

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The school's aims for this policy To make clear to girls, staff, parents and carers that bullying is not acceptable and to be proactive in raising awareness to prevent incidence of bullying as much as possible.

- To foster an atmosphere of mutual respect between all members of the school community so that bullying behaviour is rare.
- To encourage a climate of openness in which girls, staff and parents and carers are able to talk readily about any suspicion of bullying.
- To establish an atmosphere of group responsibility, so that all girls take care of each other and are proactive in attempting to resolve conflict.
- To give pupils strategies to resist bullying by others and develop appropriate resilience.
- To provide support for those being bullied.
- To provide a framework within which those bullying others may recognise, acknowledge and reform their behaviour.

Bullying – the nature of the problem

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time, which makes another person or group feel uncomfortable, intimidated, threatened or hurt whether this is intended or not.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, taunting, making offensive remarks, including remarks of a sexual or sexist, cultural, racist or homophobic nature, or linked to any disability including Learning Difficulties. This includes making “fun” of someone when they are not enjoying the joke. It may also include such comments about members of an individual's family or close friends.
- **Emotional:** exclusion from a group, deliberately ignoring, staring or other inappropriate body language.
- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, taking or hiding someone's belongings, deliberately damaging work or possessions.
- The bullying may be **Indirect:** spreading unkind stories or malicious rumours, sending malicious emails, text messages or notes. Cyberbullying is recognised as an increasing method of bullying which can draw in girls who may not intend to be deeply hurtful and would not consider saying such things face to face.
- It is recognised that Bullying can cause **serious psychological damage** which can have tragic consequences. It is also recognised that bullying can link into **criminal offences** e.g. harassment.

The Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour underpins all the work that is done in school to encourage a mutually respectful approach to interpersonal relationships. All girls and staff have an opportunity to contribute to regular reviews of the Code, and so have a sense of ownership of it. All teachers, especially form teachers and Heads of Year, use the Code as a framework for discussing inappropriate behaviour between girls and between pupils and staff.

- The Code of Behaviour links with specific policies including the Discipline and Behaviour Policies and the Exclusion Policy. It also links with the Mobile Phone and ICT Codes of Conduct.
- The Code of Conduct generally and related specifically to bullying is pro-actively reinforced in PSHE lessons, in form time with tutors, through referring to the entry in the pupil Planner, in assemblies, in discussions and agreements about behaviour on school trips, in curricular and extra curricular activities where appropriate.
- All teachers are expected to uphold the Code in the standards they set for interpersonal relationships in all aspects of school life.

Procedures for dealing with incidents involving bullying of pupils by other pupils

- The key to effective pastoral work is good communication between the members of staff involved.
- All teachers should be alert to warning signs in pupils' behaviour, such as distress, difficulties with work, especially homework, illness, irregular attendance. Teachers should be alert to bullying which

may be taking place in the context of lessons including group work, out of lesson time as in the Dining Hall or school grounds, and off the school site as behaviour outside school is the concern of the school. Concerns resulting from observation or direct or indirect information must be reported and followed up as it is always best to act as early as possible in the hope of preventing escalation of any problem.

- All reports of bullying must be taken seriously. If a girl informs a teacher that she is being bullied, or if a teacher becomes aware of bullying by another means, he/she should take careful notes of the details and pass on the information to the Head of Year. Such notes should be thorough, objective and non-judgmental. The Head of Year will circulate this information to The Headmistress, Deputy Head and Head of Pastoral Care so that they can deal appropriately with phone calls or visits from parents.
- The Head of Year will then investigate further, and will interview the victim and the alleged perpetrator separately. The Head of Pastoral Care should be informed that this is happening. These investigations should happen very promptly, if necessary by asking the Head of Pastoral Care to take over. Detailed notes, objective and non-judgmental, must be taken of these interviews.
- Sometimes an incident is reported directly to the Headmistress, Deputy Head or Head of Pastoral Care by a parent, and it may be necessary for them to start investigations themselves if the Head of Year is not available.
- If after discussion, it is agreed that it is a case of bullying, the Headmistress, in liaison with the Head of Pastoral Care, will ask the parents of the girls involved to come into school. A decision will then be made about appropriate sanctions for the individual case.
- The Head of Year will then liaise with the form teachers to provide support and advice for the victim, and communicate with other staff on a need to know basis..
- The Head of Year will also take steps to ensure that the perpetrator is asked to think through the consequences of her actions, and she will offer support to enable her to improve her behaviour.
- The individuals involved will be monitored and the situation reviewed within the half term and also later to ensure there has been no return an parents will be kept informed.

Procedures for dealing with incidents involving allegations of bullying of pupils by a member of staff

- If a girl tells a member of staff that she is being bullied by a teacher or other adult member of the school, he/she should listen carefully to the pupil and take note of what she has said. He/she should tell her that it is not possible to keep this confidential but that he/she will need to report it to the Deputy Head.
- The conversation should then be reported to the Deputy Head in writing as soon as possible, including a note of any action taken
- The Deputy Head will then investigate the allegation, by speaking with the member of staff concerned, with the girl and her parents, and with anyone who has witnessed the events. He may call upon the Head of Year or the Head of Pastoral Care to carry out some of these interviews for him.
- The Deputy Head and Headmistress will decide what further action needs to be taken with regards to the pupil and with regards to the member of staff.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Pastoral Team. Every 3 years or so a committee of Student Council members convened by the Head of Pastoral Care will be asked for comments and suggestions about amendments, and this will link in with a survey of all pupils on their perceptions of how the Code of Conduct's principles, linked to incidence of bullying, are upheld in the School. Any revision of this policy will be communicated to parents via the web-site, staff via the Staff Handbook and INSET or staff meetings and to pupils via planned opportunities such as PSHE sessions, Assemblies, Form time and amending the entry in the Planner.

Reviewed September 2009