

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 **Scope:** This policy applies to all pupils and staff at the School irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when/if bullying behaviour occurs.

1.2 **Policy aims:** Through the operation of this policy we aim:

- to maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the School
- to deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by expulsion

1.3 Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School because:

- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them
- it interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation
- it is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School

2 BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

2.1 **Meaning:** Bullying can be considered as a form of child-on-child abuse, and is behaviour which is repeated over time and intentionally hurts or causes distress by taking unfair advantage of another person or group in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable or threatened. Examples are:

- physical bullying - hitting, kicking pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- verbal bullying - name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting, homophobic, racist or sexist remarks or demanding money
- exclusionary behaviour - intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group
- sexual harassment - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- general unkindness - spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, phone texts or e-mails.

- **Cyber-bullying:** The School has a separate policy which deals with "cyber-bullying". Cyber-bullying is the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. (See *Cyberbullying: safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools* (DCSF 00658-2007, guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.)
- 2.2 **Intention:** Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "banter", "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may be non-malign and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have to leave the School.
- 2.3 **Responsibility:** It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no pupil becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability, or because s/he is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. S/he may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.
- 2.4 **Legal aspects:** A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a "tort" for which there can be legal consequences outside the School.

3 ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

- 3.1 **Ethos:** Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:
- everyone will uphold the School Rules and Anti-Bullying Policy as published in the pupils' Homework Diaries
 - a pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it
 - a complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously
 - no one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied
- 3.2 **Equal opportunities:** In School and in every year group:
- discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable
 - positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School
 - positive attitudes are fostered towards both sexes through the curriculum and tutorials
- 3.3 **Staff:** Through their training and experience, members of the staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:
- celebrating achievement
 - anticipating problems and providing support

- disciplining sensibly and fairly
- making opportunities to listen to pupils
- acting as advocates of pupils

3.4 **Pupils:** Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:

- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others
- to hold and promote positive attitudes
- to feel able to share problems with staff
- to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints
- to treat meals as pleasant social occasions

4 ANTI-BULLYING SYSTEMS

4.1 **Approach:**

Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- vertically, through all year groups
- horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

4.2 **Complaints:**

A pupil who is being bullied should complain without delay and can do so in several ways. S/he can:

- tell his/her parents, his/her Form Tutor, Head of Year or a Matron, or the Chaplain, or a member of staff or a responsible older pupil;
- place a note in the "Let me know box" situated at various locations around the school (Red Post Boxes) and on all Form Tutor's desks (Blue locked tins)
- raise a Concern via Firefly
- contact our Independent Person, Thomas Hall
- contact the Prep School Designated Safeguarding Team (Mrs Lewis, Mrs Awwad, Mrs Brooks, Mr Batchelor, Mrs Unwin, Mrs Borgonon, Mrs Williams and Mrs Fairweather)
- contact the Children's Services Department (telephone:0300 470 9100) for advice

- contact Childline (0800 1111)

4.3 **Vigilance:**

Members of staff are vigilant at **all times** but particularly:

- Before and in between lessons
- In the queue for the Dining Hall
- Changing rooms
- In Boarding Houses, particularly in dormitories
- On school transport

4.4 **Meetings:**

Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- Members of the Senior Management Team
- Heads of Year and Form Tutors
- Tutors and pupils in their tutor group
- School staff, year group staff and matrons
- School council meetings
- LEARNING for LIFE lessons
- Deputy Head Pastoral and the Anti-Bullying Ambassador (currently Form 6 pupils)

The result of these meetings is to feed-back information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils.

4.5 **Record keeping:**

- Tutors, Heads of Year and staff maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils. Pastoral information is recorded on the School Pastoral Module.
- Any bullying incident with a child protection implication will be recorded by the DSL and all records associated with it, will be stored in a confidential folder and/or on the Pastoral Module.

4.6 **Education:**

LEARNING for LIFE lessons throughout the school focus on anti-bullying. These lessons are age appropriate and in the Upper School there is much emphasis on cyber-bullying and internet safety. As a school we also take part in the national Ant—Bullying week.

These lessons cover:

- What is bullying? What are the boundaries?
- Why are some people bullied and others victims?
- What should a pupil do if he or she is either bullied or is aware of another pupil being bullied?
- What will the school do about bullying?

4.7 **Staff training:**

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that Heads of Year and other staff have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases

And in year groups, ensuring that:

- There is an adequate presence of staff
- Staff are actively involved with pupils in all areas of the year group when they are on duty
- Attempts are made to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among pupils
- There is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal
- There is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms
- Good behaviour and discipline is maintained

4.8 **Pupils' responsibilities:**

We emphasise with prefects and senior pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older boarders are encouraged to keep an eye on younger boarders and offer support, where it is needed, and in particular:

- there are many different opportunities for leadership but the responsibilities of senior pupils are appropriately limited
- school prefects receive training at the beginning of the academic year on peer mentoring.

4.9 **Monitoring:**

Every complaint or report of bullying must be recorded on the Pastoral Module and reported to the Deputy Head, Pastoral.

4.10 **Reporting incidents**

4.10.1 **Victim:**

There are many reasons why a pupil who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. S/he may become demoralised and may say, for example:

- It is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular
- The things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult
- It is all my fault anyway for being overweight/too studious etc.
- There are too many of them; there is nothing the staff can do
- It will get back to my parents and they will think less of me
- I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin
- I will lie low and not audition for a part in the school play etc.

4.10.2 **Witnesses:**

There are also reasons why a pupil who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. S/he may say:

- It is "grassing", "snitching" and I will become unpopular
- It is not my concern anyway
- I don't rate the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her

4.10.3 **Culture:**

Any of these responses would be contrary to our culture at the School. When we drive and implement this policy we encourage every pupil to understand that:

- Every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously
- Members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received
- There is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying

- A pupil who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no-names basis
- The primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless necessary

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 **Guidelines:** The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms "should" or "must". The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

5.2 Initial complaint:

A person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- Firstly, offer advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim.
- Report the allegation to the Head of Year of the victim and the alleged bully as soon as possible.

The Head of Year must:

- Consider whether the incident has a child protection implication and if so, immediately contact the DSL
- Refer to their Pastoral Module page and the Reporting Bullying Pro-forma
- Record the complaint in the Pastoral Module (Either open a plan or Raise a Concern)
- Contact the other Heads of Year (if applicable) and/or Deputy Head to agree on a strategy, and on who will take the lead

5.3 Assessment:

The victim's Head of Year will normally see the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation:

- The nature of the incident/s - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc.
- Is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- Is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- Has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed - Deputy Head Pastoral? Parents? The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead? Social Services? The police?
- Can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?
- What is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- There has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully
- The complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below)

5.4 **Serious incident:**

If a Head of Year believes that serious bullying behaviour:

- has occurred or has recurred after warnings have been given to the "bully" s/he must inform the Head and the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will then:
 - interview the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. She may decide to ask the Head of Year to be present.
 - send a summary of her findings to the Head and relevant Heads of Year,
- the Head and/or the relevant Heads of Year will interview the alleged victim and bully separately:
 - to confirm the facts of the case, if considered necessary
 - to decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the Range of Action set out below
- the Head will notify the parents of the victim and bully giving them details of the case and the action being taken

5.5 **Range of action:**

When a complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim
- advice and support to the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning
- a supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict
- a disciplinary sanction against the bully ranging from loss of break times to suspension from school. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the School permanently
- action to break up a "power base"
- moving either the bully or victim to another tutor group/dormitory after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff
- involving Children's Services or the police

- notifying the parents of one or both pupils about the case and the action which has been taken
 - such other action as may appear to the Head to be appropriate
- noting the outcome in the Pastoral Module, behaviour log on iSAMs and on pupil files

5.6 **Monitoring:**

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with pupils in the Tutor Group and/or Boarding House so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely
- ongoing counselling and support
- vigilance
- mentioning the incident at meetings of staff
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School
- liaison between Heads of Year

6 **Formal Complaint:**

If the victim or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the complaints procedure published on the website. The Complaints Policy is available from the School Secretary.

Policy reviewed annually. Last reviewed July 2023

E F Lewis. Deputy Head, Pastoral