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*We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a "telling" school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff and feel secure that action will be taken.*

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## **AIMS**

- ✳ Create an environment where students understand that bullying is unacceptable.
- ✳ Give a clear message to students, teachers, parents / carers and the community that everybody has a part to play to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- ✳ Give encouragement to victims to speak out and know they will be listened to.
- ✳ Develop strategies to deal with incidents of bullying.

## **What is bullying?**

- ✳ The sustained use of aggression or unkind behaviour with the intention of hurting or distressing another person.
- ✳ Can result in pain or distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- ✳ *Emotional* being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- ✳ *Physical* pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- ✳ *Racist* racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- ✳ *Sexual* unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- ✳ *Homophobic* because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality; **Biphobia; Transphobia**
- ✳ *Verbal* name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- ✳ *Cyber* all areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Sometimes it is difficult to decide if an incident is bullying. Ask the following questions:

- ✳ If the incident was an accident, did the students act by helping the victim, getting help or giving sympathy?
- ✳ If it was just a laugh / joke, was everyone laughing?
- ✳ If it was just a game / bit of fun, was everyone enjoying it?

## **Signs and symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he / she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- ✳ is frightened of walking to / from school
- ✳ does not want to travel on the school / public bus
- ✳ begs to be driven to school
- ✳ changes their usual routine
- ✳ is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- ✳ begins to truant
- ✳ becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- ✳ starts to stammer
- ✳ attempts or threatens suicide
- ✳ runs away
- ✳ cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- ✳ feels ill in the morning

- ✳ begins to do poorly in school work
- ✳ comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- ✳ has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- ✳ asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- ✳ dinner or other money continually "lost"
- ✳ has unexplained cuts or bruises
- ✳ comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- ✳ becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- ✳ is bullying other children / siblings
- ✳ stops eating
- ✳ is frightened to say what is wrong
- ✳ gives improbably excuses for any of the above
- ✳ is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- ✳ is nervous / jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Why it is important to respond to bullying**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to be made aware of the hurt their behaviour causes and given the support and opportunity to change for the better.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **Who to tell**

Students and parents / carers should be encouraged at all times to report incidents of bullying. They should be reassured that it can be dealt with.

They can approach any of the following:

- ✳ Head of Year
- ✳ Care and Guidance
- ✳ Tutor
- ✳ Prefects
- ✳ Teachers
- ✳ Mentor / 'buddy'
- ✳ Support Staff

### **Action by staff**

Reports of bullying incidents should always be investigated by the Head of Year, Care and Guidance, tutor or relevant teacher and be taken seriously.

- ✳ Take action as quickly as possible.
- ✳ Think hard about whether their action needs to be private or public – who are the students involved?
- ✳ Protect the informant's anonymity if necessary.
- ✳ Reassure the victim(s) – don't make them feel inadequate or foolish.
- ✳ Offer concrete help, advice and support.
- ✳ Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove and the consequences of further bullying.
- ✳ If possible / appropriate, bring the bully and victim together in a supervised meeting to discuss what has happened.
- ✳ Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
- ✳ Punish the bully, if appropriate:
  - loss of social time (break / lunch) for a specified period of time;
  - put on report to monitor behaviour towards others;
  - report daily to a member of staff;

- counselling / behaviour skills training (if available);
- referral to Police Liaison Officer if appropriate – possibility of restorative justice (RJ);
- referral to external services;
- explain clearly any punishment and why it is being given;
- inform parents of all students involved;
- meet with parents / carers of bullies and discuss / agree preventative sanctions;
- keep a written record of all incidents in Bullying Log;
- ✦ Staff should always challenge and show their disapproval of name calling and the mocking / taunting of students.

### **Further incidents of serious bullying**

- ✦ Many students who are bullying others may have themselves been bullied.
- ✦ HOY / Deputy Headteacher will consider recommending to the Headteacher a fixed term exclusion for a serious bullying incident.
- ✦ Should the bullying persist, then permanent exclusion will eventually be considered.

### **Prevention of bullying**

Every opportunity should be taken to regularly reiterate the message that bullying will not be tolerated.

- ✦ At staff meetings.
- ✦ PHSE / Citizenship lessons.
- ✦ In assemblies.
- ✦ In Tutor time.
- ✦ School Council
- ✦ In the School's Code of Conduct.
- ✦ By displaying posters and leaflets.
- ✦ During new parent interviews.
- ✦ If mobile phones are suspected of being used in any act of bullying, they may be confiscated and the content of the mobile phone may be examined and deleted. Content on the mobile phone considered to be bullying may be used as evidence.

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated annually / every 2 years and the outcomes of evaluation reported to the Governing Body.

- ✦ Number and type of incidents of bullying each year (increasing / decreasing?)
- ✦ Student questionnaires
- ✦ Reports from School Council / School prefects
- ✦ Review of ECM outcomes (in particular, "staying safe")