

Anti-bullying Policy



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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY – ST HELENA SCHOOL

The Governors, staff and students believe that all students at St Helena School are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, intimidation, oppression and abuse. It is the responsibility of all adults in the school to ensure that this takes place.

It is also the responsibility of students, parents and senior managers to ensure that staff are able to carry out their work free from humiliation, intimidation, oppression and abuse. Any issues arising for staff will be handled through the Staff Grievance procedures.

The aim of St Helena’s anti-bullying strategies and interventions are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the student
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience
- To bring about an amicable solution that allows all parties involved in the incident to continue with their education (where appropriate)
- To be aware of the quantity and particular nature of bullying that takes place in the School
- To be aware of areas of the School that pose a threat to students and to take appropriate action to reduce those threats
- To effect changes to the School environment which may be necessary to negate bullying
- To create and foster a caring community where no student need fear intimidation by promoting an “open listening” ethos and encouraging students to support one another by reporting all instances of bullying
- To further the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the individual and the community

Definition of the Problem

In 2011, the Colchester Behaviour and Attendance Partnership agreed a definition of bullying for Colchester Schools as “repeated behaviour or perceived behaviour which exhibits hostility towards another individual and which is usually hurtful and deliberate in its intent.” Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or because of perceived differences- DfE July 2013. Typical examples include:

- Persistent name calling
- Directing offensive gestures at others
- Deliberately ignoring and excluding others
- Pressurising others to behave in a particular way
- Damaging, stealing or demanding possessions
- Physical assault
- Racist comments or name calling
- Homophobic comments or name calling

Bullying is not the same as poor behaviour as dealt with by the School’s Behaviour Policy. It is also important to make the distinction between bullying and falling out with friends. Falling out is part of everyday life, bullying is not.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying through the use of communication technology like mobile phone text messages, emails, or social media websites. It should be noted that the use of ICT to bully could be against the law. Abusive language or images used to bully, harass or threaten another, whether spoken or written (through electronic means) may be libellous and may contravene the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.

There are seven main types of cyber bullying:

1. Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
2. Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
3. Phone call bullying via mobile phones uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
4. Email bullying uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
5. Chat room bullying involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
6. Bullying through instant messaging (IM) is an internet based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
7. Bullying via websites includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyber bullying.

Preventative Strategies include:

- A strong Pastoral system promoting an open and honest anti-bullying ethos
- Curriculum opportunities to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti-bullying messages
- Throughout the Academic year, we raise awareness of the negative consequence of bullying for example, Anti-bullying week in November, Assemblies, Tutor Time activities
- Posters around St Helena School
- The presence of CCTV around the school
- Trained Anti-Bullying mentors and Prefects who offer peer support

Advice to the Students

If you feel that you have been bullied, these are strategies that you can use (choose those which you feel most comfortable with at the time):

- Do not try to deal with the problem on your own
- Talk to a friend you trust and feel comfortable with

- Try not to react to bullies and don't say anything back
- Talk to an adult you can trust, this may not necessarily be a teacher
- Talk to a Prefect or an Anti-Bullying mentor
- Write down and keep a diary of what has happened and how you feel – be 100% truthful
- Deal with it immediately
- Do something. To do nothing encourages the bullies
- Do not use violence against the bullies
- Do not exaggerate – this may cast doubt on your version of events.

Advice to Teachers and Other Adults in School

- Watch for early signs of distress in students – deterioration of work, reduced attendance, sudden illnesses, isolation, the need to stay close to adults. (Appendix 1 lists signs and symptoms as identified by Kidscape). These concerns should be passed on to the relevant Tutor, Pastoral Manager or Year Leader who will deal with the concerns promptly
- Respond to the victim, offer help and follow the 'Courses of Action' outlined in this document
- Record the incident, its type and agreed outcomes on Class Charts
- Make it clear to the bully that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable
- Inform the parents of the students involved
- Use all students as a positive resource in the prevention of bullying. Peer groups will often be willing to help and support victims once recognised by a teacher. They can also help newcomers to feel welcome and accepted
- If bullying has taken place outside of the school building - on school or public transport, outside local shops, on school excursions, via social media, then it may be appropriate for staff to notify the police

Advice to Parents

If a parent thinks that their child is being bullied then they should contact the school immediately. They should contact the Form Tutor initially. Parents should also encourage their child to talk to an adult they trust about bullying incidents that have taken place.

It is the responsibility of parents to monitor their child's use of mobile phones and computers outside school – cyber bullying often takes place outside school. In these situations the school recommends that parents/carers report the bullying to the police.

Course of Action against Bullying

- Anyone can and should report any bullying incident – whether a victim, the friend of the victim or a passer-by
- All cases of reported bullying will be taken seriously
- Students are informed that they should approach any adult in the school they trust. If the matter is urgent, the student should approach the first adult they encounter
- All staff are willing to deal with an incident that is brought to their attention. If appropriate, a member of staff will handle the situation there and then. Serious issues of bullying should be referred to the relevant Pastoral Manager or Director of Learning
- When consulted about a bullying incident, the member of staff handling the matter will interview separately the victim, the alleged bully and any witnesses in order to establish an

accurate account of events. Written reports should be made and kept in the relevant students' (either bully, victim or both) records

- Sanctions- see Disciplinary sanctions - for bullying will remain at the discretion of the member of staff who deals with the incident, bearing in mind that the primary need is to prevent further bullying as well as to send clear signals to the school community that bullying will not be tolerated. All factors will be considered including the nature of the incident and any previous involvement in similar acts. It is to be emphasised that while sanctions will be seriously imposed, there will be occasions when interventions for the bully may be more appropriate
- It is essential that both the victim and the perpetrator(s) are seen later to see if the issue has been resolved. If there is a continuation of the problem, then the dialogue needs to be started again and further action taken
- In cases of serious and/or persistent bullying, the parents of both the perpetrator and the victim will be contacted
- At a whole school level, the prevention of anti-social behaviour lies at the heart of the pastoral system. In addition, the exploration of bullying is an important component in the school's Personal Social Health Education programme.

A recommended starting strategy for dealing with bullying is to adopt the **"no-blame" approach**, which can be summarised as follows:

- Having listened carefully to all reported incidents of bullying, and notes having been taken, a meeting may be arranged for all the parties involved. One or more members of staff should be present.
- At this meeting, the facts should be reviewed with everyone present having the chance to speak without being interrupted.
- Without prejudgments it should be stressed to all parties that what has occurred is wrong and should not re-occur.
- Acceptable patterns of behaviour by all parties should be agreed upon.
- Notes of the meeting should be made.
- Some time after the meeting (2/3 weeks later) the member(s) of staff should review the situation.

Where appropriate it may be important to involve parents in anti-bullying strategies and/or future action.

Disciplinary Sanctions have three main purposes:

- To impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable
- To deter him/her from repeating that behaviour
- To signal to other students that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from engaging in such behaviour

Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold students who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the student to put right the harm they have caused.

Procedures for Monitoring the Success of the Policy

This Policy will be monitored by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral Guidance and Support). In doing so, s/he will consult with a number of people and bodies:

- School Council and Anti-bullying Mentors
- Pastoral Managers
- Year Leaders
- Senior Leadership Team
- Heads of Lower and Upper School

Data on the incidences of bullying will be collated annually and discussed at the relevant LABS (Learning, Attendance, Behaviour and Safeguarding) meeting to identify trends and recommend any further action needed.

(with acknowledgement to Kidscape)

Signs and Symptoms

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go 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 stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night 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)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable 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 a possibility and should be investigated.