

Craigroyston fight bullying with peer mentoring programme



Cabinet Secretary for Justice Michael Matheson went to Craigroyston Community High School in the capital today to see how a scheme designed to tackle violence and bullying amongst young people is improving the confidence of pupils and teachers at the school

Mr Matheson met sixth year pupils from the school to hear about the Mentors Against Violence programme at the school and their peer mentoring training.

[The Edinburgh Reporter News](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Matheson congratulated the pupils on getting involved in the programme and said that although violent crime has dropped dramatically in Scotland recently. While a lot of that is down to Police Scotland it cannot be left to the law enforcement agencies alone and a big part of tackling violence in society is about culture shift.



He told the sixth year pupils that there has to be a change in attitude which cannot come from national or local government telling people what to do. He explained: "The way in which you change that is you have to identify the assets you have in the community. Assets means people in the community like you and that is what is needed to change attitudes..

"If people experience bullying and violence in their relationships they start to believe it is the norm.

“To do that we need to think about the assets in the community and also ambassadors in the community to take the message out and that is exactly what you are doing.

You are not just changing your own situation. It is about changing it for future generations as well. As you go on and develop your own lives then you will spread these values widely. You are an important part of helping with the change.

The minister also mentioned the incident on Monday at a high school in Glasgow where there was a very serious incident where a minor scuffle had escalated out of control.

He concluded: “Thank you for all the work you have put in and that you have started to make a difference. If you want to change the world then start in your own back yard and that is what you are doing with this programme.”



Local councillor Cammy Day explained that the programme had already been rolled out in Portobello High School : “The council and Police Scotland are working pretty hard in North Edinburgh to try and challenge issues around violence. It is great to see fifteen young people saying that they want to do something about it in their school and their local community.”

Headmaster Steve Ross admitted that there is not a big bullying problem in the school but the programme gives young people the confidence to speak up about violence in any situation in or out of school.

MVP Scotland is a partnership between the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Local Authorities and the voluntary sector.

They believe that young people in Scotland face many challenges in their family, community and school environments

which, if unchallenged, can create a range of negative outcomes and possibly lead to low self-esteem, lack of confidence, low attendance, low attainment and a lack of resilience to deal with them.

The MVP Programme recognises that the creation of safe learning environments is crucial not only in support of raising attendance and attainment but also in supporting young people to deal with the many challenges in today's society.

Developed by US Educator Dr Jackson Katz the MVP Programme focuses on leadership and an innovative 'Bystander' approach that empowers and equips individuals to take on a leadership role in preventing abuse and violence.

MVP successfully engages young people in the role of peer mentor and utilises this powerful influence to engage younger pupils to identify a range of behaviours as wrong, unhealthy or illegal. The programme aims to build trust and identifies friendships as a key factor in this process.