



Shebbear College

Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy

SENIOR SCHOOL (YEAR 7-13)

Reviewed and ratified by the Governing Body on 22nd November 2019

Next full review by the Governing Body by November 2020

Policy Review at Shebbear College

The Governors acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective and follows regulatory requirements. Governors undertake a regular review (at least annually) to satisfy themselves that the implementation of this policy is effective.

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT BULLYING AT SCHOOL CONSULT APPENDIX TWO AND INFORM A MEMBER OF SCHOOL STAFF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 Shebbear College is a caring community founded upon Christian values and, as such, the well-being of each of its members is a prime concern.

It is therefore unacceptable that any member of the school community should suffer either mentally or physically at the hands of any other member, or members, and the school is unequivocally committed to supporting this principle.

Bullying is very serious and can cause major physical, emotional, and psychological damage on its victims.

1.2 This document is designed to enable all pupils (including boarders), staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents, volunteers and governors to have an understanding of what bullying is as well as providing details on what they should do if bullying arises. All staff involved in observing or reporting incidents involving bullying should follow the procedures laid out in the **Appendix Three – Anti-Bullying policy - Guidelines for staff.**

1.3 This policy has been prepared bearing in mind the guidance issued by DCSF's "Safe to Learn – Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools" as well as the Department for Education's "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" (2014) and Cyber-bullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014) . As the school also has a boarding element, then reference is made to the "National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools" (in particular, Standard 12).

2. Definitions

2.1 Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts, harms or humiliates another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

2.2 The school recognises that the well-being of each person is best fostered where it is established within the school ethos that we have a mutual responsibility to each other. It should therefore be acknowledged by all that the following activities are unacceptable and defined as bullying:-

- i) Persistent verbal intimidation such as the use of threats, derogatory nicknames and personal comments. It is necessary to distinguish between harmless banter and what is hurtful. The persons receiving these comments will not always show their true feelings.
- ii) Unpleasant or aggressive actions which originate through racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist or homophobic motivation, or which arise from issues of disability or special educational needs; alternatively, as a result of a child being adopted or is acting as a carer. This includes verbal, physical, written actions, those involving use of communication technology and graffiti.
- iii) Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality. This includes heterosexual and references to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues (LGBT).
- iv) Deliberate exclusion of individuals or groups from the common social involvement.
- v) Threatening demeanour towards others who are younger, smaller or more sensitive.
- vi) Any physical harm caused by deliberate or reckless behaviour.

2.3 The digital age has seen the development of new ways to bully, libel, slander and abuse.

Cyber-bullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, to upset someone else.

3. Policy

3.1 The school's intention is to be an anti-bullying school. This can only be achieved if we work in partnership with parents, adopting a proactive and preventative approach and in particular:

- i) Continually reminding pupils about the issue of bullying and its consequences, through our PSHE programme and assemblies. Visiting speakers may also provide input for pupils, staff and parents, especially on matters relating to cyber-bullying;
- ii) Being on the lookout for potential problems;
- iii) Seeking the cooperation of parents and pupils to inform us at an early stage of issues;
- iv) Raising the subject with the school council as part of the review process and seeking feedback from pupils through representatives' input;
- v) Raising awareness of staff through training;
- vii) Recording all incidences of bullying on the pastoral log and reviewing this regularly (Deputy Head and Assistant Head Pastoral) to ensure action designed to prevent their reoccurrence.
- vi) Taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.

3.2 As such behaviour is unacceptable then it follows that action should be taken to curtail such behaviour when it occurs. It is therefore proper for others present to intervene personally (on behalf of any who suffer) in so far as their own well-being is not endangered and to report such instances to those who can take proper action (prefects – day and boarding, teachers, form tutors, heads of school, Head, Deputy Head and Assistant Heads).

3.3 The pastoral system at the school is proven to be very effective in the resolution of such difficulties when it is aware of them; no pupil, friend or parent should feel reluctant or scared to discuss these problems at the relevant level. Any such discussions are in confidence (where possible), if that is requested, but the school's priority is that the cause of the unhappiness should cease.

3.4 Support will always be offered to both the bullied and the bully. This may take the form of help and discussion with a tutor, the chaplain, or another member of staff or, if it is felt to be necessary and useful, with external agencies. It is recognised that the reason for the bully's behaviour needs to be addressed if a successful outcome is to be achieved. Sanctions may be invoked as set out in the schools' behaviour management policies and can possibly lead to the removal of the protagonist from the school.

3.6 Where cyber-bullying involves threats through written or verbal messages the school has the right to contact the local police or other agencies where they believe that these threats may be serious and a potential criminal offence may or may not have been committed.

3.7 A bullying incident may be addressed as a child protection concern when there is “reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm”. Where this is the case, the matter will be discussed with the Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection or their deputy, and the school’s **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** may be implemented.

3.8 An extensive explanation of procedures relating to the use of technology and to cyber-bullying can be found in the school’s **e-Safety Policy**.

3.9 At the beginning of each academic year every pupil, including boarders, receives a school planner which contains a summary of the key points of this policy. Form tutors explain this to their tutor group. In addition, all boarding pupils receive a presentation focusing on cyberbullying and e-safety.

3.10 Education: Measures are taken throughout each year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy. These measures include:

- i) Regular input through the PSHE Programme including CEOP training sessions for all pupils and parents (voluntary) in e-safety
- ii) Anti-Bullying messages are given in assemblies, across the three schools, as well as delivered within whole school assemblies;
- iii) Focus events related to charitable initiatives across the College;
- iv) Through Religious Studies lessons across the school where the moral and ethical aspects can also be considered.

3.11 Staff Training: Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that all pastoral staff, including boarding staff and Heads of School, as well as other staff involved in the pastoral management of pupils have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- i) awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases;
- ii) listening skills;
- iii) providing support following a bereavement.

Regular up-dates are given to staff, especially when the Anti-bullying Policy has been updated, to enable staff to reaffirm their understanding of the principles of this policy whilst ensuring that the legal responsibilities are understood. Discussions in form tutor Meetings and pastoral meetings allows staff to discuss the actions which can be adopted to help resolve and prevent problems as well as allowing time for the sharing of good sources of support both the pupils and the staff.

Where new and more complex areas are introduced, the school will invest in specialised speakers or trainers who will help the staff to understand the needs of pupils in a variety of situations, including those with SEN or disabilities and “lesbian”, “gay”, “bisexual” and “transgender” (LGBT) pupils.

3.12 Legal aspects: Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message or e-mail) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

4. Scope

This policy ordinarily applies only to incidents of bullying which takes place on school premises or whilst a pupil is in the care of the school on a school trip or a related activity. The school is not legally responsible for bullying which takes place in other circumstances.

However, the school has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its pupils and will respond to any information it receives about bullying outside school thus:

If it emerges that a pupil at the school is responsible for bullying other children outside school then this matter will be addressed in a robust fashion in accordance with the school's terms and conditions and (if appropriate) the bully's parents informed.

If a pupil at the school is found to be the victim of bullying outside the school then help and support will be offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in the future. The victim's will be informed.

5. Conclusion

The school recognises that bullying is a serious and pernicious form of behaviour which can cause psychological damage, hurt, loss of self-esteem and can in extreme cases lead to suicide. The best defence against anti-social behaviour is the clear acknowledgement by each member of the community of a personal responsibility for the well-being of others and a willingness to take appropriate action on behalf of those in need.

Appendix 1 – Creating an Anti-bullying Culture

1.1 Ethos: The expectations of the College community is that:

- (i) every pupil at Shebbear College will uphold the Behaviour Code which is contained in the pupil planner and displayed around the Senior School;
- (ii) a pupil or member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it;
- (iii) a complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously; and
- (iv) no one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone is being bullied.

1.2 Equal Opportunities: In school and every year group:

- (i) discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable;
- (ii) positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic groups within and without the school; and
- (iii) positive attitudes are fostered towards gender and sexuality differences through the curriculum and tutor groups as well as through the PSHE programmes.

1.3 Staff: Through their training and experience, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- (i) celebrating achievement;
- (ii) anticipating problems and providing support;
- (iii) disciplining sensibly, fairly and consistently, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the pupils and the needs of vulnerable pupils;
- (iv) making opportunities to listen to pupils;
- (v) acting as advocates of pupils.

1.4 Pupils: Through our pastoral care system, Pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the school. They are encouraged:

- i.) to celebrate the effort and achievements of others
- ii.) to hold and promote positive attitudes;
- iii.) to feel able to share problems with staff;
- iv.) to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
- v.) not to feel guilty about airing a complaint;
- vi.) to treat meals as pleasant social occasions.

The school emphasises with senior pupils the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older boarders are encouraged to keep an eye on younger boarders and offer support, where it is needed.

APPENDIX TWO - Practical Guidelines for pupils and parents

For Pupils - What can you do if you are being bullied?

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Try not to show that you are upset; try to look and sound confident.
- Try to ignore the bully; remember that they want a reaction and try not to give one.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- If you are the victim of cyber-bullying, do not respond to messages and inform your tutor or other member of teaching staff as soon as you can.
- Inform your tutor or any other member of teaching staff as soon as you can. They will take you seriously and deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and not make matters worse for you. You can use the Confide button on the school network to do this (anonymously if required)

For Pupils - If you know someone is being bullied:-

- Don't stand and watch; fetch help. Tell an adult immediately. Teachers have ways of dealing with bullying without getting you in to trouble. You can use the Confide button on the school network (anonymously if required)
- If a friend tells you that they are being bullied try to persuade them to tell a teacher themselves. If this does not happen you should tell a teacher yourself.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully. Show that you and your friends disapprove.
- Be sympathetic and supportive to someone who may be being bullied.
- Be careful about teasing people or making personal remarks; if what you are about to say may be hurtful, do not say it. Do not join in with hurtful comments being made about a fellow pupil using any form of technology.

Guidance for Parents

- Watch for signs of distress in your child, for example, they suddenly may not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to a normal standard.

- Be aware of your child's use of technology, including social media, and check security settings are in place – the school can advise.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school immediately with as many details as you can. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.
- Discourage your child from hitting back as this will only exacerbate the issue.
- Encourage your child to talk to his/her tutor about any worries.

Appendix 3 – Anti-bullying Policy: Guidelines for Staff

Where an instance of bullying (including cyber-bullying) has been brought to your attention, be it reported by a pupil or parent, or simply observed around the school, please follow the guidance below for reporting and recording the details.

- i) On receiving a report or observing bullying behaviour please note the details in writing on the pastoral incident log. Please then speak to the Head of School about this to clarify details which may be unclear.
- ii) The Head of School will decide on the most appropriate way to proceed, consulting the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if required.
- iii) For lower level incidents/issues, a Form Tutor may be asked to intervene, speaking to the relevant parties and supporting both parties to try to resolve the situation. The matter should still be recorded on the pastoral incident log.
- iv) For more serious incidents, Heads of School will investigate, possibly with a second member of staff (who will act as a scribe as well as protecting those involved). Where appropriate, sanctions may have to be given to some or all of those involved. This could be a detention or, if the Deputy Heads are involved, a Saturday morning detention.

If the matter is of a very serious nature or repeated bullying following previous investigations, then a referral to the Head and a possible suspension/exclusion may be the outcome. All interviews/investigations must be fully documented in writing and passed to the Head of School for filing.

- v) Where the pupils involved are from the separate schools (Lower and Upper), both Heads of School should oversee the investigation. The victim's Head of School and that of the main protagonist would be the ideal combination.
- vi) A report must record the date, time, names of the pupils interviewed and the staff present, as well as the details of the investigation, the outcomes and any action taken. All reports should be filed in the pupils' individual files and must be signed by pupils and staff involved.
- vii) All incidents reported, however minor, must be logged as "Bullying Incidents" on the pastoral incident Log

This is laid out in such a way to enable patterns to be identified. The Safeguarding Governor (Currently Mr Simon Leigh) will view this file regularly (and also as part of the annual review of Safeguarding).

- viii) After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

ix) Pupils who have been bullied should be supported by:

- the offer of an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- reassurance that the problem is being taken seriously;
- the offer of continuous support;
- strategies aimed to restore their self-esteem and confidence.

x) Pupils who have bullied should be helped by:

- discussion of what has happened;
- exploration of why they became involved in the bullying incident;
- clarification of what was wrong about their behaviour and why they need to change;
- the involvement of parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

Note: Each bullying incident will be individually investigated and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner which should take into account the circumstances of it.

