise corridors.
- No member of staff can claim to be “too busy” to listen to a bullying claim by a pupil. If a pupil comes to a member of staff because they are being bullied, they must be listened to with care and concern and complete a Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).
- Deal quickly with bullying, whether witnessed or reported, by filling out a Bullying Incident Report Form and submitting it to the relevant PTPS. Bullying Incident Report Forms can be found in the staffroom cabinets.
- Deal with bullying behaviour witnessed within and out-with the classroom by following the school’s discipline policy.

Role of Support Staff

- Ensure that all pupils are educated in a safe and secure environment by exercising vigilance both in and out of the classroom.
- Use contact with pupils to promote mutual courtesy and respect.
- Inform class teachers of any concerns related to bullying within the classroom.
- Report any bullying incidents to PTPS via the Bullying Report form.

Role of Principal Teachers Pupil Support

- Build relationships with pupils, which will encourage pupils to approach them for help in the event of bullying taking place.
- Promote, by means of the Social Education curriculum (S1-5) and with reference to the related pupil handout, the idea that the rights and needs of others must be respected and that there is no place for bullying.
- Inform pupils that in the event of them experiencing or witnessing bullying they should:
 - a) Tell an adult that they feel they can trust.
 - b) Report the matter to their PTPS through the Bullying Incident Report Form at the back of their homework diaries, which can be handed in at the library, PTPS Base or office.
- Provide support for the victim and/or bully by meeting with them to talk.
- Pick up and respond quickly to all referrals of bullying incidents from pupils, teachers, parents and pupils’

friends. This response will involve interviewing the suspected victim and perpetrator and recording details and may involve:

- a) contacting parents in order to discuss the situation
 - b) discussing the situation with the member of SMT who has responsibility for that House who will deal with the perpetrators through the school Discipline System.
- Where the perpetrator is not a member of the support group, liaise with his/her appropriate colleague.
 - Monitor the situation after all bullying incidents have been dealt with through interviews with the pupils involved.
 - Provide feedback to pupils, parents and colleagues of any action taken.
 - Communicate with members of SMT, pupil support staff, family worker, social worker or psychologist as required.
 - Record all details of bullying incidents reported, investigated and the actions taken.

Role of Senior Management Team (SMT)

- The monitoring of bullying within each House is the responsibility of the House Depute Rector.
- The DHT with responsibility for Pupil Support should ensure that any anti-Bullying Campaign is given a high profile.
- Staff should be supported in dealing with bullying incidents.
- Provision will be made, when and where necessary, for appropriate in-service training.
- All associated primary schools should be made aware of Aberdeen Grammar School's attitude and policy on bullying by being provided with a copy of this policy.
- All parents should be made aware of the school's approach and policy on bullying by means of the related parental handout, and P7/S1 information evening.

Role of Pupils

- Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- Report all incidents of bullying, whether experienced or witnessed.
- Try to avoid reaction to bullying situations in a violent way.
- Co-operate fully in any investigations of bullying.
- Keep away from less well supervised areas of the school.

Role of Senior School Pupils

- Act as a role model to younger pupils in how to treat others with courtesy and respect.
- Encourage everyone to act with courtesy and respect for others.
- Show willingness to listen to younger pupils should they confide in you.
- Inform your Registration Teacher, PTPS or **any** member of staff if a pupil reports bullying to you.
- Refer complaints of bullying to PTPS by means of the Bullying Report Forms, which can be obtained from the library.

Role of Parents/Carers

- Remind their children that the rights and needs of others must be respected.
- Read through the 'anti-bullying' pupil handout with their child, ensuring that expectations and procedures are understood.
- Communicate with their child on a regular/basis about life at school.
- Contact the school regarding any information or concerns relating to bullying.
- Support the school in its effort to counteract bullying, attending meetings at the school when necessary.

4. Implementation Strategies

4.1 A Definition of Bullying

It is important that staff, pupils and parents have a shared understanding of the term "bullying" used within this policy.

Bullying can take many forms and can happen to any pupil of any age.

Bullying is a wilful, conscious and repeated action which affects another person's right to safety, security, self esteem and sense of worth. The bullying action can cause physical harm or mental harm such as stress, anxiety or fear.

Bullying can take a variety of forms some of which are listed below

- (i) Using Physical Force
 - hitting
 - pushing
 - punching
 - tripping up
 - nipping
 - slapping

- kicking
- hair pulling
- taking or destroying possessions
- invading someone's personal space
- forcing a pupil to do something against their will

(ii) Using Communications, Verbal, Written, Electronic (by text message, e-mail or other internet use)

- name calling
- hurtful teasing
- making faces and gestures
- hurtful comments made verbally, notes on walls, by text or e-mail about an individual pupil, their family, relatives or friends.
- being abusive of the way someone speaks
- malicious gossip, spreading untrue or nasty rumours
- making threatening comments e.g. "I'll get you later!", "I'll see you after school!"
- making offensive remarks about a pupil's race, home country, religious beliefs or social background
- making offensive remarks about a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation (homophobic bully)
- cold shouldering, ignoring, not speaking to someone and encouraging other pupils to do likewise.
- making hurtful comments about someone's appearance, hairstyle, dress
- extortion, demanding money or goods and threatening unpleasant actions
- making hurtful comments because someone is successful
- making hurtful comments about a physical or mental disability or a pupil with additional support needs
- cyber-bullying using, electronic communications, text, e-mail, social network sites such as Bebo, Myspace, Facebook

In conclusion, bullying is any action where a person's confidence or sense of safety, security, self-worth or self esteem is undermined in a deliberate way.

4.2 Raising Awareness of Pupils, Parents and Staff

A variety of approaches are used to raise the awareness of pupils, parents and staff. They clarify the definition of bullying, help prevent it happening and set out the procedures for dealing with it.

- a) An anti-bullying information sheet is distributed to all pupils. Each new S1 intake and all new pupils to other year groups are issued with the information sheet. It is also on the school website.
- b) The Social Education programme S1 to S5 promotes the idea that the rights and needs of others have to be respected and that there is no place for bullying in Aberdeen Grammar School. The SE programme in S1 specifically teaches about bullying and the procedures for dealing with it.
- c) The weekly year group assemblies promote good relationships and respect, encourage the appreciation of different cultures and specifically deal with bullying.
- d) A number of curriculum areas/subjects teach about relationships, respect, cultural differences and bullying e.g. English, Drama, RME.
- e) Pupil diaries will include a brief statement advising pupils how to respond to a bullying action.
- f) The school's Better Behaviour Better Learning policy emphasises the rights and responsibilities of individuals and the importance of good behaviour to good education.
- g) Anti-bullying posters are displayed in the school.
- h) An anti-bullying information leaflet is distributed to all parents.
- i) A statement on the anti-bullying policy is included in the school prospectus.
- j) The school's anti-bullying policy is one of the topics covered in an S1 Parents' Information Evening.
- k) The anti-bullying policy is part of the staff induction procedures and in the staff "Rough Guide" for new staff.

4.3 Vigilance of Teaching and Support Staff and Pupils

- a) All staff, teaching and support, must be vigilant and watchful for incidents of bullying which occur inside and outwith classrooms.
 1. Staff should be vigilant for unusual frictions and tensions in the classroom situation. Bullying in classrooms can take any of the forms outlined in the "A Definition of Bullying" section of this policy. In situations where pupils are not always closely supervised e.g. start and end of lesson, group work,

workshops, role play etc. staff should be particularly alert.

2. There is no certain way of spotting that a pupil is being bullied or is bullying others. Pupils are very good at concealing these matters from staff and parents. However, victims of bullying may be identified by
 - i) changes in behaviour or attitude
 - ii) appearing more anxious or nervous than usual
 - iii) being reluctant to attend school, having periods of unusual absence

Staff should be vigilant as certain pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying. They include pupils who are

- new to the school
- different in physical appearance
- different in cultural, economic, social or ethnic background
- different in sexual orientation
- shy and lack confidence

If a member of staff observes, or suspects bullying behaviour it must be reported to the victim's Principal Teacher Pupil Support. The Bullying Incident Report Form for Teachers should be used (Appendix 2) for this purpose. Copies have been issued to all staff and further copies are available from files in the staffroom.

- b) All staff and pupils, particularly Prefects and House Captains, must be vigilant in areas of the school outside classrooms. Bullying often occurs when pupils are not directly supervised by staff in corridors, the dining room, toilets, playground and school entrances.

When staff release pupils from classrooms into the corridors at period changeover times/interval/lunchtimes they must supervise the corridors and neighbouring stairwells. Bullying and behaviour incidents at these times often re-appear within classrooms to the detriment of learning.

Members of the Senior Management Team and other volunteer staff supervise corridors and canteen areas at morning interval. This greatly helps keep a staff presence and helps make pupils feel safe and secure.

4.4 Setting a Personal Example of Positive Relationships

All staff contribute to creating an ethos/climate in which physical and verbal intimidation is unacceptable.

All staff should provide a personal example through their positive relationships with each other and with pupils. Staff should use praise and recognise achievement and good behaviour in pupils.

4.5 Personal and Social Development of Pupils

All staff have a responsibility for the personal and social development of pupils. In planning programmes of study teachers can promote the anti-bullying message and the importance of respecting other within a subject teaching context where opportunities arise. The learning and teaching methodologies planned by teachers can also develop good relationships with pupils. The use of paired work, group work and cooperative learning are particularly useful in this regard.

4.6 Responding to a Bullying Incident Reported to Staff

Allegations of bullying must be taken seriously and appropriate action taken. All pupils, especially victims of bullying are encouraged to confide in any adult in the school.

If a pupil approaches a member of staff and reports bullying, that member of staff must listen to what they have to say and ascertain whether they wish to be 'counselled' by him/her or are happy for the matter to be passed to their Principal Teacher Pupil Support. Wherever possible the pupil should be encouraged to allow the matter to be passed to their PTPS. If the pupil is satisfied their PTPS should investigate the incident, the teacher should complete the bullying reporting form. When a pupil reports an incident it must be treated as confidential. If the member of staff thinks the pupil will experience immediate harm or danger, then the matter should be passed to the pupil's PTPS or SMT immediately, regardless of the pupil's views.

4.7 Investigation of Bullying Incidents by PTPS and House Depute

- 1a) Principal Teachers Pupil Support will often be the first point of contact for pupils and parents when incidents of bullying are encountered. They combine their knowledge of the pupils with their understanding of the school's procedures to make a professional decision on the most appropriate course of action. PTPSs liaise with each other if a bullying incident involves pupils of more than one PTPS. The PTPSs liaise with the House Deputes as appropriate.
- b) Completed bullying report forms will be passed to Principal Teachers Pupil Support by teachers and support staff.

The following action will be taken by the PTPS.

- 1.1) The suspected victim should be interviewed as soon as possible, ideally on the same day and details recorded. It is vitally important that all details are recorded and kept in the pupil's file for future reference.
- 1.2) If the suspected perpetrator is in the same support group as the victim then he/she should be interviewed to gather further information. All named pupils should be interviewed. Records of the interviews must be kept in both the "victim's" and "bully's" files.
- 1.3) Where bullying is established the details should be recorded and a course of action decided upon, in consultation with the victim. The action taken should be recorded by the PTPS in the Bullying Incident Report Form. It may be necessary to involve the House Depute in serious cases.

The action taken will depend upon the nature of the incident and whether it is a repetition of past bullying. Appendix 4 gives possible actions following an investigation into a bullying incident.

Where it is felt to be helpful the parents of the victim and the bully should be contacted and their support sought in helping to resolve the situation. In normal circumstances this should be done with the agreement of the victim unless it is considered that the victim is at risk of harm or danger.

The PTPS must provide feedback to the member of staff who reported the incident.

- 1.4) Where the perpetrator is not a member of the PTPSs group he/she should liaise with the appropriate colleague who will follow the above steps.
- 1.5) If the bullying incident cannot be established the PTPSs should record the incident and tell the "victim" and the "perpetrator" the situation will be monitored.
2. Where a pupil reports bullying to the PTPS, the PTPS should follow the action outlined in 1 above.
3. Anti-bullying post boxes have been set up in the Library, School Office and the Guidance Base to allow pupils to report incidents confidentially. Forms (Appendix 1) are available for pupils to complete. A copy is attached to the Pupil Anti-bullying Information Leaflet and in Pupil

Planners from (08/09). A copy is also available on the school's website.

The box will be emptied daily and forms passed to the appropriate PTPS (i.e. the victim's PTPS)

4. Parents will also report bullying incidents.

Where this happens the victim's PTPS will investigate in accordance with the procedures.

5. If, following a report, the bully persists or retaliates this will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Such instances must be referred to a House Depute Rector who will have at his/her disposal all the usual disciplinary sanctions including exclusion from school.

6. The PTPS should provide on-going support and contact with both bully and victim to ensure the matter is definitely resolved.

Strategies in support of the victim may include:

- Regular interviews to ensure that the pupil is not experiencing further difficulties. The Register Teacher could have a daily "check" on the situation.
- Counselling to boost self-esteem/assertiveness/the building of positive peer relationships
- Peer group or buddy support
- Offering a place of sanctuary at intervals or lunchtimes if desired.

7. Where an incident has been reported by a pupil using the pupil report form the PTPS of the alleged victim should interview the reporter to gather as much detail as possible before speaking to the victim.

8. Established cases of bullying should be recorded in the school's bullying log kept in the school office.

4.8 Investigating Bullying Incidents Which Occur Outwith the School

- a) Bullying can take place on the journey to and from school and at lunchtime outwith the school and its grounds. These incidents frequently re-appear within the school and affect the good order and learning and teaching of the school. When an incident occurs between two Aberdeen Grammar School pupils the investigation procedures in section 4.7 of this policy will be followed.

- b) Some incidents of bullying occur in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. These are clearly outwith the jurisdiction of the school, and school staff have no responsibility to investigate these incidents.

When a PTPS or House Depute is informed of a bullying incident outwith the school's jurisdiction they will use their professional judgement to decide to inform/advise the parents of both the alleged bully and victim. They may advise the parent(s) to involve the police. They may also decide to warn both parties about the implications of continuing the incident within the school.

- c) If a bullying incident involves a pupil from another school the PTPS or House Depute will advise the SMT of the other school.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Depute Rector with responsibility for Pupil Support has responsibility for monitoring the operation of the anti bullying policy. A copy of all bullying report sheets will be passed to the Depute Rector which will provide an overview. Also the entries in the Bullying Log in the school office will provide statistics. The Depute Rector will report annually in June each year to the Senior Management Team.

Pupil House Councils were consulted on the draft of this policy.

The anti-bullying policy will be evaluated as part of the normal cycle of self evaluation whereby the school considers each of the main aspects of its work as outlined in "How Good Is Our School". Pupils, staff and parents will be consulted in the course of the evaluation. Regularly pupils and parents complete HMIE style questionnaires on the effectiveness of the school and these include a question on the school's handling of bullying incidents.

Bullying Incident Report Form for Staff

Name of Staff Member Reporting the Incident _____

Name(s) of Pupil(s) being Bullied

Name _____

Class _____

Please Give a Brief Description of the Incident

Date of the Incident _____ Time of the Incident _____

Location of the Incident _____

Names of other Witnesses (staff or pupils) _____

Please pass the completed form to the victim’s Principal Teacher Pupil Support as soon as possible to allow the incident to be investigated. Thank you for helping to make Aberdeen Grammar School a bully free school.

Action taken by PTPS or DHT

ABERDEEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING



ADVICE FOR PUPILS

What is Bullying?

Unfortunately, bullying happens in all schools, including Aberdeen Grammar School. Bullying is a very serious matter as it can make pupils feel miserable and affect their achievement in school. It must be tackled as soon as it appears. So what is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms and can happen to any pupil of any age.

Bullying is a wilful, conscious and repeated action which affects another person's right to safety, security, self esteem and sense of worth. The bullying action can cause physical harm or mental harm such as stress, anxiety or fear.

Bullying can take a variety of forms some of which are listed below

- (i) Using Physical Force
 - hitting
 - pushing
 - punching
 - tripping up
 - nipping
 - slapping
 - kicking
 - hair pulling
 - taking or destroying possessions
 - invading someone's personal space
 - forcing a pupil to do something against their will
- (ii) Using Communications, Verbal, Written, Electronic (by text message or e-mail or other internet use)
 - name calling
 - hurtful teasing
 - making faces and gestures
 - hurtful comments made verbally on notes on walls, by text or e-mail about an individual pupil, their family, relatives or friends.
 - being abusive of the way someone speaks
 - malicious gossip spreading untrue or nasty rumours
 - making threatening comments e.g. "I'll get you later!", "I'll see you after school!"
 - making offensive remarks about a pupil's race, home country, religious beliefs or social background
 - making offensive remarks about a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation (homophobic bully)
 - cold shouldering, ignoring, not speaking to someone and encouraging other pupils to do likewise.
 - making hurtful comments about someone's appearance, hairstyle, dress

- extortion, demanding money or goods and threatening unpleasant actions
- making hurtful comments because someone is successful
- making hurtful comments about a physical or mental disability or a pupil with additional support needs
- cyber-bullying using electronic communications, text, e-mail, social network sites such as Bebo, Myspace, Facebook

In conclusion, bullying is any action where a person's confidence or sense of safety, security, self worth or self esteem is undermined in a deliberate way.

Who gets bullied?

Anyone can be the victim of bullying, but bullies often pick on someone who

- the bully thinks might be an easy target
- may be quiet or shy
- may be different in some way
 - different religion
 - different colour
 - different nationality
 - different accent
 - different clothes
 - different appearance
 - different in achievement in school work
 - different interests/hobbies
 - different sexual orientation
- may spend a lot of time on her/his own
- they are jealous of

Bullies may make you feel:

- Lonely
- Picked on
- Powerless
- Unimportant
- Ashamed
- Helpless
- Angry
- Frightened
- Like you want to fight back
- Even suicidal
- Unhappy
- Self-conscious
- Unhealthy

'What hurts me so much is that she used to be my friend'

Louise (15)

'It took me years to get my confidence back – years. I still think about it and get upset'.

Darren (26)

Why do people bully?

Bullies can be individuals, groups or gangs

There are many reasons why some people became bullies.

- Bullies may:
- be unhappy
 - be jealous of others
 - want to look tough or funny
 - want to be the centre of attention
 - want to make up for their own lack of success
 - get a “buzz” from making other people unhappy or afraid
 - have been bullied themselves in the past so want to exert power over someone else
 - not care about respecting the feelings of others
 - take their anger out on someone else

The Pack Mentality

Like adults, children tend to be crueller in numbers. Almost three out of four children who called childline about bullying, were being bullied by a group rather than an individual.

‘It got to be a habit. The awful thing was that I felt good seeing him cry. The others laughed and that made me feel even better. It was only a bit of fun really – I didn’t realise how much pain I was causing him’.

Jay (15)

‘I want to stop but I’m scared the others will turn on me and I’ll have no mates’. Rob (11)

**Don't stand by and watch -
stand up to bullying**

What should you do if you are bullied?

Pupils have a right not to be bullied in school. However, if you are bullied this is what you can do

DO

- If you are being bullied you must speak out, always tell someone. Telling a friend or another pupil will help. However, in most cases you will have to

tell an adult (parent, Register Teacher, Principal Teacher Pupil Support, or any member of staff). This is NOT telling tales, it is the right thing to do.

- Don't be ashamed of being bullied. It isn't your fault. Tell yourself you don't deserve to be bullied.
- Sometimes ignoring the bully will work, but it may not last, so it is best to tell someone.
- Try not to get upset, which is difficult at times. A bully likes to see someone becoming anxious.
- If a bully pushes you, or hits you, don't hit back. Hitting back makes the situation worse and may get you into trouble.
- Tell your friends so they can support you.
- If you are threatened and are in danger, move away, and then tell someone.
- Try to make friends with people so that you are part of a group. Stay with groups of people even if they are not your friends; there is safety in numbers.
- Stay out of other people's quarrels.
- Look confident even though deep down inside you are not. Look relaxed and smile and try not to look upset, as a bully likes to see someone become anxious. Walk away from the situation as soon as you can.
- Don't be ashamed of being different. Be proud of the things that make you an individual. It is the bullies who need to change not you.
- Avoid places where bullying might take place by staying in areas such as the dining room or corridors at break times.
- Join lunchtime clubs/activities.
- Never behave in an aggressive manner towards others.
- Call Childline on 0800441111 or 08001111 if you need someone to talk to.

DON'T

- Fight to keep possessions
- Fight back: this can often make things worse and you might end up being accused of bullying and getting into trouble yourself
- Hang around places where bullying happens
- Hang around with the people who are bullying you

Always
Let
Someone
Know

**You don't
deserve it**

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT BULLYING?

- Do not stand by and watch bullying – try to get help!
- Don't give bullies any encouragement – show that you and your friends disapprove of their behaviour.
- Be aware of any children who may be being bullied – go out of your way to offer your sympathy and support.
- Be sure that you are not upsetting anyone without realising it. Be particularly careful about teasing or making personal remarks – imagine how you might feel if you were on the receiving end.
- Be sensitive to people's feelings – even if you fall out with someone or decide that you don't want to be friends with them anymore, they still have feelings.
- If you know about somebody being bullied, do tell an adult or a trusted older person – it is their duty to protect young people. Don't be misled into thinking that you are telling tales – the victim may be too lonely or scared to stand up for themselves.
- If you find yourself bullying other children, even though you would like to stop – do talk to someone. You will get help and support too.



***BULLYING – WE CAN STOP IT
YOU CAN HELP!***

Possible Actions Following the Investigation of a Bullying Incident

- a) **Adopting a “No Blame Approach”** and getting all parties involved together to allow mediation. In practice this requires careful handling. All pupils involved will require continuous reassurance that the aim of the discussion is to resolve their differences peacefully, not to apportion blame. This strategy may be most useful, e.g. when two pupils have had some, possibly minor, disagreement and this has been seized on by third parties who have inflamed the situation, carrying all sorts of messages from one party to the other. It is also possible that this strategy may have greatest effect in situations where the pupils involved could see no other solution than to resort to violence or other forms of harassment. It may also be particularly useful when a “loner” ends up being bullied or picked on by a group.
- b) **Bringing the bullying behaviour to the attention of the bully** for example, a pupil has reported that he/she is continuously being annoyed (bullied) by the behaviour of an older pupil. To the older pupil this may only be “high spirited play” but to the younger pupil it is seen as threatening behaviour. It can often be the case that the older pupil is unaware of the seriousness of the effect of their behaviour.
- c) **Dealing with a group of bullies by group discussion.** This can be very difficult. It is likely that having more than one member of staff present would be useful when approaching the group in discussion, in the first instance. Both members of staff however should be working to an agreed strategy, the aim of which is to eliminate the bullying behaviour.
- d) **Involvement of other agencies.** It may be helpful to seek the assistance of members of the Community Police Team if incidents are recurring and occurring in the home situation/local community. A Social Worker may also be contacted.

Accessing appropriate support for both the perpetrators and victims of bullying for example counselling from the Educational Psychologist, a counselling service, or the involvement of Behaviour Support staff for persistent offenders.

- e) **Use of school discipline system.** It is suggested that strategies a-d are used by the PTPS in the first instance where appropriate. It may be more appropriate that the school’s discipline policy should be brought into force. The PTPS and DHT will decide upon the most appropriate disciplinary sanction. It is likely that the parents will be informed.
- f) **Serious incidents**
In the event of serious or repeated incidents, the School Discipline Policy and the ACC policy on Exclusion could be implemented.

In the case of peer physical or sexual assault the school may need to follow the procedures in the *Child Protection Guidelines*.

If the allegation involves extreme action such as assault, theft or extortion, the parent and the pupil should be informed, of their right to inform the police as these may be criminal offences.

ABERDEEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

**ANTI-BULLYING
PARENTS/CARERS ADVICE**

September 2007

What is Bullying?

Unfortunately, bullying happens in all schools, including Aberdeen Grammar School. Bullying is a very serious matter as it can make pupils feel miserable and affect their achievement in school. It must be tackled as soon as it appears. So what is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms and can happen to any pupil of any age.

Bullying is a wilful, conscious and repeated action which affects another person's right to safety, security, self esteem and sense of worth. The bullying action can cause physical harm or mental harm such as stress, anxiety or fear.

Bullying can take a variety of forms some of which are listed below

- (iii) Using Physical Force
 - hitting
 - pushing
 - punching
 - tripping up
 - nipping
 - slapping
 - kicking
 - hair pulling
 - taking or destroying possessions
 - invading someone's personal space
 - forcing a pupil to do something against their will
- (iv) Using Communications, Verbal, Written, Electronic (by text message or e-mail or other internet use)
 - name calling
 - hurtful teasing
 - making faces and gestures
 - hurtful comments made verbally on notes on walls, by text or e-mail about an individual pupil, their family, relatives or friends.
 - being abusive of the way someone speaks
 - malicious gossip spreading untrue or nasty rumours
 - making threatening comments e.g. "I'll get you later!", "I'll see you after school!"
 - making offensive remarks about a pupil's race, home country, religious beliefs or social background
 - making offensive remarks about a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation (homophobic bully)
 - cold shouldering, ignoring, not speaking to someone and encouraging other pupils to do likewise.

- making hurtful comments about someone's appearance, hairstyle, dress
- extortion, demanding money or goods and threatening unpleasant actions
- making hurtful comments because someone is successful
- making hurtful comments about a physical or mental disability or a pupil with additional support needs
- cyber-bullying using electronic communications, text, e-mail, social network sites such as Bebo, Myspace, Facebook

In conclusion, bullying is any action where a person's confidence or sense of safety, security, self worth or self esteem is undermined in a deliberate way.

Who gets bullied?

Anyone can be the victim of bullying, but bullies often pick on someone who

- the bully thinks might be an easy target
- may be quiet or shy
- may be different in some way
 - different religion
 - different colour
 - different nationality
 - different accent
 - different clothes
 - different appearance
 - different in achievement in school work
 - different interests/hobbies
 - different sexual orientation
- may spend a lot of time on her/his own
- they are jealous of

Bullies may make you feel:

- Lonely
- Picked on
- Powerless
- Unimportant
- Ashamed
- Helpless
- Angry
- Frightened
- Like you want to fight back
- Even suicidal
- Unhappy
- Self-conscious
- Unhealthy

'What hurts me so much is that she used to be my friend'

Louise (15)

'It took me years to get my confidence back – years. I still think about it and get upset'.

Darren (26)

Why do people bully?

Bullies can be individuals, groups or gangs

There are many reasons why some people became bullies.

- Bullies may:
- be unhappy
 - be jealous of others
 - want to look tough or funny
 - want to be the centre of attention
 - want to make up for their own lack of success
 - get a “buzz” from making other people unhappy or afraid
 - have been bullied themselves in the past so want to exert power over someone else
 - not care about respecting the feelings of others
 - take their anger out on someone else

The Pack Mentality

Like adults, children tend to be crueller in numbers. Almost three out of four children who called childline about bullying, were being bullied by a group rather than an individual.

'It got to be a habit. The awful thing was that I felt good seeing him cry. The others laughed and that made me feel even better. It was only a bit of fun really – I didn't realise how much pain I was causing him'.

Jay (15)

'I want to stop but I'm scared the others will turn on me and I'll have no mates'. Rob (11)

**Don't stand by and watch -
stand up to bullying**

6. What Should You Do if Your Son/Daughter is Being Bullied at School?

If you think your son or daughter is being bullied at school often the best way to stop it is to tell someone in the school about your suspicions.

The best person to speak to is your child's Principal Teacher Pupil Support (PTPS) formerly known as Principal Teacher of Guidance. Please try to give them as much information as possible. A telephone call is usually the quickest way to pass on your concerns. The school believes that bullying is a serious matter and the Principal Teachers Pupil Support will investigate allegations of bullying occurring within the school as quickly as possible.

In general bullying cannot be stopped by school staff alone. Parents/Carers, pupils and school staff must work together. The advice contained here is the most effective course of action we can take as a partnership.

7. How Can Pupils Report Incidents of Bullying in School?

All pupils are advised to tell a member of the school staff if they are being bullied by another pupil. If they are able to talk to their Principal Teacher Pupil Support that is the best person to speak to. However they can talk, in the first instance, to any member of staff.

Pupils can also report a bullying incident by completing a Bullying Incident Report Form and hand it into the school office or the Anti-Bullying post boxes in the Library and Principal Teachers' Pupil Support Base and the school office.

Sometimes a pupil's friends will report an incident on their behalf.

8. How Will the School Investigate Bullying Incidents?

The victim's Principal Teacher Pupil Support (PTPS) will investigate the reported incidents by firstly listening to the victim's account. Other witnesses will also be interviewed as will the alleged bully. The PTPS, in consultation with the House Depute Rectors, will decide the most appropriate action to take to bring the bullying to an end. A variety of options can be used including;

- a reconciliation meeting between both parties
- counselling support for both the victim and bully
- application of aspects of the school's discipline policy
- a meeting with the parents of the bully

9. How Can I Tell if My Son/Daughter is Being Bullied or Is a Bully?

There is no certain way of spotting if your child is being bullied or is a bully. Pupils are very good at concealing this from friends, school staff and parents. However, a parent or teacher might notice some changes which might be explained by bullying.

Your son/daughter:

- Is not as lively as usual
- Has become moody or withdrawn
- Is irritable or depressed
- Might refuse to go to school
- May suddenly have an unexplained illness or weight loss
- May show signs of self harm
- May have unexplained bruises or scratches
- Has a pattern of absenteeism indicating an attempt to avoid certain lessons or situations
- Makes a request to change class for no good reason
- Has a change in work patterns such as underachievement or lack of homework
- Shows a change in behaviour such as a loss of interest in a hobby or school activity
- Is missing money or belongings
- Has clothing or belongings damaged

Of course there could be other explanations for these occurrences. However if you think they might be due to bullying you should contact your child's PTPS to pass on your concerns.

10. How Does Aberdeen Grammar School Raise the Awareness of Staff and Pupils About Bullying?

- a) There is a detailed school policy for all staff to follow. This sets out a definition of bullying and the procedures for staff to report and investigate incidents of bullying behaviour.
- b) A pupil's information booklet is issued to all pupils. It gives advice on avoiding bullying and how to report incidents.
- c) The weekly Social Education Programme teaches about personal relationships, the appreciation of cultural differences and bullying, including the school's procedures for dealing with it.
- d) Several subjects in the curriculum (Religious and Moral Education, Drama, English, Social Subjects) teach about personal relationships, tolerance, the multi-cultural nature of society and bullying.
- e) The weekly year group assemblies foster an ethos of tolerance and appreciation of cultural and social differences, relationships, including bullying.
- f) Anti-bullying posters are displayed in the school.
- g) The school's anti-bullying policy is part of the induction process for new staff.

11. Where can I get Advice on Supporting my Child if he is Bullied or a Bully?

There are various website which include information and advice about bullying:

Parent Network Scotland

Be Safe Online

Learning and Teaching Scotland

"YoungMinds"

Enquire

ParentZone Scotland

The Scottish Parent Teacher Council

Scottish Executive

ChildLine

BBC Bullying Survival Guide

Kidscape