

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

SENIOR HOUSE

This policy has been prepared with regard to DCSF Guidance '*Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*' (2007)¹, '*Bullying – A Charter for Action*'² and with particular attention to *Every Child Matters* (2003).³ It is our aim that wherever possible, our policy and procedure should contribute to all pupils' well-being by helping them to achieve their potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. We acknowledge that it is the right of every child to be helped to be healthy and safe, to enjoy and achieve, and to make a positive contribution to the community.

This policy forms an integral part of the School's wider Behaviour Policy.

Bullying – definitions

The government defines bullying as:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

The School understands bullying to be:

Deliberately hurtful behaviour, often repeated over a period of time, which makes another person feel uncomfortable, intimidated or threatened, whether this is intended or not.

Bullying is a whole school issue. Whilst bullying is not specifically a criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. The school recognises that bullying has serious consequences and can cause psychological damage and even suicide. Bullying behaviour can occur between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face or indirectly. It can be fuelled by prejudice and be of a racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist or homophobic nature. It may be focused on someone's appearance, health, disability, intelligence, sexuality or their home situation. Bullying can take many different forms and is increasingly carried out through electronic means, commonly known as 'cyberbullying'.

Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

¹ <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk>

² <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk>

³ <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters>

- Physical:** Hitting; kicking; pushing; taking or hiding belongings; deliberately damaging someone's work or possessions
- Verbal:** Name-calling; teasing; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments
- Indirect:** Spreading unkind stories about someone; inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or texting, emailing, misuse of MSN or social networking sites; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; spreading malicious rumours.

All forms of bullying are taken equally seriously.

The school's aims and objectives with regard to bullying:

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Prevention

- i. To make it clear to girls, staff, parents and guardians that bullying will not be tolerated; promoting an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- ii. In accordance with the School's Christian foundation, to instil in all members of the school community a sense of caring and kindness for one another; encouraging positive behaviour and respect for others.
- iii. To promote a positive environment where every member of the school community feels safe and supported; ensuring that during breaks and lunch times the buildings and grounds are supervised by staff.
- iv. To encourage a climate of openness in which girls, staff and parents act immediately if there is any suspicion of bullying occurring.
- v. To provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, which ensure that pupils, staff and parents know how to report bullying and how to get help.
- vi. To apply disciplinary sanctions fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably to deal with those pupils who are found to be bullying; taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. The aims of such sanctions are:
 - to impress on the perpetrator that what they have done is unacceptable;
 - to deter them from repeating that behaviour;
 - to signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it;
 - to hold the pupil who bullies to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it;
 - To provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused.
- vii. To educate pupils in resisting bullying in all its forms; being clear about the roles that pupils can take in preventing bullying, including as a bystander.
- viii. To promote pupils' emotional health via resilience.

- ix. To provide variety of opportunities to address bullying issues through a whole-school and whole curriculum approach to developing social and emotional skills in areas such as empathy and the management of feelings.
- x. To make use of opportunities throughout the school calendar to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November; and whole-school assemblies, Pastoral evenings for parents).
- xi. To engage pupils in the process of developing the school Anti-bullying Policy and promoting open and honest reporting through the role of Form teachers, Form Prefects, School Council and the annual Anti-bullying Questionnaire. Regular Anti-bullying Questionnaires enable us to note any patterns so that appropriate action can be taken. Pupils discuss findings from their particular year group and make suggestions based on these patterns.
- xii. To provide effective support for those being bullied and a framework within which those bullying others may recognise and reform their behaviour.

Intervention

The aims of school anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- i. To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- ii. To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- iii. To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil as appropriate, e.g. the School Counsellor.
- iv. To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.
- v. To provide support for both the pupil who has experienced bullying and for the pupil exhibiting bullying behaviour.

Procedure for dealing with incidents involving bullying:

For Girls:

- i. All girls are encouraged to be alert and to watch out for bullying behaviours.
- ii. The girls are reminded regularly of the importance of reporting any bullying behaviours to a member of staff, regardless of whether they themselves are the target. This message is reinforced through Form time, PSHE lessons, through assemblies, the wider curriculum, the role of the Form Prefect, School Council and the annual Anti-bullying Questionnaire.
- iii. Girls are strongly encouraged to speak with any member of staff (adult?) with whom they feel at ease.
- iv. Various different strategies for reporting bullying are discussed in School Council and the girls are encouraged to make suggestions.

For Staff:

- i. All teachers should be alert to possible warning signs in pupils such as distress, work difficulties, illness and irregular attendance.

- ii. If a girl informs a teacher that she is being bullied, or a member of staff hears that bullying has taken place, he/she should listen very carefully, taking careful notes of time, place etc and satisfy themselves that there is a case to answer. All reports of bullying must be taken seriously. The teacher should then speak to the relevant Section Head/HOY who will investigate (with the Pastoral Assistant Head) the allegation by interviewing both victim and perpetrator separately. Detailed notes should be taken throughout and retained in the pupil's file.
- iii. If both the Section Head/HOY and the Assistant Head agree that bullying has taken place, they should then inform the Headmistress who will usually call the parents of the girl concerned into school. After discussion, suitable sanctions will be decided in line with the School's Behaviour Policy. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.
- iv. The Form Teacher and Section Head/HOY should follow up any incidents with appropriate support and advice for the victim.
- v. If appropriate, the Pastoral Assistant Head may suggest the involvement of the School Counsellor and discuss this with the girl(s) concerned and (if under 16) their parents.
- vi. Staff receive training which focuses on recognising and tackling bullying behaviours, and raises awareness about times and places where it is most likely to happen.

The school does not use corporal punishment.

Curriculum Support

The anti-bullying message is communicated regularly to the girls through assemblies, tutorials, School Council and through various areas of the curriculum, most notably through PSHE/Citizenship lessons, the ICT curriculum and through visiting speakers. The Pastoral Assistant Head conducts an annual Anti-bullying Questionnaire throughout the Senior House during Anti-bullying week.

All teachers should use appropriate opportunities to reinforce the anti-bullying message through the standards they set in their relationships with the pupils and those they expect between pupils, whether inside or outside the classroom. Training for academic staff regarding anti-bullying is provided; all academic staff are made aware of the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies and procedures.

Reviewed: December 2009