**Anti – Bullying**

**Policy**

**Rationale**

Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all people in its educational establishments. This is supported by the Aberdeen City Council, Education and Children’s Services Anti-Bullying Policy (2017), a service-wide policy that should be used alongside Aberdeen City Council school policies.

**Our Values**

In line with the Aberdeen City Council, Education and Children’s Services Anti-Bullying Policy we at Northfield Academy understand that bullying behaviour is never acceptable and that Children and Young People have the right to learn in a safe, secure environment.

**Rights Respecting School**

Northfield Academy has begun the process of working together as a school community to become a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. Being part of the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is an important step towards ensuring that the rights of young people are central to all we do. It also ensures that they understand their rights and the need to respect the rights of others.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requires that young people have the following rights respected:

* **life**, **survival**and **development**
* **protection**from **violence**, **abuse**or**neglect**
* an **education**that enables children to **fulfil their potential**
* **express their opinions**and be **listened to**

 Articles 13, 15 and 19 of the UNCRC state that:

* You have the right to **protection against discrimination**
* In exercising their right to freedom of expression children have the responsibility to also **respect the rights, freedoms** and **reputations of others**.
* Children have the right to be **protected** from being hurt and mistreated **physically or mentally**. They must be kept **safe from harm** and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.

Our Anti-Bullying policy plays a central role in ensuring that the rights of all our school community are protected and reflects the Rights of the Child with each step addressing the relevant articles within the UNCRC.

The first stage of this journey, ***Recognition of Commitment***, is close to completion and we are hopeful that we will be able to achieve the second step of this process, ***Level 1*** award, by the end of the 2017 / 18 session.

**The importance of respectful relationships in school**

Our Anti-bullying School Policy embraces particular articles of **The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child**:

* Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect them.
* Article 12 – Every child has a right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.
* Article 19 - Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.
* Article 29 –Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

We need to teach about children’s rights and also model rights and respect in all our relationships: adult-pupil, pupil-adult, adult-adult and pupil-pupil.

**The Equality Act 2010** places a duty on schools to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
* The protected characteristics are:-
* Age
* Disability
* Sex (Gender)
* Gender reassignment (Transgender)
* Marriage and civil partnership
* Pregnancy and maternity
* Race
* Religion or belief
* Sexual orientation

**Definition of bullying**

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of ‘agency’. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online” (Respectme, 2015).

Further considerations:

• There does not need to be intent

• The behaviour does not need to be persistent, but the threat can be sustained

• Bullying is behaviour and impact – never one on its own

• Bullying occurs within the context of relationships

• Bullying can be verbal, social, physical, and emotional or prejudice based; online or face to face

• It is best to avoid labelling and using terms such as ‘bully’ and ‘victim’

There is a difference between bullying behaviour and other hurtful behaviour and many disagreements do not constitute bullying behaviour but they still need to be addressed.

**The Children and Young People’s Act (Scotland) 2014** ensures that **GIRFEC** – Getting It Right For Every Child – is at the heart of everything we do. We consider the wellbeing of every child under the wellbeing indicators:

*Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.*

**The objectives of this policy**

* To promote respectful relationships to prevent bullying.
* To make pupils, staff and parents aware of the causes and effects of bullying.
* To ensure that pupils, parents and staff know how to deal with bullying.

**What is bullying behaviour?**

Bullying behaviour is:

* Hurtful.
* Repeated over a period of time.
* Difficult for those being bullied to make it stop.

It is not:

* Repeated disagreements.
* The same as falling out.

The bully isn’t always:

* Deliberately trying to cause hurt.
* Aware that their behaviour is causing someone else to suffer.

**Types of bullying**

Bullying can be:

* Verbal
* Social
* Physical
* Emotional
* Prejudice-based

Verbal can include teasing, yelling, name-calling, put-downs, swearing, threatening, ridiculing, racist comments, or comments about sexuality.

Social can include exclusion, spreading rumours, dirty looks, humiliation.

Physical can include pushing, shoving, stealing or damaging property, hitting, slapping, spitting, punching, or any type of assault.

Emotional can include stalking, extortion, blackmail, personal comments.

Prejudice-based can include suggestive comments or signs, touching, groping, leering, showing offensive material, racist comments, comments about physical differences.

Bullying can occur in all settings including:

* Family
* School
* Work place
* Sporting field
* In the broader community
* Cyber-bullying

**Why does bullying happen?**

Those displaying bullying behaviour often target people who will find it difficult to stand up for or defend themselves. Often they find someone to take their aggression out on because they feel bullied themselves.

**Bullying at Northfield Academy**

Bullying is unacceptable at Northfield Academy. This is demonstrated by:

* Pupils having the opportunity to receive information and discuss bullying issues through Personal & Social Education.
* The Peer Mediation group supports any pupil who would like peer to peer advice, support or help.
* Everyone encouraging young people to report incidents of bullying.
* Recording all reported incidents of bullying. (Appendix 4 & on SEEMiS)
* Ensuring that every report of bullying is taken seriously.

**What can pupils do about bullying?**

Pupils can try the following strategies:

* Ignore it.
* Walk away from bullying behaviour..
* Stay with groups of friends as much as possible.
* Avoid areas where bullying is most likely to occur.
* Laugh it off and pretend it doesn’t bother you.
* Report on-line cyber-bullying or abuse.
* Don’t respond to cyber-bullying other than to block the source of the bully behaviour.
* Seek advice or help from a Prefect, Peer Mediator or another trusted pupil.

When a pupil doesn’t feel that they can deal with it using these strategies they should speak to an adult. This could be a parent, class teacher, form teacher, Guidance teacher, Depute Head, School Based Police Officer, Student Councillor, PSA or Headteacher - any adult the pupil trusts.

Often the incident of bullying can be dealt with by the person it is reported to. However, the member of staff may decide to refer the incident to the Guidance Teacher or Depute Head. If such a situation is within one House, it should be dealt with by the Guidance teacher. Otherwise, the Depute will take the lead.

Dealing with an incident may include:

* Investigating the incident by interviewing other young people.
* Restorative meetings.
* Contact with parents/carers.
* Counselling.
* Disciplinary action.

Information for pupils (Appendix 1)

Information for parents and carers (Appendix 2)

Information for staff (Appendix 3)

Recording information (Appendix 4)