

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Also available on School website for parents. Revised June 2017, September 2017, March 2018.

To be read in conjunction with: Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding, Searching and Confiscation and IT Services Terms and Conditions

Behaviour in school is generally very good and instances of bullying are relatively rare, but the school is proactive in ensuring that staff and pupils know that bullying is unacceptable. The school aims to create an ethos of mutual respect between all members of the community, and to ensure all pupils are confident that reported instances of bullying and unkindness will be followed up swiftly, sensitively and effectively by staff.

There is a continuum between teasing and bullying. Bullying, however, is defined as behaviour by an individual or group, sometimes repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can have serious long-term psychological impacts on those affected. It can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff or between staff. Bullying can be motivated by prejudice, by actual or perceived differences, e.g. race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, homophobia, SEN, disability, because a child is adopted or a carer. Bullying may involve an imbalance of power which makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves.

Bullying can be:

- **Verbal** Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing or banter
- **Emotional** Excluding, hiding possessions, threatening gestures, humiliation
- **Physical** Pushing, hitting, kicking or threatening to do so
- **Racist, religious, cultural** Taunting, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** Unwanted physical contact, comments, homophobic abuse
- **Sexist** Imposing stereotypical images, victimising someone because of their gender
- **Cyber (electronic/digital/online means)** Digitally through social network sites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs or other images, sexting, emails etc. This can happen at all times of day, with a potentially bigger audience and therefore more accessories to the bullying.
- **Other** e.g. related to SEN, disabilities

Throughout the school there is an emphasis on kindness and openness, and on consideration and tolerance of others. Differences such as ethnicity, gender or sexuality which can motivate bullying are openly discussed and pupils are made aware that bullying is unacceptable through assemblies, Tutor groups, PSHE, curriculum opportunities in e.g. language lessons and Friday 4 lectures; and this policy is on the pupil portal. Annual awareness weeks are held, e.g. anti-bullying, mental health and LGBT Day of Silence to coincide with national awareness weeks. Cyber-bullying is also covered in the Pupil Sevenoaks School IT Services: Terms & Conditions. The policy is referred to in the New Parents' Handbook and it is also in the Staff Handbook. In addition, bullying is covered in new staff induction by the Pastoral Deputy Head and occasionally raised and discussed at staff meetings to ensure staff are aware of legal responsibilities, and this policy (which includes steps to be taken) and that for some pupils with SEN or disabilities or who are LGBT the school may need to seek specialist skills. Most Lower and Middle School Tutor Groups have a Prefect assigned to them as a Peer Helper. Feedback is received from pupils informally and through pupil questionnaire every two to three years.

If a pupil is being bullied, feels they are being treated unkindly or insensitively or made unhappy/ uncomfortable or feel that this is happening to someone else they should tell their Peer Mentor, Tutor, Divisional Head or the Pastoral Deputy Head or any member of staff they know and trust, or their parents who should inform the Tutor/Divisional Head.

The Tutor and Divisional Head will listen to what they have to say and agree what should be done next. With the exception of physical bullying (which is rare), problems can usually be dealt with discreetly by discussing the matter with the other person(s), and keeping all parents, as appropriate, informed. The focus is on the need for pupils to recognise and regret the impact of their deeds and words, and on reconciliation and as quickly as possible before things escalate. In more complex situations, where hurt has been caused and inflicted on both sides, a reconciliation through mediated conversations in the presence of a Divisional Head is always our aim. Experience shows that when sanctions are not immediately imposed, pupils are more likely to seek help and can be helped to understand and change their behaviour.

When a case of unintentional unkindness or bullying has been dealt with, the Tutor and Divisional Head will speak to the pupil about two weeks later and again the following half-term. If the matter is unresolved, the matter will be dealt with more severely. Sanctions will depend on the severity of the bullying and the ages of those involved, ranging from a letter home and Divisional Head's detention to expulsion in the case of intimidation and persistent bullying.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', and will be raised with the local safeguarding board.

All instances of bullying must be referred to the Pastoral Deputy Head, who will keep a record and review and evaluate policy annually.

The School's policy is based on Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools, DCSF, revised November 2007 and has been revised to take into account non-statutory DfE advice *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* DfE October 2014 and Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff (2014):

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444862/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

<http://www.beyondbullying.com/uploads/cyberbullying-advice-for-headteachers-and-school-staff-121114.pdf>