

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Aims and Objectives

The **aim of this policy**, which applies throughout the school from Early Years Foundation Stage to the Sixth Form is twofold

- to **try to prevent bullying**, as far as possible **and**
- to help staff, pupils and parents to **recognise and deal with bullying when it occurs**

At Sheffield High School our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play and we pride ourselves on our respect and mutual tolerance. This is the fundamental point of our Code of Behaviour. The school and the GDST are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop her full potential.

This **ethos means** that:

- Bullying of any kind, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are not acceptable and will not be tolerated
- We seek to treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school in a sense of active group responsibility and community
- We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other
- We believe parents/guardians/carers have an important role in supporting Sheffield High School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and co-operate closely together
- We have regard to relevant national guidance, especially the DCSF publication 'Safe to Learn – embedding anti-bullying work in schools' and to the requirements of our regulatory bodies, such as the Independent Schools Inspectorate, with which this Policy complies
- Our anti-bullying approach also involves other school policies, especially the Code of Behaviour, the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and the ICT and Mobile Phone Codes of Conduct. (see Section 7)
- We use PSHE lessons and activities, assemblies, projects, stories and literature, current affairs, historical events, tutorials and other curriculum approaches to discuss and tackle bullying and possible bullying issues and to help create an atmosphere where bullying is more likely to be prevented in the first place

- Our Pastoral System encourages an atmosphere of appropriate open-ness in which girls, staff, parents and carers are able and willing to talk readily about any suspicion of bullying
- We train staff to recognise the potential signs of bullying and how to deal with it when it occurs and we have systems in place for investigating bullying at a suitably senior level. These are summarised below in Section 5.

1. What do we mean by bullying?

This policy uses the definition used by the DCSF: **Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.**

This definition includes:

- hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by **physical** (including sexual and sexist) means. These may include kicking or hitting someone and deliberately taking, damaging or hiding their work or possessions
- **verbal** bullying (including electronic media like chat room and SMS messages). This may include name-calling, teasing, taunting, making offensive remarks, including remarks of a personal (including linked to appearance or medical conditions) , sexual or sexist, cultural, racial, religious or homophobic nature, or linked to any disability including Learning Difficulties/Special Educational Need. 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** bullying (for example by excluding someone, deliberately staring at them, mocking their efforts in or outside lessons, other inappropriate body-language. Emotional bullying will also link with all other forms of bullying such as tormenting them or spreading malicious rumours about them)
- **manipulating other people** to tease or torment someone
- **complicity** that falls short of direct participation in bullying. This is often referred to as ‘bystanding’

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, religious or cultural and which focus on special educational needs, disabilities or physical attributes (such as their appearance, hair colour or body shape), or a person’s sexuality.

Using ICT in these ways is also bullying – we call it as ‘**cyber-bullying**’. It can involve using mobile phones, social networking sites, like Facebook, Formspring, Bebo, and Myspace, emails, text and SMS messages, voicemails and the posting of photographs, video clips and other electronic media on the internet. We recognise that these forms of electronic communication can draw in girls who may not immediately think about the seriousness of their actions and may be saying or complying in things that they would not do face to face.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time – even in the very best schools with highly effective systems of pastoral care. Sometimes it is overt and intimidatory but it is often hidden and subtle. Whatever its nature, bullying is treated seriously at Sheffield High School because

- it is against our ethos and values
- it is hurtful to others and to the school community
- it can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage. At its worst, persistent and severe bullying can even lead to suicide, which is why it is taken so seriously
- it can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or to threatening behaviour

2. Being aware – possible signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to attend or to return to school, or hanging around on school premises after school rather than leaving with others. Erratic attendance or a pattern of absence.
- Avoidance or lateness to tutor time and (some) lessons.
- Choosing the company of adults and/or avoiding spending social time with (groups of) peers eg. In the Dining Hall or on school trips.
- Excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet, possibly linked with certain occasions such as non-uniform days.
- Failure to produce work, producing unusually bad work or work which seems to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others.
- Reluctance to volunteer answers or ideas in class, and any signs of ridicule when answers are made.
- Exclusion from group activities inside and outside the classroom or sports activities
- Books, bags or other belongings going missing or lockers being interfered with
- Changes to established habits and presentation such as accent, way uniform is worn, stopping extra curricular activities, stopping music lessons
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Nurse complaining of headaches, stomach aches etc.
- Any unexplained cuts and bruises
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Tiredness (which could link to difficulty sleeping and/or nightmares)
- Talk (or writing, doodles etc.) of unhappiness, running away, suicide.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers. Girls are also encouraged to be aware of these possible symptoms.

3. How we deal with bullying.

We are pro-active and provide the following preventative measures:

- Use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. The Annual national Anti-Bullying Week is always marked. Form-time activities will include those related to possible bullying and its prevention.
- The Senior School Planner makes it clear what bullying is and what should be done if it is known or thought to be happening.
- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is

structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. The Schemes of Work for each year in Senior School include specific focus on Cyber-Bullying.

- We utilise other lessons, such as RS, History, English and Drama to highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. Sixth Form prefects often support them in Main School and the Dining Hall (Senior School lunchtime) are also alert. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour (see Section 3. The issue of Bullying is also addressed regularly in staff INSET, in Staff Meetings in Tutor-Team meetings and at Pastoral Board.). Staff supervising School trips maintain alertness to possible bullying behaviour.
- A strong and experienced pastoral team of Heads of Year in the Senior School who support the Head of Pastoral Care and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, are alert to possible signs of bullying and alert and receptive to possible concerns of girls about this. The School Nurse is also a key member of this team.
- Our pastoral team give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. Staff are informed as appropriate about girls and relationships to be particularly aware of or to actively monitor.
- A trained School Counsellor can be an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. She is available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to her (if they have general agreement from parents/carers to self-refer from Y10, and anyway once they are 16) when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. Otherwise, a member of our pastoral team may refer a pupil to her via liaison with the Head of Pastoral Care.
- Advice is displayed on PSHE Boards around the school and in the Medical Room on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans. Information is also available from the Pastoral Team and the School Nurse.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- The School reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and on journeys (including school and public transport) and any other incidents that occur in the vicinity of the school and/or involve our pupils. It is made clear that the responsibility of the school does not stop at the school gate.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

The School's Behaviour and Sanctions Policy alongside the Discipline and Exclusions Policy and other relevant policies and practices, provide support for the victim and the bully and support this policy.

4. School Practice – Procedures to follow

Preventing incidences of bullying: at Sheffield High School we

- Encourage all our pupils to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. This could be via the form teacher or class teacher, a Y7-9 Sixth Form prefect, or a member of the Pastoral Team including the School Nurse.

- Provide leadership training to our Y13 Prefects in relevant roles, such as the Y7-9 Prefects, or when relevant to responsible girls on school buses which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- Provide a point of contact for parents to report incidences of bullying through the relevant Head of Year in Senior School or other members of the Pastoral Teams throughout the school.
- Investigate and record all reported incidents immediately and always monitor reported incidents. We monitor bullying records so that any emerging patterns may be identified.
- Ban any initiation ceremonies or other behaviour designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation.
- Expect all pupils to adhere to Sheffield High School's ICT Code of Conduct for the safe use of the internet. They and their parents sign this. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our ICT Department monitors pupils' use.
- Impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issue all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as "hotmail" are not allowed.
- Adhere to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offer guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy lists".
- Offer guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Insist on compliance with the Mobile Phone Code of Conduct which is signed by each girl and her parents/carer.

If an incident of bullying is reported, and all reported incidents must be taken seriously and investigated:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. In the Senior School they will liaise with the Head of Pastoral Care. The Head will be informed and may deal with the matter directly or delegate this to an appropriate senior member of staff.
- The victim will be interviewed on her own and either asked to write an account of events or to confirm the details which are recorded by the member of staff.
- The bully(ies), together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events or to confirm the details which are recorded by the member of staff.
- The incident/s will be recorded, factually and non-judgmentally.
- Other tutors/members of staff (including non-teaching staff) as relevant will be informed and relevant enquiries made.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. She will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions dependant.
- The parents/guardians/carers of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought and they will be kept informed about how the strategies put into place progress through regular meetings and/or other contact.

- Factual, contemporaneous, dated notes will be kept of all investigatory meetings, meetings with parents, telephone calls and other relevant information.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be agreed. This will recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, can be considered if judged helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Sheffield High School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

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.

6. Sanctions in cases of bullying

Although each case may vary, where a pupil or pupils have been found to have bullied, then appropriate and proportionate sanctions will be applied, in accordance with the school's Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and taking account of any cumulative effect of a pupil's behaviour.

Depending upon the particular situation, sanctions, either individually or in combination, may involve such steps as

- loss of privileges
- transfer to another class, group or teaching set (in a particular case, the pupil who has been bullied may wish to move into a different group and this will be considered, provided that it is not perceived as in some way condoning of the action of the bully)
- 'on report' or equivalent requirement for monitoring of behaviour
- making restitution to the victim (for example, for items damaged or destroyed)
- detention(s), either at break or lunchtime or after school
- internal isolation with work being set.
- service to the school community
- fixed-term exclusion **
- permanent exclusion **

NB ** These sanctions will be imposed in severe or persistent cases of bullying, in accordance with the GDST Exclusions Policy.

7. Related policies are:

- The Code of Behaviour which 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.
- The Behaviour and Sanctions Policy
- The Discipline and Exclusion Policy
- The ICT and Mobile Phone Codes of Conduct
- The SEN (LDD) Policy
- The Equal Opportunities Policy
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (which also links to allegations of bullying by members of staff)
- and also PSHE Schemes of Work (which include addressing Cyber-Bullying)

This policy was updated in January 2011 and is due for the next review by September 2011. It will be reviewed by the Pastoral Team and will take into account the views of Student Council members convened by the Head of Pastoral Care or the Head of Junior School who will be asked for comments and suggestions about amendments. 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 and in the Parents' Handbook, to staff via the Staff Handbook, INSET and/or staff meetings and to pupils via planned opportunities such as PSHE sessions, Assemblies, form time and amending the entry in the Planner.

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