

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY for ABBERLEY HALL SCHOOL**

### **Aims**

Our aim is to create a School in which children grow up happily, free to pursue their own interests but with consideration for others, and free from fear. We hope to prevent bullying before it occurs through the continuing vigilance of all children and staff, by educating children in their responsibility for themselves and each other, and by agreeing a definition of bullying, so that all children and staff have a clear understanding of what we, as a School, consider unacceptable behaviour.

There are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

It is the school's aim that pupils do not identify bullying as a problem.

### **Definition**

Bullying is any action that thoughtlessly or deliberately causes pain, unhappiness, humiliation or suffering to another. Bullying activities include isolated or repeated acts of verbal abuse, teasing and name-calling, which become bullying when they cause another to feel victimized. Equally, the exclusion of others from the social groups that form naturally within the different age groups, causing distress and isolation, is also an act of bullying. The erosion of self-esteem, and in certain cases the taking or spoiling of possessions, also classes as bullying.

### **Bullying can be related to:**

#### **Race, religion or culture –**

Historically, the term *racism* has been used principally in situations where colour and physical appearance are considered to be significant markers of difference. There has virtually always, however, been a cultural element as well — 'the other' has been recognised not only by their physical appearance but also in relation to their culture, language and religion. This crucial point was reflected in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition quoted above and is reflected also in race relations legislation, since case law has established that Sikhs, Jews and Travellers of Irish heritage are for legal purposes to be treated as distinct racial groups. Other forms of racism where differences of culture and religion are at least as significant as differences in physical appearance include Islamophobia and hostility to refugees and people seeking asylum.

### **Sexist or sexual bullying-**

Comments and overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty.

Any bullying behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, that is based on a person's sexuality or gender. It is when sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or by girls. It can be carried out to a person's face, behind their back or by use of technology.

For example:

- Using words that refer to someone's sexuality as a general put down (like calling something 'gay' to mean that it is not very good)
- Using sexual words to put someone down (like calling someone a 'slut')
- Making threats or jokes about serious and frightening subjects like rape
- Gossiping about someone's sex life - including the use of graffiti
- Touching someone in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable
- Touching parts of someone's body that they don't want to be touched
- Forcing someone to act in a sexual way

### **Disability Bullying-**

The Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has:

*'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'*

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The definition of Special Educational Needs includes many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and need special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has:

*'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'*

Special educational needs and disabilities SEN / Disability Bullying can take the form of:  
name-calling, innuendo, negative stereotyping or excluding from activity based on disability or learning difficulties

### **Cyber bullying-**

This is a method of bullying. It includes the sending of malicious emails and texts as well as images spread by mobile phone.

Cyber bullying can be defined as *the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.*

It can be used to carry out all the different 'types' of bullying (such as racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to SEN and disabilities),

*Research carried out for the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) by Goldsmiths, for example, found that 22 per cent of 11— to16-year-olds had been a victim of cyberbullying<sup>1</sup>.*

1 P. Smith, J. Mahdavi et al 2006

### **All these are unacceptable**

#### **The Seriousness of Bullying**

We take seriously any form of bullying and we understand the severe emotional distress that bullying can cause.

All forms of Bullying can cause psychological damage. In extreme cases this psychological damage that can manifest itself through other problems such as self-harm.

***This Anti-Bullying policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Policy for Promoting Good Behaviour as well as the School's Equal Opportunities Policy.***

## **Education and Prevention**

Education must be at the heart of any effort to eliminate bullying. All aspects of school life are opportunities to further such education.

Throughout the pupils' age range, the Form Tutors or class teachers are responsible for ensuring that the children are fully aware of how to recognize and understand bullying behaviour in order to prevent it, and for personal, social and moral development. Pastoral Tutors are a back up system, through encouraging their tutees to talk about their own problems or concerns for others.

PSHE lessons taught in the Prep School in NC Years 4, 5 and 6 are another area where children can be made more aware of the issues surrounding bullying.

Prevention is enhanced by the School's ordered and disciplined environment. The 'Rules for the Guidance of Staff and Pupils' are posted in all the classrooms. This document outlines four important points about how we aim to prevent bullying and what children can do if they are a victim or witness an incident.

Particular attention needs to be paid when children are together in unsupervised groups: before a lesson for example.

Children should be encouraged to recognise that bullying is unacceptable. Children should feel able to speak out to members of Staff should they so desire.

Any problems of this nature are brought up at staff meetings so that all staff are made aware of any situations.

Prefects and Patrol Leaders as part of their roles have specific instructions to bring any indications of bullying to the attention of a member of a staff. There are regular weekly Prefect meetings with the Headmaster and the Patrol leaders meet with the Deputy Head, also on a regular weekly basis.

## **Procedure and Sanctions**

In any case of bullying, the Headmaster must be informed immediately. The incident must also be recorded in the Record Book.

With any action, the safety and happiness of those threatened is the first consideration; the bully will be shown that his or her behaviour will not be tolerated. Immediate steps are taken to avoid recurrence.

In all cases of bullying, the parents of all children involved will be informed. A meeting may be arranged between the Headmaster and the parents of the child/children involved.

Form Tutors will follow-up victims during the days after an incident to ensure that all is well and occasionally thereafter for a period of weeks. Staff will be kept informed at staff meetings so that all individuals involved are suitably supported.

It may be appropriate to investigate more closely any underlying reason for the bully behaving as he/she did. The Headmaster will, when appropriate, interview the bully and in some circumstances with the parents of the bully present. This is intended to air the issues around the incident so that parents can support their child and help.

Possible further steps may include suspension or even expulsion.

## When is it Bullying and When is it Teasing?

**PHYSICAL bullying** is mercifully rare, is quite easily identified and should always be reported to the Headmaster by the member of staff seeing the problem so that members of staff and the Headmaster can agree on the necessary action to be taken.

**TEASING or MENTAL bullying** is the sort of teasing which causes mental stress and unhappiness. However the dividing line between 'leg-pulling' (or the sort of teasing which is not only acceptable, but is probably good for our development) and the sort of teasing which causes mental stress and unhappiness is a narrow one and can be hard for our children to define or understand.

### Why is this line hard to define or understand?

- Different children have different levels of sensitivity. What hurts some has no effect on others, being water off the proverbial duck's back.
- Some sufferers do not show that they being hurt.
- Teachers tease children (as do and should parents) and children tease teachers. This may give the impression to some that all teasing is acceptable.

### How can we help children to define and understand this line?

- Headmaster – frequently (at least once a term) to talk about the line to the school at assembly.
- Form Tutors - not only to discuss the line with their forms at least once a term, but also to take every convenient time to do so, e.g. whenever a case of mental bullying occurs.
- Pastoral Tutors – talking informally with their groups, encouraging children to talk about any incident or worry they may have about themselves or others.
- In the Pre-Prep and EYFS this is discussed during circle time and assemblies using age appropriate language.

### What action should be taken to stop MENTAL bullying?

- Any member of staff hearing teasing going on should check to satisfy himself or herself that the teasing is mere 'leg-pulling' and acceptable to those being teased.
- If the teasing is not acceptable the necessary action should be taken:
  - Intervention** and/or sanction and in either case written in the Record Book.
  - Counselling** only may be sufficient, by some sanction (possibly a task benefiting the community) may not only confirm the wrongness of the teasing to the bully and others, but may appease any guilt felt by the bully.
  - the Form Tutor** (s) of the children involved should be informed on all occasions so that an overall profile for each child can be kept.

**FORM TUTORS** are the basis of the tutorial system and they should talk frequently to their forms about the unacceptability of bullying, making it clear:

- Any case of bullying can be reported to any member of staff
- Any report will be treated seriously and if appropriate and requested, confidentially; confidentiality of the source can normally be guaranteed, but only in rare cases would it be right to promise confidentiality for the information itself.

**Any incident of bullying must be reported to the Headmaster**

**Opportunities to promote anti-bullying messages through the curriculum.**

Drama, stories, poems, discussions, historical figures, current affairs pastoral groups, form tutors, Chapel readings and talks by visiting Preachers

-Contributions of all pupils are valued.

-All pupils can feel able to contribute appropriately.

-Stereotypical views are challenged and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others whether arising from race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability or disability.

-All forms of bullying and harassment are challenged

-Pupils are supported to develop their social and emotional skills.

**THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS**

*Reviewed and updated September 2009 by Richard Wesley, Deputy Headmaster  
Next review: September 2010 by Richard Wesley, Deputy Headmaster*

## **Guidelines for Adults who come across any form of bullying**

### **First Steps:**

- DO**
- remain calm; you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control of the situation.
  - treat the incident seriously.
  - take action as quickly as possible.
  - does your action need to be private or public; who are the pupils involved?
  - reassure the victim(s); don't make them feel inadequate or foolish.
  - offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).
  - encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.

### **Involving Others:**

- DO**
- inform the Headmaster (or the Deputy in his absence)
  - inform colleagues if the incident arose out of an unexpected situation where everyone should be vigilant in the future.
  - record the incident in the Red Book.

### **Final Steps:**

- DO**
- make sure the incident doesn't live on through reminders from you.
  - try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence of the incident, if you uncover the trigger method.

### **If you have to deal with bullying, what should you avoid?**

- DON'T**
- be over protective and refuse to allow the victim to help him/herself.
  - assume that the bully is bad through and through; try to look objectively at the behaviour, with the bully.
  - keep the whole incident a secret because you have dealt with it.

### **Suggestions to give to children on how to deal with bullying:**

- Laugh or ignore comments or teasing; silence might throw them off.
- You can tell them to 'buzz off,' shout 'No' or 'Go away'. Say it sternly and walk away.
- If it is a group bothering you, look at the weakest one of the group in the eye and say: 'This isn't funny' and walk away.
- Stay with the crowd – bullies usually pick on individuals.

**Further guidelines can be found on: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)**