

## **Supporting Document - Background to the MVP Programme**

### **Introduction**

Violence remains at unacceptable levels in across the UK. The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme offers excellent opportunities to discuss a range of issues within an educational framework where positive relationships, health and wellbeing are key.

MVP aims to create safe and supportive learning environments by challenging bullying and abuse, building relationships and creating partnerships between schools and communities.

Violence is a complex issue and one which is very often not fully understood by the many who are responsible for tackling it. We often deal with the violence that we see and do not tackle the culture, the beliefs and the attitudes which may result in the physical act itself.

The introduction of bystander training within the school setting will start to tackle the culture, the beliefs and the attitudes that say its ok to abuse a girl/woman or its ok to hit a girl/woman. The approach will also allow discussions on bullying, harassment and different forms of hate crime, and the influence of the media in shaping our society.

### **Bystander Engagement**

Traditional approaches to tackling men's violence against women have been narrow. A bystander approach focuses both on increasing a person's knowledge that these behaviours are wrong as well as giving an individual

the skills and confidence to intervene to prevent such behaviour as well as supporting the victim.

For boys and men, it invites them into the discussion on this issue, for women it empowers them to support their friends and allows them to feel confident to discuss these issues. Bystander approaches aim to create a positive culture which defines such abuse and violence as unacceptable.

Within our society a 'false consensus' exists. This is where the majority of people with healthy attitudes incorrectly think that they are in the minority. The bystander approach works by questioning these social norms, realigning beliefs as well as giving reassurance that positive intervention is possible.

### **The MVP Model**

The Mentors in Violence Prevention programme developed in the 1990's by Dr Jackson Katz utilises a creative bystander approach to prevent all forms of bullying and gender based violence. Males and females are not looked at as potential victims or perpetrators but as empowered bystanders with the ability to support and challenge peers. Within the MVP programme a bystander is defined as a friend, class-mate, team-mate, colleague or relative. In other words, it is someone they know.

### **MVP Playbook**

The playbook offers a consistent approach to delivery of MVP sessions. The aims of the MVP programme are:

1. To raise awareness
2. To challenge attitudes
3. To open dialogue

#### 4. To inspire leadership

The MVP programme makes use of a simple playbook to provide discussion on a range of behaviours which include:

- Dating Abuse
- Harassment
- Bullying
- Sexting
- Control
- Alcohol and consent

Throughout the MVP programme there is an opportunity to develop leadership skills. Once schools receive initial training their next task is to recruit and train a team of MVP mentors from the upper part of the school. It is this 'boy to boy' and 'girl to girl' mentoring that has demonstrated positive outcomes for the MVP programme as well as giving MVP mentors valuable life skills.