



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

SUMMARY STATEMENT

We want all pupils to feel secure and valued as members of a caring community, to develop academically and socially with confidence and without fear. The aim of the policy is to help us deal with incidents of bullying quickly, effectively, consistently and with sensitivity to the needs of the individual.

When dealing with incidents of bullying the following cannot be emphasised too strongly:-

- the necessity to involve parents as soon as possible
- the necessity for a real partnership between pupil, school and home
- that subsequent action should be driven by the need of the individual

We should also distinguish between behaviour intended to hurt and the hurt caused by thoughtlessness and insensitivity. This distinction must be made when deciding on a course of action. Situations involving thoughtlessness and insensitivity may benefit more from education rather than the application of sanctions, especially when dealing with younger pupils.

It is comparatively easy to punish after the event. We need to nip bullying in the bud and develop sensitivity from the moment the young person comes into our care. We want pupils to be sensitive to the feelings of others and to ensure that their words or actions do not hurt. We should also like them to talk to a parent or teacher if they are being made unhappy.

We hope that parents will inform us at an early stage if their child is being bullied or they suspect that it is happening. We should like to be informed if the strategies we subsequently employ are not working so that others can be tried. We should also like parents to work with us, if necessary, to educate their child into being sensitive to the feeling of others.

Each incident of bullying should be dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the age and stage of development of the pupils involved and to seek parental support at the earliest possible opportunity. If pupils have reached an age and stage in their development when they clearly understand what is meant by the term bullying, it may be necessary to apply sanctions immediately.

In conclusion, by continually developing the role of the Form Tutor and the Personal, Social & Health Education programme, we shall become increasingly effective in pre-empting the development of bullying and the misery and suffering that go with it.



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THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

We want all pupils, irrespective of race, gender and religion to feel secure and valued as members of a caring community, to develop academically and socially with confidence and without fear. The aim of the policy is to help us deal with incidents of bullying quickly, effectively, consistently and with sensitivity to the needs of the individual.

When dealing with incidents of bullying the following cannot be emphasised too strongly:-

- the necessity to involve parents as soon as possible
- the necessity for a real partnership between pupil, school and home
- that subsequent action should be driven by the needs of the individual

We should also distinguish between behaviour intended to hurt and hurt caused by thoughtlessness and insensitivity. This distinction must be made when deciding on a course of action. Situations involving thoughtlessness and insensitivity may benefit more by education rather than by sanction, especially when dealing with younger pupils.

We need to catch bullying in the early stages: to pre-empt situations by looking out for signs of behaviour that, unchecked, are likely to develop into bullying. Signs such as:-

- aggression
- teasing
- thoughtless words or actions
- a reluctance to involve someone in the group

It is comparatively easy to punish after the event. We need to nip bullying in the bud and develop sensitivity from the moment the young person comes into our care. The importance also of the role of the Form Tutor, in responding quickly to early signs of unacceptable behaviour, cannot be emphasised too strongly. Our links with the primary schools should help ensure not only academic progression but should also build on the social and personal education already started.



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We want to stress that:-

- any form of bullying is unacceptable
- we want to break through the wall of silence which helps to sustain bullying
- we want to do our best to deal effectively, consistently and sensitively with incidents of bullying
- we want our pupils to develop into caring young adults sensitive to the needs of others

BULLYING DEFINED

Bullying is any individual or group behaviour which is **intentionally** unkind and which may cause physical hurt and /or emotional distress. It may involve:-

- physical actions - pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other unwanted physical contact
- verbal abuse - name calling, racially and sexually offensive remarks
- emotional abuse - ignoring/shunning, ridiculing, tormenting, moving/hiding possessions, graffiti, intimidation, racial and sexist gestures and harassment

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Children who are being bullied at school will not always feel able to tell those in authority. However, when a disclosure is made or bullying is suspected, it should always be treated seriously. While others may not feel that certain actions or words are of a bullying nature, if the recipient feels they are being bullied that is sufficient evidence to treat the case as prima facie bullying.

For those pupils who feel unable to inform staff about their problem, observations regarding specific behaviour patterns can be routinely established within the school.



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Signs of bullying might include:

- unwillingness to come to school or to specific lessons
- withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- complaining about missing possessions
- refusal to talk about the problem
- being easily distressed
- damaged or incomplete work
- changes in pupil behaviour

Where these difficulties are associated with a special needs pupil, a pupil from a minority racial or cultural background, or where there are indications of sexual harassment, these indicators may well confirm bullying is occurring. Investigation should be undertaken, checking with colleagues and maintaining rigorous vigilance.

DEALING WITH BULLYING

Staff

Staff must be consistent in their expectation of pupils' behaviour. Each incident must be dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the feelings of the child being bullied and the age and stage of development of the pupils involved. Parents must be informed at an early stage and pupils must be informed where they may seek help, especially at breaktime and lunchtime so that they know where they can be safe.

Pupils

Pupils should be sensitive to the feelings of others to make sure that their words or actions do not hurt. They should talk to someone if they are unhappy and they should tell a member of staff if they witness any form of bullying.



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Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians need to inform us at an early stage if their child is being bullied or that they suspect that this is happening. They also need to inform us if the strategies

employed do not seem to be working so that others can be tried and to work with us to educate their child to be sensitive to the feelings of others.

Procedures

- All incidents must be investigated promptly and thoroughly and written records made
- Staff should seek help and support at an early stage if necessary
- Serious incidents of bullying should be reported to the Head of Key Stage or a Deputy Head who will deal with the situation as appropriate
- Bullies and victims must be interviewed separately and evidence collected from both
- Witness information must be obtained
- **A written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes must be made and placed in the pupils' files**
- Once the basic facts have been established, the parents/guardians of the bully and victim must be informed as soon as possible
- Appropriate action must be taken to prevent further incidents which should be monitored. If this action is not successful other strategies and/or sanctions must be applied. Advice should be sought from the Head of Key Stage or a Deputy Head if your intervention is not working.

If at all in doubt, seek advice. Do not let a situation linger indefinitely.



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STRATEGIES TO MINIMISE INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

Effective delivery of the PSHE programme which is regularly monitored and evaluated

- The continuing development of the form tutors to improve their expertise
- Early intervention as the result of vigilance
- Whole school promotion of self-discipline among pupils
- Whole school encouragement of respect and sensitivity of the feelings of others

STRATEGIES AND SANCTIONS

The following is not an exhaustive list but an attempt to clarify the sort of strategies or sanctions that could be used when dealing with incidents of bullying. It is stressed that each incident must be dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the age and stage of development of all the pupils involved and that parents/guardians of the victim and the bully must be involved at the earliest possible opportunity.

Strategies

- A no blame forum (or mediation) in which attitudes, feelings are explored and/or shared agreement as to what happens next

NB This should only be done with the willing consent of the victim

- Counselling on appropriate behaviour
- Development of coping strategies, confidence building and assertiveness techniques
- Working with parents/guardians to develop in the pupil a greater sensitivity to the feeling of others

If strategies are not proving successful decide if sanctions are applicable



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Sanctions

When pupils have reached an age and a stage in their development when they clearly understand what is meant by the term bullying, it may be necessary to apply sanctions immediately. Sanctions may include the following:-

- Reprimand and warning
- Detention
- Short exclusion
- Longer exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

The strategies/sanctions employed must be monitored to ensure that their success is long lasting.

In conclusion, it must be understood that pre-empting the development of bullying with early and effective education may eliminate years of misery and suffering so often experienced by the victim.

Dissemination of the Policy

- Through the School Aims
- Through the PSHE programme and Assemblies
- Through a summary of the policy contained in the:-
 - Prospectus
 - Key Stage Handbooks
 - Pupil Diaries

The full policy is contained in the staff Policy Handbook which is also circulated to the Governing Body.