Caledonian Campus

Anti-Bullying Policy

CC024

**Anti Bullying**

All children and young people have the right to feel safe.  The Scottish Government state that all adults have a role in ensuring that children and young people live safely and reach their potential.  Bullying can significantly impact on a young person’s sense of well being and safety and it “is the single biggest problem that children and young people speak to Childline about, with around 20,000 calls each year”.  At Spark of Genius we take the safety and wellbeing of young people very seriously and bullying in any form will **not** be tolerated.

This policy is designed to help staff to:

* Effectively identify bullying behaviour
* Recognise the impact of bullying on young people
* Appropriately respond to incidents of bullying at Spark of Genius
* Reassure young people that adults at Spark of Genius take the issue of bullying very seriously
* Encourage all stakeholders to work in partnership to stamp out bullying
* Provide strategies to effectively address bullying incidents

**What is Bullying Behaviour?**

A number of theories and definitions exist on what constitutes bullying.  It can be defined as “the act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault or other more subtle methods of coercion such as manipulation.  Bullying is usually done to coerce others by fear or threat.  At Spark of Genius we recognise, due to the nature of the youngsters we work with, that bullying may be unintentional.  It is therefore the impact that it has on the individual concerned that must determine whether behaviour is defined as bullying although it is generally accepted that the behaviour has to take place on more than one occasion for it to be described as bullying.  The young person’s ability to defend themselves will have an impact on whether behaviour is described as bullying.

**Bullying can be:**

* Emotional: name calling, teasing, put downs and threats;
* Physical: hitting, punching, kicking or any act of violence;
* Racial: being ostracized, name calling, graffiti, gestures or inappropriate jokes;
* Sexually motivated: unwanted sexual advances or comments;
* Homophobic: being ostracized, name calling, graffiti, spreading rumours;
* Cyber: abusive internet, email or mobile phone contact.

**What is the Impact of Bullying?**

The long term impact of bullying may be devastating to the individual concerned, additionally there are immediate consequences that can significantly impact on a young person’s ability to function.

Staff must be aware that many young people are scared to report bullying incidents due to the repercussions that may result from this.  Young people may feel fear due to their experience of being bullied.  This may result in signs of anxiety, deteriorating school performance, nervousness and changes in moods and personality.

Truancy or absconding can be another sign of bullying as young people attempt to avoid the bully or bullies.  This can directly impact on school achievement as young people need to attend school to learn and it can have longer term implications for their access to further education, training and employment.

Taunts can significantly impact a young person’s view of themselves and eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia or obesity can sometimes result from a throw away comment. Constant put downs can lower self esteem and destroy a young person’s confidence, making them feel that they have nothing positive to contribute, resulting in a lack of aspirations. Children and young people may also use self-harm to cope with difficult feelings; when a young person feels that there is no solution to the problem of being bullied then the ultimate impact can be suicidal thoughts.

Low moods, depression and a lack of enthusiasm can result from bullying as young people find it difficult to attend interest groups or get out of bed as a result of their experience of being bullied. Sometimes children and young people who have experienced bullying go on to develop bullying behaviours as the behaviour has been learned. Violence towards others can also result from a young person being consistently taunted or abused; aggressive behaviour can often be seen to be the only way to solve the problem.

**Procedures: How Staff must Respond to Bullying**

At Caledonian Campus we recognise that young people will tease each other, have disagreements and fall out as this is part of normal adolescent development and behaviour; this needs to be distinguished from bullying.  However if staff allow this behaviour to go unchallenged it may lead to bullying and result in a young person feeling unsafe.

**Staff must:**

* Be observant and vigilant at all times and look out for signs of bullying
* Be mindful that transition periods, such as breaks or staff changeovers, are ‘hotspots’ for bullying behaviour
* Role model positive behaviour and always challenge negative comments and behaviour
* Help young people to develop different ways to express their feelings
* Promote confidence and self esteem helping young people to effectively address bullying behaviour
* Treat all instances of bullying seriously and follow the guidelines identified below

**Should you suspect that a young person is being bullied you must:**

* Record your concerns on the ‘Record of Bullying Concern/Incident’ sheet

(See Appendix 1) ensuring that you distinguish between fact and opinion, there should be one written for each young person who is involved.

* Communicate your concerns with the rest of the staff team to ensure consistency and close supervision of all young people
* Pass your concerns on to your line manager immediately to seek advice on the best way to proceed
* Advise the young person of how the issue will be dealt with, be discreet at all times
* Complete a risk assessment for the young people involved or update it.

**Dealing with a Bullying Incident**

Bullying can be dealt with in a number of ways depending upon the severity of the incident:

* Address the behaviour with the individual young person or group of bullies at the time.  The member of Spark of Genius staff dealing with the behaviour will depend on the severity of the incident.
* Mediation between the individual young person or group of bullies and the young person affected by the behaviour
* A formal meeting with parents or professionals involved with the bully or group of bullies
* A member of the Senior Management Team may be asked to address persistent bullying behaviour
* Serious instances of bullying may be dealt with through Caledonian Campus Child Protection procedures (alert the DCPO or the Deputy DCPO) and could result in police involvement.

Every employee at Caledonian Campus must be familiar with this policy and procedures to follow as the welfare and safety of our children and young people is paramount.  All concerns must be recorded and shared with management and the rest of the staff team, risk assessments should be put in place to ensure the safety of all young people affected.

**Useful References and Contact Information:**

**Childline**

08001111

**respectme**

Scotland’s Anti-bullying service

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

**Parentline Plus**

Anti-bullying Helpline

08088002222

**Kidscape**

Parents Helpline

08451205204 (Mon-Fri 10.00 – 16.00)

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

**Useful Websites**

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com/)

[www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org/)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/)

[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org/)

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

[www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk/)

Appendix 1 **Record of Bullying Behaviour**

**Record of Bullying Behaviour**

**Date:**

**Young Person:**

**Location:**

**Details of the Incident:**

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**Action Taken:**

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**Outcome:**

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**Staff Member:**

**Date of Risk Assessment Written:**

**Existing Risk Assessment to be Updated? Yes/No**

**Keyworker Signature:**

**Management Signature:**