



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy is updated and approved by the Governing Body every 5 years

This version was approved – 13.10.2016
The next update will be due by December 2021

J Collins - Chair of Governors



Introduction

The accepted broad definition of bullying is anything said or done to hurt, harass or intimidate someone else. This may be over a period of time or a one-off incident. It can be violent, aggressive behaviour of a physical or verbal nature, including threats, intimidation or teasing.

Every year more than 20,000 young people call ChildLine. These are some of the ways they describe bullying:

- being called names
- being teased
- being punched, pushed or attacked
- being forced to hand over money, mobile phones or other possessions
- getting abusive or threatening text messages, e-mails or comments on social networking sites
- having rumours spread about them
- being ignored or left out
- being picked on based on religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, ethnicity or race.

Bullying is all too commonplace in society. It affects not only the victims of bullying but the bullies themselves and the silent majority who are not involved. Bullying can be easily overlooked, not least because those who are victims of it and/or those who witness it are reluctant to come forward. It can sometimes be over looked and described as ‘banter. This policy aims to combat bullying by ensuring that everyone knows what the policy is, that the policy is applied consistently and that everyone accepts and supports it.

Aims

The school’s policy on bullying is consistent with the AGS ethos of RESPECT and with the aims of the wider policy on behaviour in particular.

This policy aims to promote a school community which is free from the fear of threat or intimidation by:

- ensuring that all students accept that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated
- raising awareness that whenever bullying occurs it must be dealt with as effectively as possible, that it must not be ignored and that the prevention of bullying is everyone’s responsibility
- promoting a safe and caring atmosphere in which students can work freely and are able to come forward when bullying occurs, without fear of retaliation
- identifying ways in which bullying can be prevented
- indicating ways in which bullies and their victims are dealt with
- reassuring parents and the wider community that bullying will be dealt with as effectively as possible within the school.
- understanding that ‘banter’ can go too far and, when this happens, it should be considered to be bullying.
- understanding that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures

Implementation

The school's attitude to bullying is very clear. Under no circumstances is bullying of any kind tolerated and the school will act swiftly and firmly when it is reported. All students are made aware that bullying is considered contrary to the school's ethos of RESPECT and its' expectations of reasonable behaviour.

The school seeks to prevent bullying by creating opportunities for discussion, across the curriculum, of its serious and sometimes potentially tragic consequences. This may be on an informal basis or more formally as part of the curriculum. Discussion of aspects of bullying takes place in several areas of the curriculum such as PSHCEE, English, History, Drama and in assemblies. This includes consideration of issues such as social relationships, change of expectations on transfer to secondary school, peer group pressures and matters relating to race, sexuality, what happens historically when bullying goes unchecked etc. Every year in November, the school participates in National Anti-Bullying Week, with a series of special assemblies and PSHCEE activities.

New intake students are made aware of the school's policy on bullying as part of the induction programme. Students are encouraged to come forward and inform staff, a prefect or a parent when bullying, involving themselves or others, occurs, without fear of retribution. Students are made aware that to remain silent when they have knowledge of bullying is to condone it and possibly encourage it in the future. It is important that students are aware and confident that staff are accessible and willing to consider cases of bullying. Some students receive training as Anti Bullying Ambassadors within the school and these students, alongside Tutor Group Prefects, seek to be alert to issues of bullying and promote a culture of speaking out.

Parents are integral partners in the school's policy on bullying. Wherever possible, their support is enlisted in the school's aim to eliminate bullying and they are encouraged to tell the school about bullying concerns. The school also seeks to involve, where relevant, the wider community in its approach to bullying. This may involve liaison with the local police community liaison officer, governors, parents, the education welfare service, school medical service, etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The school's policy on bullying, as an integral part of its overall behaviour policy, is regularly evaluated. Monitoring involves discussion with students, staff, parents and governors and a question about bullying and feeling safe is included every year in parent and student questionnaires. Issues raised by the responses to questionnaires are discussed within SLT and actions taken if necessary. The school acknowledges the need to regularly review ways of improving the quality of social relationships in the school, at all levels, as part of our self-evaluation process.

The school will continue to seek ways of creating a climate in which students and teachers actively co-operate in reducing the incidence of bullying. Bullying cannot be tackled in isolation. This anti-bullying policy is at the core of the school's ethos and the value it places on respectful relationships between students, between staff and between staff and students.

Appendix 1 - Advice for parents

Parents often feel angry or upset if they feel that their child is being bullied. Many students are good at hiding their feelings and the first you may know of the problem is when your son suddenly does not want to go to school. Other signs of bullying can include unexplained cuts and bruises, lost dinner money, friendship problems, eating disorders, poor attendance, less progress in school and mood swings.

If you feel that your son is being bullied at school, you should encourage your son to speak to his Tutor/ Head of Year or other trusted member of staff. If he feels unable to do this you should speak as soon as possible to your son's Tutor or Head of Year and explain your concerns. Ask the staff member to look into the situation and try to resolve it. AGS has a variety of actions and/or sanctions that can be used, depending on the seriousness of the situation.

If bullying continues the following steps may be taken and would be helpful:

Keep a diary of what your son says is happening

Speak to the Tutor/Head of Year again, explaining that the problem is still unresolved, giving as much detail as possible.

Appendix 2 - The AGS 'Anti-bullying Code' - to be displayed in all classrooms.

Appendix 3 – Advice for students

If you are being bullied....

- Avoid places where the bullying normally takes place.
- Use your best judgment. Sometimes giving in to some demands can seem to help, but it is not a long-term solution
- People who bully want to get a reaction out of you, but do not retaliate
- Try noting down dates, times and places of when the bullying happens
- Make sure you have got your friends around you most of the time
- Do not suffer in silence. Bullying is wrong - so tell someone about it (a friend, a Prefect, your Tutor, your Head of House, your Head of Year or another trusted member of staff)
- Do not give your passwords to anyone else

If you are being bullied on-line, via social media or by mobile phone....

- If you are being targeted by mobile phone, contact your service provider with details of the calls or texts that are causing you concern.
- Consider changing the SIM card in your mobile. It is not fair that you have to do this, but it is an easy solution.
- Tell somebody what has been going on – your parent or teacher.
- If you are being targeted online or by email, contact your internet service provider, the social networking site or the company who provides your email. If you can produce written evidence of what has been going on, it may be possible to block the bully's account.
- Never give out your email address or mobile number in chat rooms
- If you receive unpleasant texts, snapchats or tweets, keep a record of them and show them to a teacher or your parents

If you know someone who is being bullied....

- Do not ignore someone being bullied
- Try to be there for the person being bullied and encourage them to tell somebody
- Do not get into a fight on behalf of someone else
- If someone is in danger, get help right away from somebody who is in a position to help
- Tell someone about it - they might be able to help the person

If you are bullying someone...

- It is not too late to stop bullying
- Ask yourself why you are behaving that way, do you really want to hurt or upset people?
- Are you taking out your anger on other people because of what is going on at home?
- Are you jealous of other people?
- Talk to someone about your situation
- Do you understand what could happen to you or other people as a consequence of your behaviour?

Appendix 4 - Advice for staff

All staff –

All staff are expected to deal with bullying whenever and wherever they encounter it. In a large majority of cases, bullying will be reported to the Tutor or the relevant Head of Year but all teachers should be alert to bullying behaviour and be pro-active in stopping it. In line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, use a range of behaviour management strategies in all your lessons to establish an expectation of respectful behaviour. In lessons, forward planning should aim to achieve social inclusion of all students by carefully planning seating, management of groups and tasks.

Use prompt positive correction for low level disruption (such as verbal put downs, taking of possessions, pushing and shoving) that targets individuals. A calm request to stop the behaviour and a warning that, should they continue, they would be engaging in bullying behaviour, should be sufficient.

Make it clear that the school does not accept bullying behaviour and there is no place for this behaviour in this school. If the behaviour is repeated and/or if high level bullying occurs, then the incident should be reported promptly. A member of the pastoral team, normally the Head of Year, or a member of the SLT, will then follow up the incident.

Tutor/Pastoral staff –

The Tutor may be the first point of contact for the victim. The Tutor has an essential monitoring role within the tutor group and should endeavour to help to develop harmonious relationships and skills of community living. He/she may be in a position to identify potential bullying situations at an early stage.

If bullying is reported, you should follow these guidelines:

- Take all reports of bullying seriously. Reassure the student making the report that they have made the right decision to tell. Adopt an unprejudiced approach.
- Be prepared to listen carefully to all students involved. When investigating cases of alleged bullying, be aware of the need to listen to victims, witnesses and bullies. This listening may take place at different levels such as talking with individuals or small groups directly involved, or discussion with a whole class or tutor group.

- Students should be interviewed individually. It is good practice to interview the ‘accused’ first so they are given the first opportunity to give their side of events. Ask all those directly involved in the bullying incident and, if appropriate, selected witnesses nominated by both ‘sides’, to complete an Incident Report form. Make notes as you proceed.
- Discuss with the victim the possible actions that could be taken in order to empower the student who has been bullied, give them the choice of how they would like the incident to be dealt with; ask him what he would like to happen next so that he does not experience this again and so that it does not happen to others. Offer the support of a safe area if deemed necessary (eg. Medical Room, Learning Support area).
- Liaison with parents is paramount. Parents often hear about bullying before teachers and are potentially an important source of support both in detecting and dealing with it. Ensure that parents of those directly involved are notified as soon as possible by telephone that an investigation is being carried out – arrange to keep them informed of the outcomes and if necessary invite them into school for a meeting.
- Once the investigation has been completed, the action that is required will be determined and communicated to all appropriate people. Sanctions are issued on the basis of the particular circumstances of each case.
- Check with the victim at regular intervals (daily and then weekly) that the bullying has stopped. All incidents of bullying must be recorded on isams. As a matter of course, the Head of Year will record all cases referred to them and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed of them.

Appendix 5 - Useful information/contacts

Childline 0800 028 0285

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Kidscape 08451 205204

Samaritans 08457 909090

Useful Web-sites:

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org

www.parentcentre.co.uk

www.antibullying.net

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.education.gov.uk/bullying

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.samaritans.org