

LA Anti Bullying Policy

Largs Academy's Anti-Bullying Policy supports North Ayrshire Council's approach to Anti-Bullying and Respect for All: national approach to anti-bullying.

It is important to ensure that the ethos of anti-bullying is embedded in day-to-day practices that are in step with Respect for All. The message that bullying is never acceptable is always prevalent and continuously and consistently reinforced.

(Respect for All,)

Largs Academy is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment that has a respectful, equitable and inclusive culture and for all members of the school community.

Our Anti-bullying Policy aims to make clear our understanding of what bullying behaviour is, our expectations of everyone in our school community, how we will work to prevent it and how we deal with bullying behaviour.

The UNCRC, article 19 states:

“Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.”

What is bullying?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.

(Anti-Bullying Alliance)

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on the other person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this 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 and it can happen face to face and online. (Respect Me 2015)

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Impact of bullying behaviour

Bullying can affect people in different ways. Our response should focus on identifying how someone feels and helping them to cope with and respond to those feelings. Young people may act out of character when they are being bullied and changes in behaviour can be signals that something is wrong. We need to focus on what has happened and the impact it had.

Possible signs of young people experiencing/displaying bullying behaviour

Emotional signs of bullying

- Isolating themselves and not talking to the family
Feeling withdrawn and spending more time alone
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in behaviour such as feeling more angry than usual
- Avoiding social media
- Not seeing their friends after school or at weekends
- Anxiety and nervousness that wasn't displayed previously

Physical signs of bullying

- Bruises, cuts and marks that cannot be explained
- Issues with their sleep
- Complaining of headaches or stomach aches

Changes at school

- Suddenly doing less well at school
- Anxious about going to school and saying they are feeling unwell more than usual
- Not taking part in after school clubs

Children and young people who have experienced bullying are more likely to:

- Face barriers to learning
- Avoid school
- Self-harm and experience anxiety or depression
- Have impaired wellbeing

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour might not be repeated, the threat that it might can be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these. This behaviour can include:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting - for example, threatening gestures, having belongings taken or damaged.
Physical	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence. Physical violence may be considered as assault, according to severity.
Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
Cyber	This type of bullying changes the geography of bullying, however the behaviours are the same and must be addressed as if happening in the physical environment. Online bullying includes all areas of internet, such as email and social media misuse; mobile threats by text messaging/ calls; misuse of associated technology such as camera/video facilities and online gaming platforms.
Racial	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, deliberate physical attacks. It can be identified by the fact that victims are singled out because of the colour of their skin, the way they speak, ethnic grouping or religious or cultural practices. Sectarianism may also be included here.
Gender based	Unwanted physical contact, which may be considered as assault, or sexually abusive/suggestive comments. Gender stereotyping is an aspect to be considered here.



**Homophobic/
Transphobic/
Biphobic**

Being targeted because of who you are, or who you are perceived to be. Hurtful behaviour and attitudes which focus on the issue of sexuality. Homophobic bullying is prejudice or negative attitudes about lesbians or gay people. For example, a boy might be called gay because he doesn't want to play football, or a girl might be called a lesbian for holding hands with another girl.

Biphobic bullying is prejudice or negative attitudes about bi people. For example, a bi child or young person might be called 'greedy' for being attracted to more than one gender, asked probing and unkind questions such as 'can't you make your mind up?', or be told 'it's just a phase'.

Transphobic bullying is prejudice or negative attitudes about trans people. For example, a trans child or young person might be called 'tranny', 'it' or 'he-she'; asked probing or unkind questions about their body or appearance; or have a peer intentionally use their old name or incorrect pronouns.

Any of these can be a particular problem for young people who do not conform to gender stereotypes or may be unsure about their own developing sexuality.

Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice that relates to perceived or actual differences. This can lead to prejudice and discriminatory language or behaviour, including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia.

'Prejudice-based bullying is when bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice based on an individual's actual or perceived identity; it can be based on characteristics unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance.'

Respect for All 2017

To address the years of unfavourable treatment experienced by some groups, **The Equality Act 2010** makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a '**protected characteristic**'. These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Marriage and civil partnership
6. Race
7. Sex
8. Religion or belief
9. Sexual orientation

Prejudice-based bullying includes the protected characteristics, however, prejudice can and does extend beyond these and can lead to bullying for many other reasons such as:

- Additional support needs
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Body image and physical appearance
- Gypsy/Travellers
- Intersectionality
- Care Experienced children and young people
- Sectarianism
- Gender identity and transphobia
- Young Carers
- Socio-economic prejudice

Hate Crime

Hate crime is defined through the law as:

“A crime motivated by malice or ill-will towards individuals because of their actual or perceived disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.”

A hate crime can take a number of forms that are potentially criminal and should be treated as such. Adults, children and young people can seek appropriate advice and guidance from Police Scotland if they feel a hate crime may have taken place.

Prevention of bullying

Throughout the school year we endeavour to undertake a range of activities which contribute to our Anti-bullying strategy:

- ✚ Our Anti-bullying policy has a central focus in all areas of the school and this is displayed prominently for all to see.
- ✚ Senior pupils are trained each year as Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) and deliver key sessions across all years in PSE to empower pupils to safely speak out against all forms of violence from rape and sexual harassment to bullying and abusive behaviour. Key to the training and delivery of sessions is to discourage the bystander effect and promote our school “Speak up and Report” approach.
- ✚ The PSE curriculum offers learners opportunities to explore relationship issues. This is through the Personal Safety block in term two and includes raising awareness of bullying behaviours, forms of bullying and reflection on the effects bullying can have.
- ✚ Assemblies allow an opportunity to raise the issues around bullying behaviour which are then explored further in PSE and through whole-school activities across the week.
- ✚ Inset training to ensure all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities in supporting the anti-bullying policy.

In addition, we will consistently strive to:

- ✚ Challenge inappropriate behaviour
- ✚ Deal with all forms of discrimination
- ✚ Support to improve pupils' self-esteem and resilience
- ✚ Ensure that pupils have the opportunity to raise and discuss any matters which are troubling them
- ✚ Raise awareness/profile of support staff
- ✚ Encourage pupils to resolve personal animosities and tensions through conflict resolution, mediation, and restorative practice
- ✚ Create safe spaces within the school environment

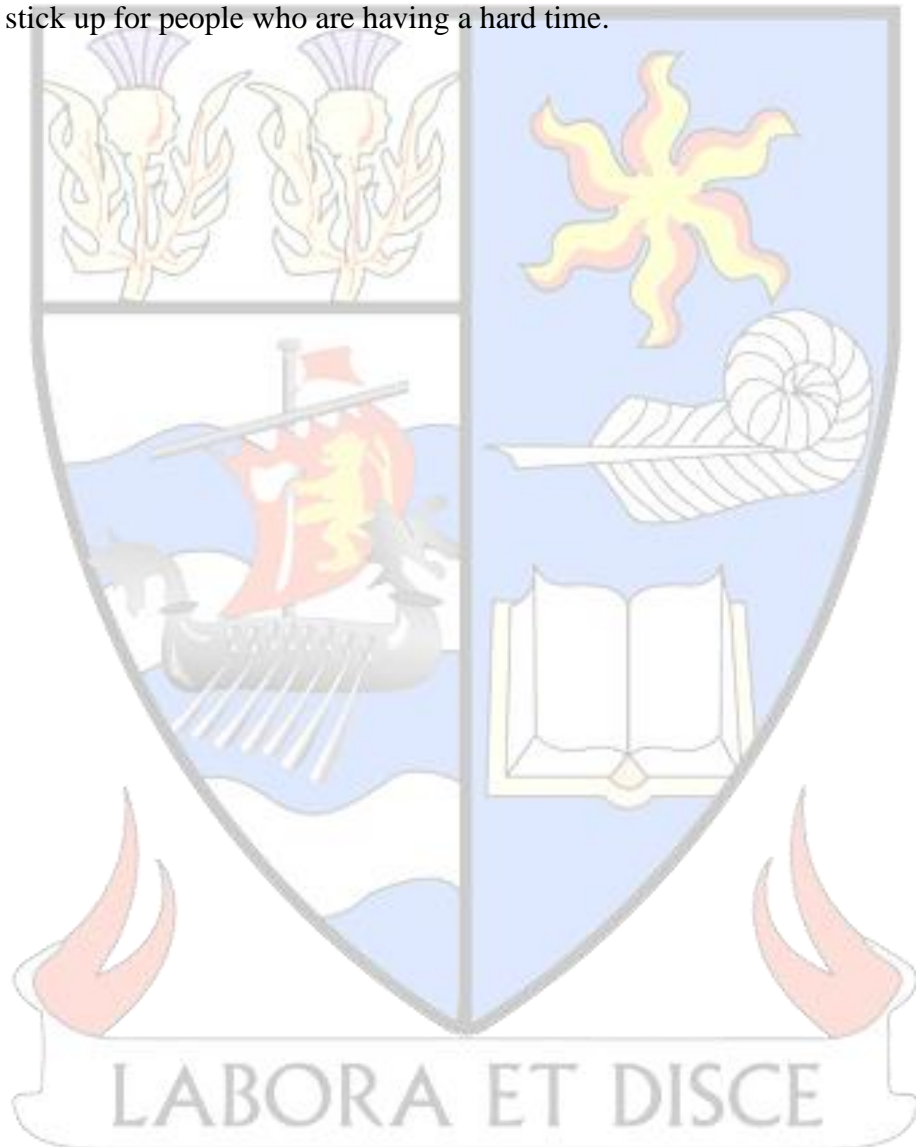
Advice for pupils - I am being bullied – What should I do?

It doesn't matter what colour hair you have; what trainers you are wearing; how you speak; how you walk; how you talk – it is not your fault if you get bullied. We are all different in some way and that's what makes us amazing.

No matter who you are, bullying makes you feel rubbish and it is okay to be upset about it. **The important thing is that you tell someone about it.**

- ✚ If you feel you can, talk to a teacher you trust or a family member. If you don't want to do that you can always call Childline 0800 11 11 or visit www.childline.org.uk
- ✚ Talk to someone in school. In the first instance, this would be your Pupil Support Teacher/ PT Pastoral Support or Year Head. This will be recorded by the school, investigated appropriately.
- ✚ If you don't want to tell someone in the first instance, complete an online antibullying self-referral form barcode for each PT Pastoral support teacher that we have placed around the school which will:
- ✚ Write down what happened, when it happened, and who was involved. If the bullying is online, keep the evidence – save or copy any photos, videos, texts, e-mails or posts.
- ✚ It can be tempting if you are being bullied to take revenge – for example to send a horrible message back to someone; to try and embarrass and hurt the other person, or to fight back. This is not a good idea – you might end up getting in trouble or get yourself even more hurt.
- ✚ Only spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself. If someone constantly puts you down they are not a real friend/ boyfriend/ girlfriend and not worth your time.

- ✚ Be kind to yourself, and do things that make you feel good, relax and make new friends. You might make music; write lyrics; draw cartoons; dance; act or join a sports club. This is your life so make sure it's the best life possible – don't let anyone bring you down.
- ✚ Remember to respect other people! Just because someone is different to you and your friends – that doesn't mean you are better than them or have a right to make them feel bad. If you mess up, say sorry. You don't have to be friends with everyone – but you should always make it clear that you don't like it when people bully others, and stick up for people who are having a hard time.



Advice for parents/carers - My Child is being bullied – What can I do?

No single sign will indicate for certain that your child is being bullied, but watch out for:

- ✚ belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- ✚ physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- ✚ being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- ✚ not doing as well at school
- ✚ asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- ✚ being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- ✚ problems with eating or sleeping
- ✚ bullying others

You might experience a huge range of emotions if you discover your child is being bullied.

Here is some advice to support:

Talk to them about bullying and cyberbullying. Explain what bullying is, ask if anything like that has happened to them. Keep calm and listen carefully to what they say. Reassure about the next steps – they may feel scared, embarrassed or ashamed. Continue to check in and offer to listen.

Let them know who to ask for help. This could be a trusted adult, a teacher or a family member.

Speak to the school. In the first instance, this would be the PT Pupil Support Teacher or Year Head. This will be recorded by the school, investigated and reviewed.

Help them relax and take time out. Bullying can reduce confidence. Provide opportunities to make them feel good and build confidence. Reassure at all points.

Report bullying on social media and online gaming. Don't stop them from using their phone or social media – this could feel like a punishment and the child has not done anything wrong. Support to block and report.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Concerned-about-your-child/>

Report bullying videos shared online. Get in contact with the site the video is shared on as soon as possible. If a report is made and depending on the sites terms and conditions, they may be able to remove this.

Report hate crime to the Police.

Our response to bullying behaviour

As a school community we are committed to ensure a welcoming and inclusive ethos where we share an understanding of Anti-bullying behaviour.

We acknowledge that within our school, pupils and staff have a collective responsibility for challenging bullying behaviour:

From transition in S1, pupils, parents/carers are made aware of our year team structure and the roles and responsibilities of the Year Head, Pupil Support Teacher, Pastoral Support teacher and PT of Pastoral Support teacher. This ensures our school community knows who to speak to if they are concerned about bullying behaviour.

It is important that pupils, parents/carers and staff are confident in reporting any bullying concerns that they may have. Equally, we encourage a “Speak up and Report” approach where we challenge any bullying behaviour observed or are aware of, and report this.

Where bullying behaviour is observed by or reported to a member of staff, they will:

- ✚ Take it seriously
- ✚ Provide a safe space to talk and listen
- ✚ Reassure about the situation
- ✚ Ask further questions to gain more information
- ✚ Consider support to deal with the situation
- ✚ Ask the young person what they wish to happen
- ✚ Restorative conversation
- ✚ Parent/carer contact
- ✚ SMT involvement (if appropriate)
- ✚ Police involvement (if appropriate)
- ✚ A follow-up of the event will then be monitored and reviewed by Year Team with check-ins for all pupils involved and recorded by Year Team.
- ✚ It is important that those demonstrating the bullying behaviour are also supported to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and to avoid any future behaviour.

They may need support to:

- ✚ Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- ✚ Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- ✚ Repair relationships

With this in mind we will:

- ✚ Listen
- ✚ Explain the behaviour demonstrated and why this was wrong
- ✚ Explain the consequences
- ✚ Be clear about behaviour that needs to change
- ✚ Discuss any prejudices that might be apparent in the behaviour

- ✚ Consequences/Sanctions to bullying behaviour may involve:
- ✚ Logical consequences – loss of break/lunch, change of seat, alternate changing for PE, behaviour monitoring card
- ✚ Restorative conversation – mediation with victim, supported by member of staff
- ✚ Parental involvement – phone call, meeting to discuss behaviour further
- ✚ SLT involvement – verbal warning, formal disciplinary warning, exclusion
- ✚ Police involvement - Hate crime, Telecommunications Act, Malicious Communications Act

Recording and Monitoring Bullying Behaviour

- ✚ Once a bullying allegation has been reported, investigated monitored and reviewed, it must be:
- ✚ Recorded on SEEMIS

Bullying behaviour can then be monitored through reports on Seemis or by analysis/quality assurance of the school. This may then inform/support any further action required.

Further sources of help and advice

Further help and advice for parents and students can be found through the following organisations:

<http://www.respectme.org.uk/>

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

<https://nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/> <http://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/bullying/> <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/guidanceadvice/bullying/>

<http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/>

