

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

*This update: November 2010*

### **Introduction**

At Katharine Lady Berkeley's School, we place the highest priority on achieving an emotionally and physically safe environment for our pupils, students and staff. This is clearly stated in the aims of the school as it is an essential prerequisite for effective learning and a happy school life. We recognise that bullying sometimes takes place and consider it to be totally unacceptable and in conflict with the aims of the school. All members of the school community are expected to work towards the prevention of bullying.

### **Aims**

- To educate pupils through the lesson based curriculum and in their wider school life that bullying is socially unacceptable.
- To ensure that all members of the school community, staff, parents and pupils, are aware of the kinds of behaviour which form bullying.
- To establish a culture in which all members of the school community consider bullying to be unacceptable and take responsibility for tackling it.
- To ensure that those who consider themselves to be victims of bullying feel confident to tell someone about it without fear of making the problem worse. Victims should not 'suffer in silence'.
- To ensure that the school's response to bullying will be considered and proportionate to the behaviour of the bully and the effects on the victim. The principal aim of the response will be to stop any further bullying.

### **The nature of bullying**

Bullying is described by events which are characterised by some or a combination of the following:

- Actions which the perpetrator carries out repeatedly (generally more than twice).
- The perpetrator knows that the actions are intimidating, threatening and/or hurtful. In this case the bully will have made a moral judgement to carry out actions which they know to be wrong – thus their actions are immoral, *or*  
The perpetrator does not understand the effect but the victim is upset/unhappy due to the actions over a period of time.
- The bullying actions are often a covert activity.
- The victim will be afraid that anything which is said or done to counter the bullying will make matters worse – the victim feels 'trapped'.

Bullying actions can occur in a range of ways which are not mutually exclusive, including:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Exclusion (from a group)
- Written
- Cyber-bullying – including text messaging, instant messaging, email, postings on social networking sites, misuse of associated technology, e.g. camera and video facilities
- Homophobic bullying – this may take place over actual or perceived sexuality
- Unkind or otherwise inappropriate references to particular characteristics of a child with learning difficulties or disability
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Interference with property
- Extortion
- Other non-verbal intimidation
- Pupils or students who collude with or accept bullying as bystanders are also involved in the actions of the bully

Bullying in any, or any combination, of the above categories creates psychological distress - sometimes accompanied by physical distress.

It should also be appreciated that certain aggressive events, sometimes including assault, although serious, do not necessarily constitute bullying.

## **Raising and maintaining an awareness of the nature of bullying**

A wide range of strategies will be used in order to ensure that all members of the school community are aware of the kinds of behaviour which can constitute bullying. These strategies will be used regularly in order to ensure that:

- bullying is regarded by all members of the school community as being unacceptable;
- all members of the school community can identify bullying and that if they witness such behaviour, they either intervene themselves or tell an appropriate member of staff;
- behaviours which perpetrators consider to be something of a joke but which the victims find hurtful should be understood to be bullying;
- children who consider themselves to be victims are aware of and understand the support available;

The strategies used to maintain this awareness will include:

- Use of assembly time;
- Reinforcement work over a longer period of time through work in tutor time and in appropriate subjects such as Art, English, Drama and PSE;
- The use of external agencies, for example professional Drama groups;
- A launch event early in Year 7 so that all are aware of:
  - the nature of bullying;
  - strategies to avoid bullying;
  - what to do if they are aware of bullying taking place;
  - which staff to see;
- Posters around the school which are regularly renewed;
- Use of INSET days for the teaching and non-teaching staff so that they recognise the various forms of bullying, are fully aware of the school policy and have strategies for dealing with bullying;
- The issue of cards to all pupils which list the steps to take if bullying becomes an issue for them;
- A section in the homework diary which gives pupils advice if they consider themselves to be a victim of bullying;
- The availability and promotion of a pupil friendly anti-bullying policy.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of the school community share in the responsibility to strive to eradicate bullying.

- Children who witness bullying should tell someone.
- Parents who consider that their child is being bullied should tell the school.
- Parents who are informed that their child is a bully should work with the school to stop such behaviour continuing.
- Teachers must be vigilant to identify bullying and to deal with it when it is discovered.

## **The school's response to bullying**

As stated above, the principal aim of the school's response is to make the bullying stop. All actions by the school are recorded for future reference.

The following key principles inform the school's response:

- pupils should feel confident about their right to tell and be clear about to whom they should speak;
- staff will respond quickly and consistently to reported incidents of bullying, demonstrating familiarity with the school's policy;
- pupils who say they have been bullied will be listened to, taken seriously and helped to feel safe;
- all reported incidents should be investigated fully as soon as possible after they are reported; the facts of each alleged incident must be established, not least because this may be useful in averting future incidents;
- those pupils involved in bullying and any pupils who have colluded in some way, must understand fully the consequences of their behaviour; they should also be encouraged to consider how they can make amends and what may, in certain cases, be appropriate sanctions to be imposed; this also offers the opportunity for supportive work for the bully;

- victims of bullying should understand that it is the bully who has behaved inappropriately. If there are aspects to the victim's conduct which may have stimulated the bullying, the victim must receive sensitive and effective support;
- all incidents will be recorded and monitored;
- parents will be kept fully informed.

There are five stages to the school's actions in response to incidents of bullying as listed below. In the vast majority of cases (over 90%), the response at Stage 1 will be sufficient to prevent further bullying. When a pupil is placed on one of the bullying response stages, this will be reviewed at the end of the academic year or after six months, whichever is the sooner. At a review, it may be considered appropriate to move a pupil to a lower stage or take them off the bullying stages completely.

### Stage 1

If staff are made aware of an incident of bullying and it is the first time that the perpetrator has been involved in such behaviour, the following initial approach is used. In general, the actions described below will be actioned by the relevant Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year or a senior member of staff. In some cases the tutor may carry out the action. Other members of staff who become aware of behaviour which may constitute bullying should refer the case to the relevant Head of Year who will know if there is any background to the observed or reported behaviour.

This approach works by providing an opportunity for the bully and any colluding bystanders to consider the actions and appreciate their effect. In the vast majority of cases, this causes the bully to stop their intimidating, aggressive or otherwise hurtful behaviour in which case no further action needs to be taken.

The details of this response are as follows:

- 1) The child being bullied is interviewed with an emphasis on how the bullying has made him or her feel.
- 2) The teacher takes notes and agrees with the victim that the perpetrator and any others colluding will be spoken to.
- 3) A meeting is held by the teacher with the bully, any others colluding and possibly any bystanders. The meeting will seek to make clear the effects of the bullying actions and ask the individual or group for ideas as to how the problem can be resolved.
- 4) Approximately a week later, the bullies and the victim are seen again individually in order to find out whether the bullying has stopped.

This approach is used as, in many cases, the perpetrator of bullying may not appreciate the effect of their actions. Evidence shows that punishing such bullies may have a temporary effect on a particular situation but it is unlikely to permanently stop bullying behaviour whereas this approach is more likely to provide a permanent solution. Also, punishment is more likely to result in the bully wishing to get their own back on the victim. Victims, fearing retribution, will therefore be discouraged from telling anyone about their plight. Clearly in those cases where this approach does not work, sanctions such as those described below have to be used.

At this stage, in most cases, the parents of the victim and the bully will be informed of the situation. If the parent is informed by telephone, this should be supported in writing. In some cases, the professional judgement of the staff may be that this is not appropriate although account should be taken of the way in which this may be regarded by the parents if the case progresses to stage 2.

### Stage 2

Sometimes the bullying continues, or a bully moves to another victim. In this case, the parents of the bully would be asked to attend a meeting at school with the relevant Head of Year or another senior member of staff.

In parallel with a meeting with the parents of the bully, a sanction such as one or more detentions is likely to be used. The sanction(s) used will be proportionate to the action of the bully.

### Stage 3

If the bully continues their aggressive, intimidating and hurtful behaviour, one or more fixed term exclusions will be used together with further meetings with the parents of the bully.

#### Stage 4

At this stage, longer fixed term exclusions will be used and it is likely that a Pastoral Support Plan for the bully should be set up. The Governors' Discipline Committee may also be involved at this stage. Consideration should also be given to an assessment of the bully by the school's Educational Psychologist.

#### Stage 5

If all of the above have been used and the bully continues their behaviour, precluding one or more victims from enjoying the emotionally and physically safe environment to which they are entitled, permanent exclusion from the school is likely to result.

At any stage, if the bullying actions include physical assault or otherwise cause serious harm to the victim, the school reserves the right to use the sanctions which are appropriate to the level of aggression or intimidation.

### **Review and Development of this Policy**

This policy is subject to continuous review and development through:

- a formal review on an annual basis by the Governors Healthy School committee;
- school council discussion which enables the views of pupils and students to be taken into account in the development of this policy;
- monitoring by the nominated Governor, Mrs Margaret Clarke.

### **Associated Policies and other Documents**

Safeguarding Policy

Guidelines for safer working practice with children and young people

Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Racial Harassment Policy

*Approved by full Governors: 8 December 2010*

*Next review: Autumn 2011*