

MARYHILL HIGH SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY JANUARY 2009

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Date of Approval:	9 March 2009
Approved by:	Board of Governors
Review Date:	Spring 2012

MARYHILL HIGH SCHOOL Anti-Bullying Policy

'The aim of the school is to create a caring atmosphere in which everyone is happy and successful'.

'Bullying' strikes at the very heart of this aim, and is to be confronted in an effective and purposeful way, eg:

1. The pupils are made aware of their role through school assemblies, form period work, PACE and RE lessons.
2. The teachers support a whole school policy through their care, vigilance, and professional skills.
3. The parents are assured that, with their help and support, all issues will be dealt with as conscientiously and effectively as is possible.

The key factors are that:

'anti-bullying' forms part of the ethos of the school, and when problems arise they are not ignored.

Strategies

Guidelines for Form Teachers

1. Symptoms of the victim:

- deterioration of work
- spurious illness/isolation
- remaining with adults
- erratic attendance

(However, these could be signs of other problems.)

2. Do

- let the children know that you can be approached for reporting of incidents
- remain calm: you are in charge (reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun)
- take the matter seriously
- take action as quickly as possible
- think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public
- reassure victim
- offer concrete help, advice and support
- make it plain to the bully that you disapprove
- encourage bully to see the victim's side
- inform the Head of Year, even if you deal with the incident yourself
- refer to the Head of Year a serious act of physical aggression
- punish the bully if you have to, but be very careful how you do this (reacting aggressively or punitively can give the message that it's alright to bully if you have the power)
- explain clearly the punishment and why it is given

- think ahead to prevent a recurrence of the incident (if you know the trigger factor)
- reward non-aggressive behaviour (a word of praise is often enough)
- use other pupils to help newcomers and shy children
- take Citizenship programme on bullying seriously
- use role play and group discussions
- raise esteem of victim by giving responsibility (tasks, errands etc).

3. Don't

- wait for bullying to happen (assume that it is taking place)
- hold bully courts
- be over-protective by refusing to allow the victim to help himself/herself
- assume that bully is bad through and through
- ignore early signs of potential bullying whilst on duty.

Guidelines for Heads of Year

1. See notes for Form Teachers.
2. For recording purposes and to convey serious view of behaviour:
 - Victim and bully record events in writing
 - Head of Year records discussions in writing
 - Write to parents of bully and victim
 - In serious cases, write to parents of victim, outlining what has happened, steps school has taken and inviting contact in future if concerned
 - Advise victim about avoidance techniques
 - Tell victim to report future incidents 'quietly'
 - Find out who he/she can talk to
 - Punish bully, but do not bully. This will only reinforce the behaviour
 - Enter details on personal file. It may help if this is to be removed after a specified time
 - Check with the victim at a later date that bullying has ceased (to reassure)
 - Inform Form Teacher
3. When a pupil reports bullying, handle discreetly
4. Ensure that Citizenship programme is completed
5. If necessary, see the parents. Always be constructive.

Advice for parents' of victim

- a. Look for warning signs:
 - unwillingness to attend school
 - headaches or stomach pains
 - equipment goes missing
 - requests for extra pocket money
 - damaged clothing
 - bruising
- b. Take an interest in child's social life. Discuss:
 - friendships
 - journey to and from school
 - break and lunchtime activities

- c. If suspicious, contact school. We want to help
- d. Encourage child to recruit friends (less likely to be bullied)
- e. Do not encourage child to hit back, it will make matters worse
- f. Parent/Head of Year devise strategies for inside and outside school.

Dealing with parents of bully:

- a. Seek support for school action
- b. Parents show disapproval of behaviour (perhaps punish)
- c. Try to discover why he/she is bullying
- d. Point out implications for future
- e. Help parents devise strategies to change child's behaviour
- f. Parents reward non-violence
- g. If problem is addressed at home, there is a greater success in school.

Conclusion

Bullying exists in all schools. It is the aim at Maryhill to create an environment where bullying is at a minimum, it is reported when it occurs and it is effectively confronted when it is reported.

To achieve this aim, everyone has a part to play.