

STEPHENSON STUDIO SCHOOL



ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Anti-Bullying Policy

The aim of the policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including Trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the School policy on bullying: therefore the aim of the policy is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

This policy is available on the school website, the shared staff area on the school network and on request from the School in hard copy.

It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- PSHEE/SMSC Policy and Schemes of Work

This anti-bullying document is also compliant with:

- Equality Act, 2010
- SEND Code of Practice 2014: 0 to 25 years
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, October 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DFE, November 2015

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually but not exclusively repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another person or group physically or emotionally. It is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and it is often motivated by prejudice.

Examples of unacceptable bullying behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail (please refer to the E-Safety Policy)
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle.

It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair, colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs and/or disability.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the highest concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school.

Bullying is also a primary concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of those targeted a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. It can be psychologically damaging and, at worst, it has been a factor in student suicide.

It is acknowledged that students who exhibit bullying behaviours may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their targets.

All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Students are educated through PSHEE, assemblies, and the wider curriculum to raise awareness, with discussions of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff or parents feel that a criminal offence may have been committed they

should seek assistance from the school's Designated Safeguarding Person (Mrs Tudor or Mrs Laird) who will support them in contacting the police.

All members of the school's community are expected to behave in such a way that bullying is not accepted. This includes being mindful of their own behaviours and reporting any incident that involves any of the behaviours outlined in the definition section of this policy.

Anti-Bullying Procedure

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on fail to take action.

Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying. These could include:

- Not wanting to go to School or travel on usual mode of transport
- Changing usual routines
- Becoming anxious or withdrawn
- Attempting or threatening suicide
- Crying without any obvious cause
- Feeling ill/feigning illness
- Work deteriorating at School
- Possessions "going missing"
- Becoming aggressive or unreasonable
- Bullying other students or siblings
- Displaying increasing lack of confidence and self-esteem
- Asking for, or stealing money
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Being excluded from group activities by other students

Legal responsibilities must be understood by all staff and the School's community members should act promptly and firmly against any incident of bullying, in accordance with the School's policy.

Hate Crime

Hate crime is any offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by the offender's hatred of people because they are seen as being different. People do not have to be a member of a minority community to be a victim of hate crime. Any incident where an individual or group of people are targeted because they are believed to be of a different

race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or have a disability can be reported as a hate crime.

Reporting and Recording Incidents

Any member of staff who becomes aware of possible bullying should pass the information to the Headteacher using the school's behaviour referral system. The Headteacher will ensure the incident is properly logged on the school's data base and allocate the most appropriate person(s) to support the student and resolve the issues as quickly as possible.

Any student or parent reporting bullying should be encouraged to make a statement to include the following:

- Date(s), times(s) and place(s) of incident(s)
- Name of any witnesses
- What actually happened
- How it made them feel
- Any action taken e.g. reported to a member of staff
- Original copies of any correspondence or written material connected with the issue.
- Where cyber bullying has taken place, printouts should be obtained wherever possible (e.g. of emails), or the member of staff taking the statement should sign it to say they have seen any text messages/call records on the learner's mobile phone.

Where a student requests or needs it (e.g. because they have learning difficulties, or their first language is not English), the member of staff can record this for them, taking care to ensure the students words are accurately recorded.

This information will inform the mediation process if it is decided to embark on this. It will also be used as evidence in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings.

Parents will be informed as soon as a detailed account has been reported. During the investigation process parents will be updated as appropriate by the allocated member of staff.

Parents should contact their child's tutor in the first instance who will log concerns and ensure they are passed to the Headteacher. If a parent is concerned a criminal offence has been committed, they should contact either Mrs Tudor or Mrs Laird directly via email or the school's reception number (01530 519099)

Initial Meeting and Investigation

The Learning Coach, Personal Coach or SLT member dealing with the allegation of bullying should set up an initial informal interview with both parties separately and explain the School policy on bullying. The targeted student should be enabled to discuss the incident and all possible courses of action. For example, empowering the targeted student to address the issue with the perpetrator, mediation or invoking the Disciplinary Procedure. Counselling can be offered to both parties. Appointments can be made through the Personal Coach.

Mediation

The mediator would ordinarily be the student's Personal Coach, but may also be the Headteacher or member of SLT. The mediator can help participants to resolve their dispute and to co-exist at the School, through using the following procedure:

- Both parties define the problem as they see it, individually with the mediator;
- The impartial mediator identifies the key issues for both parties - these are listed on paper;
- At the end of the individual session with the mediator, the mediator ascertains whether or not the parties are willing to meet together, along with the mediator. This is the point when real mediation can take place, if both parties are willing to try, to move towards reconciliation;
- At the joint meeting, led by the mediator, both parties should be encouraged to speak and express their opinion with only one person allowed to speak at a time. The mediator needs to firmly control the meeting to ensure it does not turn into a battle;
- The mediator sets up a plan of action which will satisfy each party and obtains agreement on these;
- A follow up meeting is agreed and the situation monitored at agreed intervals.

Stephenson Studio School Behaviour for Learning Policy and Exclusion Policy

The Stephenson School Behaviour for Learning Policy and Exclusion Policy may be invoked in the case of prolonged and/or extensive incidents of bullying or, following mediation where no satisfactory plan of action can be formulated or if the perpetrator continues his/her bullying behaviour. In this instance the Headteacher may decide on a number of sanctions including, internal exclusion, fixed term exclusion and ultimately permanent exclusion.

Alleged Bullying of a Student by a Member of Staff

A student who feels that she/he is being bullied by a member of staff should discuss the issue with their Learning Coach, Personal Coach or member of SLT.

If it is not possible to resolve the issue, the student can make a formal complaint in writing. This should be handed in to the Headteacher. The complaint will be investigated and the student will be contacted regarding the outcome.

Recording and Monitoring

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by Tutors to monitor that the problem has been resolved. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Senior Team each half term and the Head of KS4 regularly at Tutor meetings to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

Annual student surveys will be used to facilitate an understanding of the level and type of bullying that students might have experienced.

Confidentiality

As a general guideline, members of staff will respect confidentiality of the individual as long as it is consistent with the School's Child and vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

However, where confidentiality has to be broken, then the complainant should be involved in that process. In some cases the individual may just want to talk about the bullying but may not wish to take matters further. In this case a strategy should be developed with the student to address the situation.

Supporting Students who Exhibit Bullying Behaviours

There is often an underlying reason for bullying behaviour. Students in this instance can be very insecure and may

- Have been bullied themselves
- Be afraid of becoming a victim to someone else
- Want to be accepted into a certain group
- Want to be well known for their physical status
- Have low levels of self-esteem and self confidence

Support may be required to enable a young person to change his/her behaviour. Breaking patterns of behaviour and expectations of other students and staff may make him/her a target to others. Any young person who recognises themselves as engaging in bullying behaviours and who wishes to address this, should be encouraged to seek help and advice from the School Counsellor or their coaches or be put in touch with external support organisations such as Childline or KidScape.

All young people who want to change aspects of their behaviour should be encouraged to do so and should not be intimidated, humiliated or made to feel uncomfortable when seeking support.

Training and Further Awareness Raising Activities

The School will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards and will be discussed with students during Tutor led CP sessions. Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for Student committees and feedback will be taken to School Council. It will also be revisited as necessary during PSHEE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. English, physical education. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying.

Further References

- Childline: 0800 1111 <http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>
- Children's Commissioner: 020 7783 8330
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
- Preventing and tackling bullying, Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies, DfE, October 2014
- Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff, DfE, 2014
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies DfE Guidance, July 2011
- www.cyberbullying.org