



May 2012

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

This school (which means the Board of Governors and all members of staff) condemns bullying of any kind. We will not tolerate bullying, whatever defences or excuses may be offered in an attempt to justify it, and will punish severely those who engage in bullying behaviour.

This policy reflects the school aim of maintaining a safe, caring and happy environment for all pupils and adults.

2. Policy

The school will do everything within its capacity to:

- encourage a whole-school approach to bullying, so that effective teaching and learning can take place for all in a safe and secure environment;
- prevent bullying from occurring, through its pastoral provision, classroom management and curriculum;
- support and protect any pupil who is the victim of bullying;
- have a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively, prioritising an assessment of the risk to the victim;
- identify and take appropriate action (including severe punishment) against those responsible for bullying, particularly those who persist in bullying behaviour.

3. Definitions

Bullying is defined broadly, to include any form of harassment, physical, written or verbal. It involves everything from assault to verbal abuse. In other words, any pattern of actions which is deliberately intended to wound, intimidate, dismay, hurt, upset annoy or provoke another pupil will be regarded as bullying and attempts to frighten or cajole pupils into keeping quiet about such harassment will be regarded as bullying.

In recent times a different form of bullying has emerged, namely cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.

4. Action to be taken

It is the school's view that the most effective way of dealing with bullying is through the persistent and determined action of all members of staff.

In addition to making it clear to pupils on a regular basis and in a public way that the school will not tolerate bullying in any form, we must also ensure that those who are, or believe themselves to be, the victims of bullying know that they not only can, but should, tell members of staff about this in the knowledge that they will be supported and protected.

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Teachers will emphasise in Form Base and during pastoral periods that those who are responsible for bullying will be dealt with very firmly. They can expect to be suspended in serious cases and may even be asked to leave the school altogether. The Learning for Life and Work programme includes units on bullying and cyberbullying, the purpose of which is to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying and the consequences it can have.

5. Individual Responsibilities

It is important that everyone recognises the difficulties which may be encountered in implementing the anti-bullying policy. In this regard:

Staff should:

- * take reports of bullying seriously
- * log incidents
- * give feedback to all concerned in line with agreed procedures
- * participate in regular training
- * celebrate good behaviour

Pupils should:

- * report incidents of bullying
- * act in a supportive and respectful manner to fellow pupils
- * adhere to and promote the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures

Parents should:

- * stress to their children the importance of positive social behaviour
- * report concerns to the school
- * actively support the school's anti-bullying policy

6. What are the possible signs of bullying?

Young people may:

- * be frightened of walking to or from school.
- * be unwilling to go to school.
- * beg a parent to drive them to school.
- * begin doing poorly in their school work.
- * come home regularly with their books or clothes destroyed.
- * become withdrawn - start stammering.
- * Become distressed - stop eating.
- * Cry themselves to sleep.
- * Have nightmares and even call out 'leave me alone'.
- * Have unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts.
- * Have their possessions go missing.
- * Refuse to say what's wrong.
- * Constantly complain of headaches or seem anxious.
- * Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above.

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7. What can parents do?

Take a sensible approach. Listen and investigate. The young person must be told that he or she is undoubtedly not the only victim and that there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is essential that parents are particularly understanding towards their bullied child. Every opportunity should be taken to enhance their self-esteem and bullied children should not be encouraged to hit back. Young people must be encouraged to tell their parents and then the young person or the parent must tell the Form Teacher or Year Head.

8. Helping the bully

While it is distressing for parents to discover that their young person is the victim of bullying it can be equally upsetting for the parents to learn that their child is a bully. The bully is usually an insecure person and he or she needs help.

9. Procedures for Investigating Alleged Incidents of Bullying

[a] All reports of bullying will be investigated, initially, depending on the circumstances, by the Form Teacher, Year Head or Vice-Principal. Appropriate action will then be taken.

[b] A record of all allegations made by pupils or parents will be kept in the school's 'Bullying Incident Book' which is retained by the Vice-Principal in charge of Pastoral Care and the Headmaster will be informed.

[c] Parents of victims and parents of bullies will be informed of any reported incidents so that they will be in a position to help and support their son/daughter.

[d] In any alleged incidents of bullying the Form Teacher, Year Head or Vice-Principal will speak separately to the pupils involved (including potential witnesses) and will make written notes of the details given in an attempt to get both sides of the story. Pupils will be asked to write their account of the incident. Questions such as the following will be asked:

- * What kind of bullying has taken place?
- * Where did the incident take place?
- * When did the bullying happen?
- * Who did the bullying?

[e] Should more than one person be involved in the bullying incident, each child will be interviewed individually and then the Form Teacher or Year Head may meet with the group. Each member of the group will again be asked for his or her account of what happened to make sure that everyone is clear what everyone else has said.

[f] If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to him or her the seriousness of this breach of the school rules. The parents of the child will be contacted by the school and asked to meet with the

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Vice-Principal (and/or Headmaster) and the Year Head involved. An appropriate punishment will be given.

- [g] The Vice-Principal and the Year Head will act to support the young person who has been bullied and not to make the situation worse. They will attempt to help the bully see the situation from the victim's point of view and encourage the bully to desist from their activities. They will set in motion appropriate disciplinary action.
- [h] In some cases it may be necessary to refer the victim and the bully for specialist counselling to overcome the effects of the bullying behaviour they have experienced or have inflicted on others.
- [i] Separate follow-up meetings will take place with the bully and the victim to ensure that there is no further bullying.

10. Links with other policies

To increase the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy, links with other policies including the Pastoral Care Policy, the Positive Behaviour Policy, ICT Policy and the Child Protection Policy have been established.

11. Evaluation Procedures

The following will be measured and analysed in order to assess the effectiveness of this policy:

- * the number of reported incidents of bullying;
- * the age and gender of those involved in incidents;
- * the consequences of bullying eg absenteeism;
- * the academic progress and performance of victims.

12. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has been defined as the "use of the Internet and related technologies to harm other people, in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner".

The following are some categories of cyberbullying:

- inappropriate text messaging;
- insulting/embarrassing material/pictures/video clips via mobile phone camera;
- silent or abusive messages;
- email bullying;
- chat room bullying;
- inappropriate instant messaging;
- inappropriate use of websites including web logs(blogs), social networking and online polling sites.

Many of these categories will not be accessible to pupils through school, but however they are accessed, the pupils may well feel the impact at school and will be dealt with accordingly through the School's Anti-Bullying and Discipline policies.

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13. Some Helpful Addresses

Kidscape

Helpline: 08451 205 204

Telephone: 020 7730 3300

www.kidscape.org.uk

They provide free leaflets and booklets for parents, children and teenagers about bullying.

Childline

Freephone: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

A 24-hour helpline for children and young people in danger or distress or with any problems.

They also welcome calls from young people who are bullies and want to talk to someone about their behaviour.

NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline

Freephone: 0800 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk/Helpline

A 24-hour helpline for anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse [including bullying].

Children may use this facility themselves.

Parents' Advice Centre

Freephone: 0808 8010 722

Telephone 028 9031 0969

www.parentsadvicecentre.org

This is a service for parents and young people in Northern Ireland. It offers listening support, in addition to guidance and counselling relating to any family problem.

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Telephone: 01455 883300

www.bacp.co.uk

Members of BAC have experience of a wide range of counselling. Write enclosing a SAE for a list of counsellors in your area.

Anti-Bullying Campaign

Helpline: 020 7378 1446

They produce leaflets and information for parents.