

SENIOR HOUSE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY DURHAM HIGH SCHOOL

This policy should be read in conjunction with: *Child Protection and Technology Policy; ICT Code of Conduct; Pastoral Care Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Senior House Behaviour Policy; Senior House Pupil Code of Conduct.*

This policy has been prepared with regard to DFE Guidance '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying, 2017*' and forms an integral part of the School's wider Behaviour Policy. It is our aim that our policy and procedures 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 to achieve.

The School understands that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have consequences for their mental health. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, Schools aims to create a safe, disciplined environment where our pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Bullying – Definitions

There is no legal definition of bullying, however the Department for Education, defines bullying as: "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally." It is important to note that a single incident could also be defined as bullying; it does not *necessarily* have to be repeated over time.

The School understands bullying to be behaviour which:

- is deliberately intended to hurt, intimidate or humiliate
- often involves a power imbalance
- is usually repeated over time
- often involves no remorse on the part of the perpetrator.

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking or hiding belongings, deliberately damaging someone's work or possessions.
- Verbal:** Name-calling; repeated teasing; threatening, taunting or offensive comments.
- Emotional:** Deliberately and maliciously excluding from a group, spreading malicious rumours intended to hurt or humiliate.
- Cyberbullying*:** Sending offensive, hurtful or degrading images/messages/comments by phone or via the internet/social media; excluding people from groups.

*Online safety and cyber-bullying is taken seriously by the School. The School actively manages hardware, software and connectivity in School and teachers are vigilant in the safeguarding and protection of pupils. Any incidents of cyber-bullying are reported instantly to the Head of Year/Deputy Head (Pastoral). Parents are also reminded of the part they play in safeguarding their daughter online and are asked to be vigilant when pupils are using technology at home; this is done through eg Cyber-safety Evenings and Parents' Information Evenings at the start of the academic year.
See the 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy' and the 'Child Protection and Technology Policy' for further information.

Bullying behaviour can occur between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, sexuality, gender, special educational needs and disabilities, or because a child is adopted, under Social Care or is a young carer. It may be focused on someone's appearance, health, ability, sexuality or their home situation.

Bullying often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve the bully having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways; it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate.

All forms of bullying are taken seriously, however, any bullying on the basis of protected characteristics, including disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation is taken particularly seriously.

A pupil who is complicit in the bullying behaviour of others, without directly participating in bullying behaviour, is also at fault and appropriate sanctions will be applied. A pupil who witnesses bullying behaviour and does not report will have their inaction questioned. Furthermore, bullying behaviour can often be very subtle and difficult for adults to identify.

Bullying or Friendship Issues?

It can be very difficult to discriminate between behaviours resulting from the problems with friendships which often occur in schools. Teasing and falling out with friends are very common and can cause children to feel hurt or upset, but this is not *necessarily* bullying behaviour.

In these situations, staff will exercise discretion in order to determine whether the incident is to be treated as a friendship issue or as a case of bullying. When there are problems between peers, staff will do their best to provide support, offer mediation and to repair relationships. Staff will also be alert to the fact that if these strategies are not employed, the situation *could* escalate to bullying behaviour.

Preventing Bullying

We aim:

- 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; and
 - 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 and well-being.
 - 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 (*see PSHE programme*).
 - x. To make use of opportunities throughout the School calendar to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying: eg assemblies and the PSHE programme.
 - xi. To engage pupils in discussing the School's Anti-bullying Policy and promoting open and honest reporting through the role of Form Teachers and School Council.
 - 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's 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.
- v. To provide support for both the pupil who has experienced bullying and for the pupil exhibiting bullying behaviour.

Reporting Bullying

In most cases, if not seen by an adult, staff rely upon pupils/parents to report any incident of concern. At all times, pupils and parents are listened to and the School will respond immediately by investigating. It is hoped that pupils will be confident to report incidents, particularly to pastoral staff. Pupils may inform any member of staff but are urged to speak to their Form Teacher or Head of Year in the first instance. It is important that incidents are reported as soon as possible so that School can act promptly and prevent the behaviour developing further.

If the Headmistress/Designated Safeguarding Lead decide that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm because of the bullying incident, then the case will be treated as a Child Protection concern and a referral made to outside agencies such as the Police or Children's Social Care.

Confidentiality May Not be Guaranteed

When a case of bullying is reported to a member of staff it is not possible for that person to promise that the information will be kept confidential. Investigation is essential and the parents or the victim will be kept informed, although we do not tell parents what (if any) sanctions have been imposed on other children.

In the event of cyber-bullying, staff will advise that any evidence is kept such as date, time and content of message. It is important in any investigation into cyber-bullying, to keep evidence to be able to show staff, parents and possibly the police in extreme cases.

Procedure for Dealing with Incidents Involving Bullying:

For Pupils:

- i. All pupils are encouraged to be alert and to watch out for bullying behaviours.
- ii. The pupils 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, assemblies, the wider curriculum and School Council.
- iii. Pupils are strongly encouraged to speak with any member of staff with whom they feel at ease.
- iv. Various different strategies for reporting bullying are discussed in Form Time, Year Councils and 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 pupil or parent informs a teacher that a pupil is being bullied either inside or outside of school, or a member of staff hears that bullying has taken place, he/she should listen very carefully, taking careful notes. All reports of bullying must be taken seriously. The teacher should then speak to the relevant Head of Year who will investigate the allegation, with the Deputy Head (Pastoral), by interviewing both victim and the alleged perpetrator/s separately. Detailed notes should be taken throughout. A write up of the investigation will be logged on CPOMS. There may be a case for talking to the alleged perpetrator and victim together after initial separate interviews.
- iii. If both the Head of Year and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) agree that bullying has taken place, they should then inform the Headmistress who will usually call the parents of the perpetrator/s 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. A record of the incident is kept in the "Anti-Bullying Incident File" in order to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified.
- v. The Form Teacher and Head of Year should follow up any incidents with appropriate support and advice for the victim.
- vi. If appropriate, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) may suggest the involvement of the School Counsellor and discuss this with the pupil(s) concerned and (if under 16) their parents.
- vii. If the Headmistress/Designated Safeguarding Lead decide that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm because of the bullying incident, then the case will be treated as a Child Protection concern and a referral made to outside agencies such as the Police or Children's Social Care.
- viii. Staff receive training which focuses on understanding the principles of the this Anti-bullying Policy, recognising and tackling bullying behaviours, and understanding the needs of our pupils, including those with special needs or disabilities, and lesbian, bisexual or transgender pupils.

All teachers should use any appropriate opportunity to reinforce the anti-bullying message either through the standards they set in their relationships with the pupils and the relationships they expect between pupils, whether inside or outside the classroom, or within lessons and extra-curricular activities. In particular, staff are encouraged to take any opportunity to discuss in a positive way, the differences that exist between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice.