

# ANTI BULLING POLICY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Junior & Senior School (hereinafter “the School”) aims to ensure that all members of the school community feel welcome, safe and happy and so are able to learn and make progress. Bullying of any kind prevents this happening. Bullying makes people feel unsafe. We seek to provide a secure, positive environment where pupils are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding and to participate in any activity free from intimidation.

As a school, we take bullying in any form very seriously. Students, parents and carers should understand that reporting bullying is essential and be assured that the school will investigate thoroughly whenever bullying is reported. It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to implement the Anti- Bullying Policy. Staff receive regular training and reminders about the necessity to be vigilant for signs of bullying and the Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

This Policy will be discussed with all new entrants to the school, using age-appropriate language. Both parents and students agree to adhere to this Policy by signing the Home School Agreement and Code of Conduct in the Senior School.

## 2. AIM

- To prevent bullying in any form. This indicates bullying related to race, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexism, sexual orientation, socio-economic group, special educational needs, disability, appearance and health conditions.
- To build an anti-bullying ethos within the school community.
- To ensure all staff, students, parents and carers have a clear understanding of what bullying behaviour is.
- To ensure all within the school community know and understand the school Policy on bullying and feel confident to implement it when bullying is suspected or reported.
- To challenge bullying behaviour and use both counseling and sanctions to deal with it.
- To increase understanding and support for students who are bullied.

## 3. DEFINITION

Bullying is defined as any action which makes someone feel unhappy, or uncomfortable, because of their gender, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, ability or disability or any other perceived difference.

It is usually an action repeated over a period of time but can on occasions be a one off incident. It can be carried out by individuals, or by groups. It can be emotional, physical, racial, sexual, verbal, homophobic, related to Special Educational Needs or disability or a combination of these. It can occur in person or through social media / technology (Cyber bullying). It can take the form of name- calling, threatened violence, actual violence, intimidation, isolation, ridicule, or other actions such as spreading unpleasant stories and gossip, sending inappropriate text messages and/or e-mails or making inappropriate telephone calls, the inappropriate use of the internet/personal websites/ blogging / social media. All bullying is designed to make the victim feel threatened, humiliated and unsafe. Bullying is a very serious matter and in both the short and the longer term bullying can lead to health problems including possible psychological problems for the victims.

#### **Some bullying is physical:**

- Pushing, hitting, kicking
- Taking and damaging belongings
- pitting at another student

#### **Some bullying is verbal:**

- Name-calling
- Taunting, mocking, sarcasm
- Use of discriminatory or offensive language
- Spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours about another student or his/her family
- Belittling other students' abilities, achievements, appearance, way of speaking
- Writing offensive notes about another students

#### **Some bullying is relational:**

- Excluding people from groups, deliberately ignoring
- Gossiping, spreading rumours
- Ignoring and isolating other students

However, not all negative interactions between students can be characterised as bullying and the school works hard to ensure that students understand the differences between bullying and 'falling out' or arguing.

### **4. STATEMENT OF BULLYING**

*The Junior and Senior School adopts a zero tolerance Policy towards any form of bullying, including Cyber bullying.*

### **5. RACIST AND RELIGION BULLYING**

Racist and religion bullying includes making any insulting reference and/or hurtful behaviours, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, excluded or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin or national status.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying includes making any insulting reference and/or hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, excluded and worthless because of their actual or perceived sexuality or sexual identity, which is designed to harass and isolate that person.

SEND pupil bullying

Bullying of pupils with SEND includes making any insulting reference and/or hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, excluded and worthless because of their Special Educational Needs Difficulties.

### **6. CYBERBULLYING:**

Cyberbullying takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, texts, emails, sexting, messages, or calls from mobile phones, online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content, use of mobile phone cameras without permission to cause distress or fear, altering photos or videos without permission, hijacking e-mail accounts, posting threatening, abusive, humiliating materials on websites

or social media sites, or making threatening, abusive, defamatory, humiliating remarks on social networking sites. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

\*According to the Ministry of Education Guidelines, cyber-bullying which occurs outside of school is deemed not to be the responsibility of the school. In such instances, parents will be informed and the school will contact the Cyber Ethics Department of the Cyprus Police Force who will carry out further investigations. However, if the cyber bullying impacts on a student's life in school then the School may take measures to protect that student and impose sanctions against the offending student(s).

**Signs of bullying might be:**

- Physical: bruises, scratches, cuts, damaged clothes.
- Health: loss of appetite, stomach-aches, headaches, soiling/bedwetting, nightmares
- Emotional: unwillingness to go to school, withdrawn or secretive behaviour, unhappiness, unusual shows of temper, refusal to speak about problems, high levels of anxiety, jumpy when cyber messages are received
- Change of routine: asking to be taken to school rather than walking/travelling on the bus, asking for more money, belongings that are lost or go missing repeatedly.
- Academic: concentration difficulties, damage to work, missing work, grades decline

**The School is fully committed to minimising the incidents of bullying through the following means:**

- a) Commitment of staff and students to reporting incidents.
- b) The school's PSHE programme, including an annual Anti-Bullying week to raise awareness.
- c) Dealing with incidents immediately.
- d) Clearly specified sanctions and consequences, which are made known to the whole school community.
- e) Informing parents and other appropriate individuals.
- f) Following up on incidents to ensure there is no recurrence.
- g) Training for staff

**It is expected that everyone in the school community will adhere to this Policy.**

## **7. PREVENTING BULLYING**

At our School everyone is vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of bullying seriously. We use the curriculum to reinforce the ethos of the school and to help students to develop strategies to combat bullying behaviour. Students and parents receive a copy of the anti-bullying Policy annually.

Staff receive regular training on how to tackle incidents of bullying and various strategies are used to

try and alleviate potential bullying such as individual preventative meetings and information meetings for staff to be vigilant to developing situations or with children who may be vulnerable to bullying at any given time (either temporarily or because they have SEND).

We make sure that students understand that they must report any incidents of bullying to an adult and that, when another student tells them that they are being bullied, or if they see bullying taking place, it is their responsibility to report their knowledge to a member of staff.

### **7.1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

- Monitor the behaviour of all students
- Be alert to signs/indications of bullying
- Listen to students who have been bullied and respond immediately
- Report cases of bullying
- Follow up on any complaint by parents or carers about bullying and report back promptly
- Promote the school's anti-bullying Policy and procedures

### **7.2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS**

- Report to a staff member any witnessed or suspected incidents of bullying
- Act in a respectful way to other students and staff, to promote a safe and secure environment within the school
- Intervene, if able, to prevent the bullying taking place, as long you are not in danger or risk
- Promote the school's anti-bullying Policy and procedures

If anyone who becomes a victim of bullying, they should:

- Speak out in order to put an end to their bullying and that of other potential targets of bullying

If anyone is engaged in bullying behaviour, they should:

- Know that sanctions and learning programmes hold them to account for their behaviour and help them to face up to the harm they have caused
- Learn how to behave to not harm others in the future, by being given the opportunity to develop empathy, emotional and communication skills and knowledge
- Learn how to repair the harm they caused to another person

### **7.3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

- Being aware of anti-bullying Policy and procedures
- Being aware of the procedures to use if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel secure in school
- Being alert to signs of bullying
- Advise their children to report any bullying incidents to any staff member or an adult
- Inform the school of any suspected bullying even if their children are not involved
- Cooperating with the school

## **8. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW FOR REPORTING BULLYING AT SENIOR SCHOOL**

Pastoral Leaders, in consultation with the Headteachers, will have overall responsibility for monitoring incidents and any resulting disciplinary measures.

Students who are bullied, who witness bullying or who have even participated in bullying should feel confident to report it to any member of the school staff whom they trust enough to tell. Also, students can place a note in the anti-bullying box when they want to report a bullying incident. Each incident will be dealt with individually; all reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated. However, reporting bullying and keeping central records can also help staff to identify and address patterns of repeated bullying.

Any incident from name calling, physical bullying to harassment of a student or member of staff should be reported immediately in accordance with our Behaviour Policy.

**False Reporting:** Students should not knowingly or wilfully falsely accuse one another of bullying. Disciplinary action could include suspension/permanent exclusion for students if they are found to have intentionally and knowingly made false reports.

### **8.1. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE**

**(as soon as possible, or by the end of the school day)**

1. Every incident must be recorded in writing in accordance with our Behaviour Policy. A copy of the report and the action taken should be handed to the Pastoral Leader and Headteacher.
2. Pupils will be interviewed separately at first to clarify everyone's point of view.
3. Older pupils may be asked to write a report themselves.
4. The form tutor of the student who has been bullied will be informed.
5. The relevant Pastoral head will decide on the next stage of action.
6. Parents of all pupils involved will be informed
7. If the bullying is very severe then the police may also be informed by the school, but usually this is the role of the parents to report to the police.

### **8.2. FOLLOW UP RESPONSE (WITHIN A WEEK)**

1. When an incident of bullying takes place, relevant staff and the Pastoral Leader will discuss issues relating to the incident with the students involved, in a way suitable to their age and level of understanding, making use of the solution- focused approach.
2. Each student will be given an opportunity to talk and the discussion will remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and preventing any recurrence of the bullying.
3. Students who have been bullied will receive appropriate support, which may include advice from external agencies, where needed.
4. Students who have bullied will be offered support by staff and if necessary, the school counsellor. Students who bully will be helped to understand the pain this causes to others and reminded of the possible consequences of bullying. The sanctions for repeated incidents will be explained clearly to them. Support will be agreed to ensure they do not repeat bullying behaviour, and their behaviour may be monitored.
5. Both parties may be invited to meet in the presence of a staff member to find a solution to move forward.

If bullying persists, one or a combination of the following actions may be taken:

- An official report will be made and filed in the student's personal record.
- Existing disciplinary sanctions will be used in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

- Parents or carers will be contacted to discuss the issues. They will be given feedback on progress in dealing with the incident. Additional external help may be recommended; for example, from educational psychologists.
- Exclusion from the school – this is dependent on the severity and/or persistence of the bullying and will be a final resort, in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- On rare occasions it may be necessary to move a child into a different form, class or teaching set. This will only be done after informing the parents.

## 9. STRATEGIES FOR REPORTING AND RECORDING BULLYING

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and dealt with by class teachers initially. In this way students will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. Class teachers should inform the Year / Pastoral Leader and relevant Deputy or Headteacher that any such matter has been dealt with and will be monitored. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis but reporting bullying and keeping central records can also help staff to identify and address patterns of repeated bullying.
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour\* by students will be referred immediately to the relevant Deputy or Headteacher.
3. Parents of victims or bullies will be informed by the Headteacher or Deputy Head as soon as possible so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their child before a crisis occurs.
4. Teachers should record incidents of bullying on the report sheet provided and a copy of this should be sent to the relevant Deputy or Headteacher and placed on the student's file
5. This report sheet indicates what action is to be taken and then monitored.

(\* Examples of serious cases would be pupils ganging up on a pupil, e.g. in playground, toilets; outward aggression towards another pupil, repeated bullying behaviour when previously tackled by class teacher. This list is not exhaustive)

## 10. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way.

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with the conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. Other pupils may also be interviewed to get a clearer picture.
3. Incidents of once off aggression will be dealt with according to school's behaviour Policy. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to him/her to see it from the victim's point of view.

**Staff are encouraged to use strategies to prevent bullying and to respond to bullying incidents.**



These include:

- Role-play and other drama techniques to help students understand and appreciate the feelings of others
- Assemblies designed to help students share information and to provide an opportunity for presenting important issues such as equal rights, relationships, justice and acceptable behaviour
- Anti-bullying week takes place in November each year
- Bespoke PSHE lessons with specific year groups according to our PSHE programme or in response to a particular problem with a class or year group. The following information is shared with Students.

## **11. IF YOU ARE BULLIED:**

- Remember it is not your fault; no-one should be bullied
- Tell someone: a parent, a friend, a teacher or an older student
- Never keep it to yourself and think it will go away
- It will not get worse if you report it

## **12. INVOLVEMENT**

### **12.1. PARENTS AND CARERS**

The parents or carers of any student involved in an incident of bullying will be informed of the incident and will be asked to support strategies proposed to tackle the problem.

Parents and carers are reminded regularly, through letters and newsletters, that their children must tell someone if they experience bullying.

### **12.2. THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR**

The School Counsellor is available for students as well as their parents. She is introduced to the school at the beginning of the academic year. In cases of bullying, she may be recommended to a child or a child may choose to see her. She can offer specialist support, guidance and strategic advice for the students, staff and parents.

## **13. ACTIONS SUPPORTING THE TARGET OF BULLYING**

- Targets of bullying should be offered an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their Form Teacher, Teacher, Head of Year or an Assistant Head.
- Their parents/guardians should always be informed in situations where the bullying incident is deemed, by the Investigating Team, led by an Assistant Head, to be more serious.
- They should be offered continued support and there should be follow up two weeks later to ensure that there is no reoccurrence of the bullying. There should be additional follow up two to three months later to verify that the actions/sanctions have prevented the reoccurrence of bullying and ensured that the student feels safe.
- They can be offered support from other students via peer mentoring.
- Counselling may be recommended or provided.

## **14. ACTIONS SUPPORTING THE OFFENDER**

- Normally, the Head of Year will communicate the victim's feelings to the offender. This will

involve talking about what happened, discovering why they had become involved in order to get rid of the prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.

- The offender will be expected to apologise and to take action in accordance with the principle of restorative justice.
- The offender will be requested to undertake counselling in more serious cases. The offender may be asked to undertake a specific work assignment or community service assignment.
- The offender will be informed that there will be follow up action taken in the near future.
- Other steps may include participation in a peer-mentoring programme.

## **15. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Monitoring and evaluation of this Policy forms a regular part of our self-review process. All policies are evaluated and reviewed with involvement from staff, students, parents and carers.

Records will be kept of all alleged bullying incidents and passed to the Principal at the end of every term to be retained in a central location. Headteachers and Deputies will keep the Principal informed of bullying incidents on a weekly basis so that bullying in the school can be monitored.

**END**