



Medeshamstede Academy

Anti-bullying strategy

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Medeshamstede Academy Anti-bullying strategy:

Our 'Anti-Bullying Strategy' sets out the expectations of behaviour at Medeshamstede Academy and our approach in ensuring that all students are safe from bullying behaviour and can thrive in a positive learning environment in keeping with our core value of respect.

All students at Medeshamstede Academy are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to disclose any issue and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying at Medeshamstede Academy happens rarely, but when it does it is everyone's problem. All Academy staff, students, parents and carers should be aware that bullying exists and share a commitment to combat it to make Medeshamstede Academy a happier place for everyone.

The responsibility for achieving the desired environment is not only the responsibility of the Principal and Trustees, but the responsibility of all Academy staff. Everyone has a duty of care to observe, monitor and report any behaviour, conversation, or action which they suspect.

All Academy staff have a legal obligation through such legislation as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education/Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'The Equalities Act 2010 (PSED)' to ensure that every action, however apparently small or insignificant is dealt with and reported.

We work hard to ensure that bullying does not feature in our community by proactively working with all students and their families to eradicate it and promptly respond to all reported incidents.

All staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of the Academy and online. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. Further information and advice about child on child abuse can be found at Keeping children safe in education 2024 and specific references can be made to p39/40.

The Academy promotes positive behaviour through the Academy Values of 'Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Reflection'

For the purpose of our 'Anti-Bullying Policy', bullying is defined as: 'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally'.

Common forms of bullying can be:

Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding or tormenting

Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

Sexual: Unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive or homophobic comments

Homophobic: Actions focussing on the issue of sexuality

#Respect #Responsibility #Resilience #Reflection

Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti or gestures

Verbal: Sarcasm, spreading rumours or teasing

Cyber: Social media abuse, mobile phone misuse, threats by text messaging or abusive calls through associated technology

It is important to understand that bullying is not occasional falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional 'joke' is played on someone. Students do sometimes fall out or make comments because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not always classed as bullying but it is important that the upset caused is recognised and resolved. It is an important part of a student's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, occasional name calling or immature pranks and staff will support students to do this.

'Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.' (Safe to Learn, DfE)

'People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop.' (Safe to Learn, DfE)

Incidents of bullying may include:

- Repeated name-calling, taunting, mocking and making offensive comments
- Repeated offensive graffiti
- excluding people from groups
- Repeated gossiping and spreading hurtful or untrue rumours
- Repeated kicking, hitting, pushing
- taking belongings
- cyber bullying – including sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails or instant messages via the internet, setting up websites designed to embarrass or upset individuals or excluding them from social networking sites.
- Repeated Homophobic/biphobic or transphobic comments

Students may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:

- ethnic background, religion or culture
- disability, special educational needs or a particular ability
- sexual orientation
- gender (including sexualised bullying)
- size, appearance or health conditions
- social or economic status (poverty, class)
- age/maturity
- home circumstances – certain groups such as students in public care, or young carers, or those with same sex parents/carers or whose parents/carers have mental health difficulties may be particularly vulnerable.

#Respect #Responsibility #Resilience #Reflection

For instances where friends may fall out on several occasions over a period, it may not be regarded as bullying. We must be careful to avoid the term ‘bullying’ being used as a term that may be chosen by one of the parties involved to try to escalate the seriousness of the matter. The academy works hard to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and “falling out”.

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences, or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or being unwilling to enter the classroom. These behaviours, however, do not necessarily mean that bullying is taking place. Likewise, bullying may occur without these behaviours appearing.

Students must be encouraged to report bullying to Academy staff. Academy staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with the ‘Anti-Bullying strategy’.

Where bullying occurs

Bullying can take place in many places. It can occur during the journey to and from the Academy, before lessons begin, at break, lunchtime and during transition times. Toilets and changing rooms are places where bullying can occur. Bullying may also take place in a subtle and surreptitious way during lessons when adults are present. Cyber-bullying incidents may originate from outside of the Academy but if it affects students during the school day then we will respond to it.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

No matter what form bullying takes, it damages both the victim and the aggressor to differing extents. Medeshamstede Academy will make use of the best information and practices available to address this problem. Bullying affects the ability of a student to fully participate in and enjoy educational life and it is both an equal opportunity issue as well as a disciplinary offence, which Academy staff will do all in their power to resolve. Medeshamstede Academy has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying

Role of Students

Students have a vital role in the prevention of bullying. Students at Medeshamstede Academy need to understand what bullying is; its causes, effects and methods of prevention. Staff will ensure that, through our Jigsaw PSHE curriculum, assemblies and events such as ‘Anti-Bullying week’ students develop their understanding of bullying in both an age and cognitive stage appropriate way. Students will be taught to accept that they have a duty to themselves and others in preventing bullying and that staff as well as students can be victims of bullying. Action must be taken by drawing the attention of an adult in the Academy to anything, which from the student’s point of view may give the opportunity for bullying to occur. Students are taught that those who tolerate bullying are supporting it. Students are taught that positive action from peers can discourage bullying.

Role of Staff

Staff need to recognise that bullying is an Academy-wide responsibility and that anyone can be a victim of bullying or a perpetrator/aggressor. There needs to be awareness that there will be incidents of bullying, and as soon as any member of staff becomes aware it is their duty to respond appropriately. Not to respond is to condone. In all dealings with students, staff will want to emphasise the importance of respecting feelings and emotions of others.

Role of Parents/Carers

Medeshamstede Academy will ensure that the robust stance regarding bullying is made clear to parents and carers through the website, post or email. Parents should be encouraged to inform the Academy staff of any concerns or suspicions they may have regarding bullying incidents and inform their child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity should they note any unexplained change of behaviour in their child or if information about bullying becomes known. This can be done either by direct DoJo message, by telephoning the Academy reception or by making an appointment to discuss in person.

Recording of Incidents:

Bullying incidents are recorded electronically on CPOMS.

Analysis of bullying incidents by the Assistant Principal (Pastoral) and the safeguarding and welfare team will inform future planning for intervention, raising awareness and pro-active activities.

In dealing with bullying, Medeshamstede Academy staff will:

- Not make premature assumptions
- Listen to all accounts of the incidents
- Adopt a problem-solving approach that encourages students to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves
- Make regular follow-up checks to ensure that bullying has not resumed
- Record the incident promptly on CPOMS, as soon as practicably possible after the incident
- Take action to resolve the issue in line with the 'Behaviour Policy' and 'Behaviour Protocol'
- Liaise with the Assistant Principal (Pastoral) and the safeguarding and welfare team to ensure there is targeted support to address underlying issues
- Refer to the police if appropriate

Outcomes:

- The aggressor(s) may be asked to genuinely apologise
- Other proportionate consequences may take place
- In serious cases, suspension will be considered
- Other interventions can be put in place

Supporting Victims:

- Victims will be offered an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with a member of the Academy staff for as long as it is required. Victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Victims will be offered the opportunity to be a part of a restorative conversation with the aggressor(s) if they feel comfortable with this. This will be supported with appropriate strategies such as using a 'Comic Strip Conversation'.

- The parents/carers of the victim will be informed as soon as possible

Supporting Aggressors:

- The aggressor(s) will be asked about what happened, predominantly to discover why they became involved in the incident
- The parents/carers of the aggressor(s) will be informed as soon as possible
- Medeshamstede Academy will continue to work with the aggressor(s) to support them in changing their behaviour in tailored support sessions using appropriate strategies such as Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations
- The support of external agencies will be considered through an Early Help, if appropriate and necessary
- Aggressor(s) will be offered the opportunity to be a part of a restorative conversation with the victim(s).

Confidentiality

Medeshamstede Academy staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a student for help. Staff must make this clear to students. Safeguarding procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made. All bullying will be reported using CPOMS.