

Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



wonder aspiration respect discipline

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Lead: Heads of Student Progress/Assistant Head (Pastoral)
Via: Standards, Personnel + Curriculum
'from potential to reality'

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Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy adheres to the Equality Act (2012) where schools must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.

Aim

School Vision: 'From potential to reality'

School Values:	Wonder	Valuing the role of curiosity in developing knowledge and understanding
	Aspiration	Valuing the challenge in the journey to achievement
	Respect	Valuing the worth of ourselves and the worth and diversity of others
	Discipline	Valuing determination, concentration and resilience. Understanding order, process and purpose

School Mission Statement

To inspire in students a passion for lifelong learning; to work in partnerships to provide an exciting, engaging and enjoyable experience. To support high standards of achievement in a happy and secure environment.

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students and staff learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied and that all members of our community are free from fear of bullying by students, parents or other staff. We aim to maintain a climate of positive relationships, care and mutual respect between all members of the community that builds everyone's self-esteem.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We aim for a mutual understanding of how our actions affect others.

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

- To prevent and / or stop any combination of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the student.
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience.
- To support parents of the victim and the bully.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of students. A single disagreement, argument or 'fall out' is usually though not exclusively outside this definition.

This policy includes:

- Bullying of students by students within school.
- Bullying of and/or by students outside of school, if the school deems this necessary.
- Bullying of staff by students within or outside school.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical e.g. kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings.
- Verbal e.g. name-calling, taunting, threats, offensive remarks.
- Relational e.g. spreading stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups.
- Cyber e.g. texts, emails, picture/video clip bullying, instant messaging.

Contexts of Bullying

The school recognises that bullying motivated by prejudice is a particular concern, for example racist, sexist and homophobic bullying and bullying related to perceptions about disability and/or special educational needs.

Racial Context

- Bullying due to differences related to race, religion or culture.
- Racist bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith, community, national origin or national status.

Sexual Context

- Bullying on the grounds of sex or sexuality, which includes homophobic bullying and bullying due to gender reassignment.
- This may include unwelcome remarks or jokes or unwanted verbal or physical advances.
- It may also include comments made about the sexuality of family or friends.

Disability Context

- Bullying on the grounds of having physical or mental impairment which affects their ability to carry out day to day activities.

Cyber Bullying

- The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else.
- This may take the form of threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking', unauthorised publication of private information or images (e.g. so called 'happy-slapping').
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988 is a law which can be used by police in these instances.

As a result of these concerns mobile phones must not be used on school premises.

Other Contexts

- Any incidents of offensive behaviour directed towards students due to their size, hair colour, appearance, health, home circumstances, etc.

Identifying and Reporting Concerns About Bullying

- All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying to a member of staff.
- Issues of concern raised by staff or students must be monitored and recorded by the Form Tutor or Head of Student Progress.
- Each incident will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.
- Each incident will be investigated and an agreed course of action made known and recorded.

It is important to remember that not all students who are bullied will report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as:

- Becoming shy and nervous
- Feigning illness
- Taking unusual absences
- Clinging to adults
- Changes in work patterns or routines
- Lack of concentration
- Truancy
- Frightened of walking to or from school
- Reluctance to travel on the school bus
- Stammering
- Crying themselves to sleep
- Declining standards in school work
- Arriving home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Asking for more money or stealing (to pay bully)
- Continually losing dinner money
- Unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becoming more aggressive than normal
- Bullying other children or siblings
- Not wanting to eat
- More emotional than usual
- Afraid to use internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a text message or email is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:-

- Foster in our students' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students
- Discuss bullying with all classes so that every student learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- Never ignore suspected bullying.
- Don't make premature assumptions.
- Remain calm.
- Keep the bully away from the victim until the situation has been calmed.
- Listen carefully to all accounts – ask students to write, sign and date their accounts.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach.
- Follow up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.
- Ensure that the Head of Student Progress/Tutor have been informed. They will ensure that parents of the victim and the bully are contacted.
- Staff who feel they are being bullied by another member of staff should discuss it with their line manager or SLT Link, whichever is the most appropriate.

The Responsibilities of Students

We expect our students to:-

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:-

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked for themselves and for other students
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying and not to respond to cyber bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

Restorative Practice

We recognise that one effective approach in dealing with a bully is to use the restorative practice approach. A group of students, including the student who has been doing the bullying, confront the effects of bullying on the victim and come up with solutions to support the victim and stop the behaviour of the bully. **This may only be appropriate if the victim feels able to confront the bully, with adult support.**

Disciplinary Stages

This is not a stepped disciplinary process. In some cases individual culprits may go directly to internal or external exclusion if the school considers this appropriate.

- Official warning.
- Detention.
- Exclusion from areas of the school.
- Isolation.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion.

What Parents Can Expect

- For reports of any types of bullying listed above to be investigated, if the school deems this necessary.
- To be informed if their child is the victim of violence or bullying, at an early stage.
- To be informed if their child is the perpetrator of violence or bullying.
- A full investigation of any incident and notification of the outcome. Parents need reassurance.
- A clear account of the issue will be recorded.
- That school staff will identify and deal effectively with incidents of bullying.
- That all concerns will be treated seriously and promptly.
- That in serious cases of violence, the parents of victims will be supported in any complaint made to the police.
- That persistent bullies will be excluded from school on a fixed-term basis resulting in a permanent exclusion if other interventions do not change the offensive behaviour.

Multi Agency Involvement

We offer a counselling programme in school via the school counsellor. Support will be offered for the victim as well as support for the perpetrator if they wish to discuss their problems. Other outside agencies will be consulted as appropriate.

Varied Interventions for perpetrator:

- Parents contacted
- HOSP intervention – speaking to student/s
- Assemblies given on specific issues pertinent to that year group
- Year periods looking at bullying; different types
- Citizenship lessons – varying topics on bullying
- Counselling
- PCSO – Would speak to the students involved
- Consequence – Isolation / internal exclusion / external exclusion
- Restorative justice – only when victim is willing
- On-going monitoring
- Referral to an agency
- Inclusion support

Preventing Bullying

In order to minimise bullying in the long term it is essential to have a whole school approach so that students and adults have a shared understanding of what bullying is and their role in preventing it happening. We are committed to the following principles:-

- Building of self-esteem and personal resilience so that individuals feel empowered to manage their own behaviours and the behaviours of others.
- Creating an ethos of mutual respect.
- To open up the issue of bullying so that it cannot thrive as part of the school's subculture where children are too frightened to speak out.
- That bullying is a serious matter and not seen as a normal part of growing up.
- Teaching students how to build co-operative relationships with others, how to avoid and resist bullying behaviour and how to resolve difficult situations without resorting to bullying or violence.
- Highlighting bullying through PSHE, Tutor time as well as other subjects as appropriate e.g. Drama, English (novels), ICT. This will include cyber-bullying, offensive texts, etc.
- To be aware that most bullying incidents take place at break or lunch times. Staff are asked to be punctual and vigilant at all times.
- Maintaining high standards of behaviour.

The law empowers Head teachers and members of the school staff, to such extent as is reasonable, and it may be deemed necessary for the Head teacher to regulate the behaviour of students when they are off school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyber-bullying). The school may intervene to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour offsite but affecting students in school. (Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspection Act 2006).

Conclusions

This policy aims to encourage a positive ethos and acknowledge that everyone in school has a responsibility to deal with bullying. We will encourage an atmosphere of trust between students and adults so that bullying cannot thrive.

Records of bullying incidents will be recorded by Heads of Student Progress, with serious incidents being recorded and collated by SLT Link for Pastoral. (This policy should be read alongside our Single Integrated Equality Policy).

The Governing Body will ensure that the school records and monitors information about bullying incidents and will request an annual report from the Head teacher (or SLT member overseeing this policy) regarding these incidents. This information will be collated by the Heads of Student Progress.

APPENDIX

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.childline.org.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying
www.parentcentre.gov.uk/bullying

www.teachernet.gov.uk/behaviour
www.teachernet.gov.uk/tacklingbullying
www.teachernet.gov.uk/truancy

www.bbc.co.uk/schools
www.bbc.co.uk/drama/issues/bullying

www.kidscape.org.uk
www.bullying.co.uk
www.young-voice.org.uk
www.antibully.net

www.the-childrens-society.org.uk/christingle/bullying
www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onelife
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
www.victimsupport.org.uk

Telephone Numbers

Children's Legal Centre – 01206 873820
NSPCC – 0800 800 5000
Victim Support – 0845 303 0900
Childline – 0800 1111
Kidscape – 0207 730 3300
Parentline Plus – 0808 800 2222
Anti-Bullying Campaign – 0207 378 1446