

# LEITH ACADEMY



## Anti-Bullying and Equalities Policy

# Anti-Bullying Policy

**Leith Academy: Our Policy to ensure equality and to promote an anti-bullying ethos.**

## **Leith Academy's Values and Beliefs**

All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. The school's values are: mutual respect and caring for others; individual needs and development; honesty and fairness in our actions; and success in learning for all. In Leith Academy we strive to create a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based on these shared values across the school community. Staff and pupils who feel happy and safe in school are more likely to be successful and confident learners & contribute effectively so they are able to reach their full potential.

At Leith Academy, we strive to ensure that we treat all service users, staff and volunteers with respect and provide a positive and safe space to access services and work in. We are aware that there may be additional barriers to accessing support for people who identify as having a protected characteristic. These are outlined in the Equality Act (2010):

- Age
- Disability
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership status

In addition to these Leith Academy also recognises that looked after children, young carers, non-binary people, people with English as a second language and low socio economic status may also experience disadvantage, prejudice and discrimination and we will endeavour to address this.

We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying and discrimination as these are never acceptable. It is an abuse of power and relationships and at Leith Academy we actively foster good relations between diverse groups and people, having around 35 different nationalities at the school.

This policy is written for Leith Academy but embraces the wider City of Edinburgh Council's "*Education, Diversity, Anti-bullying and Equality Policy and Procedures 2011-2015*"; it has also been updated as part of our work towards the *LGBT Charter of Rights for Schools* and in light of "*Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*".

## **Definitions**

### **Equalities and The Law**

Bullying is a clear breach of the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child as well as the 2010 Equalities Act and is thus illegal and deplorable. At Leith Academy, we use the legal definition of 'equalities', which gives protection to people who have specific or 'protected' characteristics. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

We are protected from discrimination:

- at work
- in education
- as a consumer
- when using public services
- when buying or renting property
- as a member or guest of a private club or association

We're also protected from discrimination if:

- we're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, eg a family member or friend
- we've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim

### **Action against discrimination**

We can do something voluntarily to help people with a protected characteristic. This is called 'positive action'.

Taking positive action is legal if people with a protected characteristic:

- are at a disadvantage
- have particular needs

- are under-represented in an activity or type of work

At Leith Academy, we also expand these protected characteristics to include pupils undergoing gender transition and transgender identities in general. In addition, our anti-bullying policy is designed to ensure and protect the equality of those of particular faith groups, Looked After Children, Young Carers and children and young people from poor backgrounds.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is an abuse of power that is defined by its effects. Bullying behaviour can harm people physically and/or emotionally. Although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, through actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these.

People who are bullied are upset by something someone else has said or done to them or about them. They are likely to fear that this will happen again and feel powerless to stop it. Bullying is a breach of children's rights under several articles from the Convention of the Rights of the Child. **Cyber-bullying** is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through emails, texts or social network websites.

In addition, "*Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*" defines bullying as follows:

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.

### **Bullying behaviour takes many forms, for example:**

- racist abuse
- sexist abuse
- harassment
- homophobia
- biphobia
- transphobia
- sectarianism
- sending abusive emails, text messages or making abusive comments on social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Whatsapp or Snapchat)
- assault
- forcing people to do things against their will e.g. stealing
- damaging or stealing property
- malicious notes or gossip

- teasing, cold shouldering/social isolation and being 'picked on'
- personal remarks about body image/appearance, disabilities, learning needs, family or social background
- any other behaviour which makes the victim or other people around them feel frightened, unhappy or isolated

### **Why do some people become involved in bullying behaviour?**

**The reasons why pupils may get involved in bullying behaviour are many. Some examples include:**

- to impress or establish leadership amongst a peer group
- to create a group identity by attacking an outsider
- pressure to conform – punishing non-conformity
- lack of social skills
- jealousy
- have been bullied themselves
- family and/or social problems
- lack of education or understanding of the impact of bullying

**Those who carry out bullying actions or are at the receiving end may display certain behaviours, for example:**

- deterioration of work
- faked illness
- erratic attendance
- low self esteem
- loss or lack of self respect
- isolation
- desire to remain with adults
- uncharacteristic behaviour or acting out to impress, e.g. showing off or aggressive behaviour

### **The Prevention of Bullying and discrimination:**

The Head Teacher is responsible for introducing and implementing this policy at Leith Academy. However, all staff, pupils and parents have an active part to play in the development and maintenance of the policy and in its success.

We are proactive at Leith Academy and there are many things that we do within the school to promote positive relationships. Bullying as a topic is covered in PSE and PD in all year

groups to ensure pupils are familiar with the school policy. We teach about rights and responsibilities and treating others with respect.

We begin our work during the primary – secondary transition. By the time pupils begin their education here they are aware of what we expect of them in terms of respect and how we treat one another.

During the life of every pupil at Leith Academy the stress on mutual respect, trust, equality, and fostering positive relationships is ongoing:

- There are various avenues within the school curriculum for the pupils to focus on and discuss issues connected to relationships and bullying. For example, within Personal and Social Education (PSE) not only is the issue of bullying addressed but also how to equip pupils with strategies and skills to avoid getting involved in bullying behaviour, and, what to do if they receive bullying. Further, with the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence we at Leith Academy will be working towards ensuring our curriculum reflects and values the diversity of the school and the local community. We have already done much work in this area in our approaches to the celebration of the cultural diversity at the school.
- Themed assemblies and events for pupils, with input from many different agencies, to target specific issues - for example, a focus on cyberbullying by community police officers.
- Pupil Council: Leith Academy has representatives from each House on the Pupil Council (Anderson, Barton, Cowan and Port) and this forum is used by pupils to raise concerns and suggest solutions.
- LGBT Champions Group: In 2015 we introduced our LGBT Champions Group, consisting of staff and pupils. This group links directly with the SMT and the Pupil Council, supported by staff at LGBT Youth Scotland. Its focusses on working towards achieving the LGBT Charter Mark for Schools via an examination of current approaches to promoting equality for LGBT pupils and staff at Leith Academy and making the school a safe and accepting place to be for LGBT people. One of the areas for development this year is introducing a Gender and Sexuality Alliance at the school (GSA) that will be a safe place for pupils to discuss LGBT issues and will provide guidance to the school on how best to promote equality and further prevent bullying behaviour. Specialist awareness training for staff has also been arranged via LGBT Youth Scotland.
- We have a staff team who monitor the school and playground area daily at breaks and lunchtimes. If they come across any issues then these are passed immediately to the House Heads or Senior Management Team.

- The House Heads can put pupils in touch with a wide variety of organisations and agencies that can offer support, advice and counselling, including LGBT Youth Scotland. We have a S6 Buddy system within the school that gives support and guidance to pupils by our senior pupils. Further, at Leith Academy we strive to offer group work sessions that can aid pupils with confidence building and coping strategies.
- We give members of staff opportunities to take part in anti-bullying training that is relevant and up to date.
- In 2015, we have also introduced the Mentors in Violence Prevention initiative, with staff and senior pupils developing their knowledge of and confidence in positive and safe intervention as bystanders to enhance our culture of inclusion and diversity at the school. The principles of this initiative overlap with those of our LGBT Champions Group.
- Advice and guidance for all pupils is given in their school planners.

#### **What we do when bullying occurs:**

A child may not be engaging consciously in bullying behaviour, but its impact is still felt and this is taken seriously. The level of awareness of a child who is bullying is a significant factor in how it is dealt with. Pupils who experience bullying or discrimination will be listened to and supported. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour or discrimination will be treated fairly and consistently using a range of measures.

#### **Dealing with Bullying:**

Pupils are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying/inequality and suspected incidents that other pupils may be afraid to report. They should do this in the first instance to their classroom teacher or their House Head or House DHT.
- Support each other and to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

Teachers are expected to:

- Treat all allegations seriously and to investigate any allegation of bullying/inequality and report this to the House Head or SMT.
- The Equalities officer for the school keeps a record of these incidents, which are collated and reported to the authority at the end of each year.

Parents can help by:

- Supporting our anti-bullying/equalities procedures.

- Encouraging their children to be positive members of the school community.
  - Discussing with their child's House Head any concerns that their child may be experiencing.
  - Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside of school.
  - Speaking to the HT if their concerns are serious and ongoing.
- We appreciate that some pupils may find it difficult to report bullying issues but pupils are encouraged to speak out if they feel that they or their friends are at the receiving end of this type of behaviour. If pupils witness it they must be encouraged to report it as this gives a clear message about the positive role bystanders can have in terms of reducing the bullying which takes place as there is an ethos of zero tolerance; these are the principles of the MVP programme and are promoted as part of this initiative. Parents/carers are also encouraged to contact the House Head or House DHT if their child discusses any concerns with them.
- We ask that pupils keep copies of any threatening or abusive notes or emails/threads, and don't delete any abusive text messages/threads. This is evidence.
- Incidents of bullying may happen out of school grounds and out of school hours but their impact can easily have an impact on pupils in school and this means it becomes an issue for staff to deal with.
- In relation to the latter point, we urge parents & guardians to contact the police if they feel an incident out of school or at the weekend merits legal attention. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's House Head if they have concerns or have information to pass on about out of school incidents. This allows Leith Academy staff to be better prepared and thus hopefully pre-empt possible situations.

#### **What happens if a bullying incident is brought to the attention of staff?**

- In a class a pupil may bring an incident to the teacher's attention or the teacher witnesses an incident. In general, low level incidents can usually be dealt with in the classroom setting. If a situation is more serious, e.g. racism or homo/bi/transphobia or assault then the offending pupil will be sent to the member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) who is on duty. The Duty Head, House Head or House DHT will then further investigate and gather evidence. The outcome of this will result in a variety of possible supports and sanctions being implemented (these will be explained below) and the input of the SMT/HH. Further, if the incident is found to be one of bullying, racism or homo/bi/transphobia then it will be recorded, by the staff involved, on a CEC Recording Form in line with their Equality policy, and passed to the DHT who has responsibility for Inclusion/Equalities.

An allegation of bullying is serious and to ensure we do our job properly we have to gather evidence, primarily in the form of speaking to witnesses. With this evidence we can then take actions to deal with the pupils concerned and keep staff and parents & guardians informed.

A pupil who has been on the receiving end of bullying behaviour needs support. There are a number of strategies we use at Leith Academy:

- staff keep a 'sympathetic eye' on the pupil
- one-to-one meeting(s) with their House Head or House DHT or with a counselling service
- use peer support strategies and if the pupil wants it we can arrange a meeting with the pupil(s) who carried out the bullying behaviour (restorative practice)
- involvement of parent/guardian – this includes keeping them informed about what the school is doing to support their child but also what actions Leith Academy is taking with the pupil(s) who committed the bullying offence and the involvement of their parents in this process
- We will talk to pupils who have experienced homophobia, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and ensure that any steps to resolve bullying includes them. There will be a sensitive approach to ensure that any disclosure does not 'out' the pupil to others. Definitions that are helpful when considering issues in regard to the above forms of bullying are as follows:

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this their sense of 'agency'. Prejudice-based bullying is bullying behaviour motivated by prejudice, or 'perceived' to be motivated by prejudice, and can be based on any characteristic unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance.

Sexual Orientation & Homophobic Bullying: Bullying based on sexual orientation is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) people. It is also commonly referred to as 'homophobic bullying' but can also be expanded to recognise the specific experiences of bisexual young people using the term 'biphobic bullying'.

Children and young people do not necessarily have to be gay, lesbian or bisexual themselves to experience 'homophobic bullying'. This type of bullying may be directed towards young people perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual young people; those that do not conform to gender norms and/or expectations; and those who have gay friends or family. Children with LGBT parents may also experience homophobic bullying. Although homophobic bullying is distinct from sexist and transphobic bullying, it is related to these forms of bullying through underlying sexist attitudes.

The term 'transgender' is an 'umbrella term' for those whose 'gender identity' or expression differs in some way from the gender that was assigned to them at birth. Gender identity reflects an individual's internal sense of self as being male, female, or an identity between or outside the two.

Transgender people face significant societal prejudice, largely because they are perceived as not conforming to gender stereotypes, expectations and norms. As a result, transgender or gender 'variant' children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to bullying. This can manifest in many ways, including transphobic and homophobic name calling or deliberately mis-gendering them. An individual may also experience transphobic bullying as a result of a perception that a parent, relative or other significant figure is transgender.

- a referral for further assessment/support via Social Work
- a pupil who has carried out bullying behaviour *ALSO* needs support. This may raise questions of 'why' as they will be seen as the pupil in the 'wrong'. Support is not the school being soft on bullying; it is in fact the common sense approach to support a pupil to see how their behaviour was unacceptable and to modify it for the better. It has to be stressed that those who commit bullying offences have often been on the receiving end of these. If a pupil has misbehaved sanctions will apply, e.g. assault can lead to exclusion, but this is only part of the process.

#### **Our work with pupils who bully others:**

- We interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately.
- We listen to their version of events and talk to any witnesses.
- We reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect it to stop.
- We seek a commitment to this end.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know they are being bullied.
- We consider sanctions under our school's Behaviour/discipline policy.
- We advise those involved that the situation will continue to be monitored to check that it has not started up again.
- We contact the parents of all parties to make sure they know about the bullying – this happens at an early stage.
- If the bullying is in relation to homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying we will deal with this sensitively and ensure that we do not 'out' a pupil without their consent.
- We offer support to those who have been carrying out the bullying to ascertain what type of support they need to ensure that it does stop.

#### **Bullying outside the school premises**

We know that bullying can occur outside the school gates, in the evenings and at weekends. It can be via mobile phones, social network sites /chat rooms. The bullying may be done by pupils (and sometimes parents) from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by

people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent tells us of bullying off the school premises we will:

- Talk to the pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.
- Talk to the Head Teacher of the other school whose pupils are allegedly bullying.
- Consider additional support, police involvement and Child Protection procedures.

## **Planning**

We examine and use all available information to ensure that the promotion of equality and anti-bullying issues are contained within our development plans.

## **Equality Impact Analysis**

When reviewing or creating any new policies or services within our school, we give due regard to all protected groups and consider whether any individual or group might require further support. This policy has been updated in 2017 to reflect the guidance provided to the school by LGBT Youth Scotland and as part of the school's ongoing work towards the LGBT Schools Charter of Rights. The DHT Pupil Support will maintain a record of all proven incidents of bullying and of the action taken as per CEC guidelines. This information can be used to inform pupils, staff and parents/guardians about trends of bullying and thus allow the school to be better informed and help plan future strategies. The DHT PS will also review the policy every four years and update it accordingly. As part of our work towards the LGBT Charter, in 2015 we conducted a baseline assessment of our approaches to promoting equality for LGBT pupils and staff at the school; we will return to this on annual basis so as to evaluate the impact of our approaches and to seek to further improve our approaches. In addition, the introduction of the MVP approach has allowed us to conduct a further baseline assessment with pupils re the school's inclusive ethos; we will have evaluated the impact of the initiative at the end of 2015/16 and 2016/17 to measure improvement in this area.

## **Involvement**

We actively encourage all our young people to participate in school and extracurricular activities and we take positive action to make sure that the diverse school population is represented in activities, surveys and our student council. The LGBT Champions Group is central to this approach.

## **Gathering and Monitoring information**

We are committed to developing measures for monitoring the achievements of our Looked After and disabled pupils.

We examine our annual record of incidents and survey information.

We use information from surveys of pupils' views and opinions.

We take active steps to ensure all data held on pupils' disabilities, ethnicity, caring and looked-after status is accurate and regularly reviewed.

### **Resources**

Here are some useful resources for young people, parents and staff:

[www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/parents/mychildisabully.html>

[http://www.respectme.org.uk/cyberbullying\\_intro\\_txt.html](http://www.respectme.org.uk/cyberbullying_intro_txt.html)

[www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/home.htm](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/home.htm)

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/inclusionanddequality/challengingsectarianism/resources/index.asp>

ASL policy located on the school server

Child Protection Guidelines – located on the school server in the staff information section

[https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/files/documents/Supporting Transgender Young People - Digital version.pdf](https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/files/documents/Supporting%20Transgender%20Young%20People%20-%20Digital%20version.pdf)

<http://respectme.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Addressing-Inclusion-FINAL-NOV-17-1.pdf>