

James Young High School Anti-Bullying Strategy

June 2023 – Revised August 2024

Mission Statement

The James Young High School (JYHS) is committed to providing a safe, caring environment in which everyone will be treated fairly and with respect.

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 19, JYHS will act to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect. In line with Article 28, JYHS believes that education is the right of every child and will act to ensure all young people are able to receive that right.

In support of the aims of A Curriculum for Excellence, the Anti-Bullying Strategy will be promoted within the school to encourage our young people to be Responsible Citizens. The school recognises that if pupils experience bullying behaviour, this could damage their opportunities to achieve the desired outcomes of becoming Successful Learners, Confident Individuals and Effective Contributors.

Firm action will be taken against reported bullying behaviour. Bullying is a breach of Children's Rights. Bullying behaviour of any kind will NOT be tolerated at JYHS.

SPEAK about the problem – anyone who knows about bullying behaviour going on MUST be encouraged to report it to allow our school to promote good relationships and create an ethos in which this type of behaviour is considered unacceptable by all and will always be challenged.

What is bullying behaviour?

Definition of bullying behaviour: bullying behaviour is considered to be any behaviour which impacts on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. It is behaviour that hurts another person physically or emotionally, and makes them feel sad, threatened, frightened or isolated. This behaviour can exist wherever relationships exist; it can be face-to-face or online.

Bullying can be in many forms:

- Cyber – misuse of technology in a way that is hurtful to others. This includes threatening, insulting, excluding or tormenting people through social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, gaming platforms) e-mail, text messaging or telephone calls. It also includes using camera or video facilities to record and/or upload photos or footage without the permission of the people involved.
- Homophobic, Biphobic or Transphobic – any comment or action used in a derogatory manner regarding a person's actual or perceived sexuality or gender identity.
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting, tripping up etc.
- Prejudice based – any comment or action that targets pupils because of any difference (real or perceived) in their appearance, behaviour, personal circumstances or any other matter. This includes the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, sex, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- Psychological – treating people in an unfriendly way, excluding people from groups, tormenting people, hiding or taking belongings, threatening gestures, trying to get people into trouble, written insults.
- Racist – verbal taunts about a person's race, religion or culture, graffiti, gestures.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, rumour spreading, teasing.

In general, social media sites advise that nasty comments are ignored and deleted unless they are threatening or illegal, in which case they should be reported to site administrators and, where applicable, the police. Copies or screenshots of comments should be kept if reporting an incident.

Any particularly serious case of physical bullying may need to be treated separately as assault. This is a criminal offence, sanctions for which are outwith the scope of this strategy.

There is no such thing as “sexual bullying”. Any unwanted sexual attention or behaviour is defined as sexual harassment or sexual assault and will be treated as such. These can be criminal offences, hence potential sanctions are also outwith the scope of this strategy.

Some key points to note about bullying behaviour

The behaviour does not have to be deliberate to be considered as bullying behaviour.

The behaviour does not have to happen repeatedly to be considered as bullying behaviour.

No-one deserves to experience bullying behaviour:

- It should not be dismissed as part of growing up.
- It can hurt emotionally as well as physically.
- It can have a long term effect, long after the actual bullying behaviour has stopped.
- It is **not** the person experiencing the bullying behaviour’s fault.
- Being different in any way is not a justification for someone to be picked on.
- It is the pupils who are displaying this bullying behaviour who need to change their behaviour, not the person experiencing the bullying behaviour.
- If someone witnesses bullying behaviour and does nothing, they are hindering the person from receiving help.

What are the possible signs and symptoms that a pupil may be being bullied?

If a child displays any of the following behaviours or physical conditions, bullying is a possible cause of the problem and should therefore be investigated:

- Fear of walking to or from school, catching the bus for school; insisting on being driven to school
- Not wanting to go to school; regularly complaining of being unwell in the morning
- Truancing periods of the school day or the whole day
- Becoming upset at night time or having difficulty sleeping
- Quality of school work deteriorating
- Returning home with clothes torn or belongings damaged
- Asking for more money than usual or stealing money
- Returning home without having eaten as expected
- Unexplained cuts or bruises
- Reduced confidence, becoming anxious or stammering
- Changes in personality e.g. becoming more aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable, quiet, introverted or attention-seeking
- Nervous or anxious when a message or notification is received; afraid to use the internet, social media, gaming platforms or their mobile phone
- Demonstrating bullying behaviour towards other children or siblings
- Running away
- Self-harming
- Threatening or attempting suicide
- Giving improbable reasons for any of the above

Note: if bullying is ruled out as a cause of any of the above behaviours, further investigation should continue into other possible reasons including mental health and physical health issues.

What should a pupil do if they are experiencing bullying behaviour?

Never assume that people already know or can already see that bullying behaviour is happening.

Speak to someone.

Initially, this can be anyone the pupil feels comfortable talking to e.g. parents, friends, pupils in leadership roles, any member of staff or other trusted adult.

To ensure the bullying behaviour is investigated and dealt with, it is important that the bullying is then reported to the appropriate member(s) of staff within the school. All reports of bullying behaviour will be listened to, investigated and dealt with sensitively, with an appropriate degree of confidentiality.

Any bullying reported within the school will be passed on to the relevant member(s) of staff for investigation. Bullying which has been discussed with parents or friends has not yet been reported to the school, so it is important that somebody informs the school to allow action to be taken – this is everybody’s responsibility. Action cannot be taken on bullying behaviour that has not been reported to a member of staff within the school.

Bullying behaviour can also be reported to Pupil Support by scanning the QR code displayed on posters in classrooms around the school.

Pupils who are experiencing bullying behaviour, their parents or friends may also find the following organisations helpful:

www.respectme.org.uk

www.cyberbullying.org

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

reach.scot

www.kidscape.org.uk

CHILDLINE: 0800 11 11

familylives.org.uk

What will the school do when bullying behaviour is reported?

The safety of the person experiencing the bullying behaviour is the first priority. The member of staff to whom the bullying is reported will listen to the details of the situation and will check that the pupil feels safe to follow their normal school routine. If necessary, the pupil will be allowed to see the Pupil Support Worker for their house as soon as possible.

Staff will use their professional judgement and, where appropriate, consultation with the pupils involved to determine whether the incident can be dealt with at the time or should be referred on to Pupil Support.

Staff may also report wellbeing concerns relating to potential bullying to Pupil Support in situations where bullying behaviour has not been specifically reported.

All reported bullying incidents will be logged on the SEEMiS referral system. All staff will be trained in the use of this referral system.

All referred incidents will be investigated by the relevant Pupil Support Worker and/or House Head. Statements from all those involved will be taken. Identities will be protected where possible.

Support will be put in place for all parties involved, where this is considered necessary. This support may take the form of mediation, counselling, anger management or external agency help. This will continue for as long as it is considered necessary and appropriate by staff members, parents and the pupils involved.

Where appropriate, parents of all relevant parties will be informed of the incident and the measures put in place to support all involved.

Police will be informed where necessary and will be involved in subsequent action.

If a pupil continues to demonstrate bullying behaviour, after all support mechanisms have been employed, they will be issued a Formal Disciplinary Warning and may face exclusion from school in line with the West Lothian Promoting Positive Relationships Policy.

What will the school be doing to prevent bullying behaviour?

All members of the school community have a responsibility to model positive behaviour and foster positive relationships, to be vigilant and challenge any bullying behaviour that they witness.

This Anti-Bullying Strategy will be accessible to pupils and parents/carers via the school website. Staff can also access the strategy via the school records management system.

Anti-Bullying week in November will be used to remind pupils, staff and parents/carers of the Anti-Bullying strategy and to provide assemblies focusing on the issue.

Education about bullying behaviour will take place in PSE classes.

Senior pupils supporting in classes and around the school will look out for signs of bullying behaviour and will report concerns to the appropriate members of staff.

This strategy will be regularly evaluated and reviewed to reflect any changes in National or Local Authority policy, modifications to school procedures or feedback from routine surveys of pupils, staff and parents/carers which include questions relating to bullying behaviour.

Note

JYHS have worked in partnership with *respectme* - Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service on development of this strategy. We acknowledge the use of some content from their website www.respectme.org.uk and note that copyright remains with *respectme*.