

## THE COTTESLOE SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY – NOVEMBER 2018

Reviewed at Resources and People Committee: 21 November 2018

Adopted at Full Governing Board meeting: 12 December 2018

Review date: Autumn Term 2021

As a school, it would be naive of us not to realise that in a community of over one thousand children/adolescents bullying, in various forms, is likely to occur. As it is often a secretive activity, we need to develop and maintain strategies that seek to change attitudes and create a school ethos that will not tolerate bullying of any kind; in short, make bullying socially unacceptable. Schools as public bodies have duties under The Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

A national annual anti-bullying survey carried out by Ditch the Label in 2018 reported that

*'1-in-5 of all young people have witnessed bullying within the past 12-months, with 50% of them witnessing it at least once a month. The experience proves to have serious impacts upon their own mental health, with 59% saying they felt bad and 39% reporting that it made them feel upset. Only 17% told us that they always intervene when they witness bullying. Most commonly young people were scared of being victimised or felt like they didn't have the right skills to interject. From those who did intervene, the response is largely positive and a statistic that was reassuring was 1-in-4 interventions resulted in them gaining a new friend. This research continues to uncover the devastating and very real impacts that bullying is having on young people. 60% told us that it had impacted their mental health, with 1-in-2 telling us it made them feel depressed and 11% attempting to take their own lives as a result.'*

Bullies have some things in common:

- they tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control;
- they tend to lack empathy; they have difficulty imagining what the victim feels;
- they tend to lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow deserves the bullying treatment;
- they have suffered some form of emotional damage through their relationships to date.

Some bullies act individually, to demonstrate their power or leadership to their friends as well as to witnesses. Some bullies actively persuade others to join them in bullying, to confirm solidarity of the group. In essence, bullying is a cowardly activity since there is a clear imbalance of social power and/or physical prowess in favour of the bully.

Victims may be students who:

- are new to the school;
- are different in appearance, academic ability, speech or background;
- suffer from low self-esteem (it is not clear whether this is a cause or effect of bullying);
- demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied, e.g. tantrums or loss of control;
- are more anxious or nervous.

## Cyber Bullying

In recent years, with the spread of electronic communication, bullying has extended to the victim's home and when social networking sites are involved, to large numbers of other students in a short space of time. The impact of this type of bullying at home and at school is presenting a huge challenge to parents and school staff.

As outlined in Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2014, the government has advised schools to take a firm stance against online bullying. 'The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.'

The Cottesloe School abides by this advice and will confiscate electronic devices which we have reason to believe hold inappropriate content linked to bullying. The Cottesloe School reserves the right to pass on evidence, including that on electronic devices, to the police if deemed necessary.

### Definition

'There is no legal definition of bullying. But it is usually defined as repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically, and is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance or disability'.

### Aims

In order to prevent and combat bullying the school must:

- make every effort to know the children we teach or come into contact with outside the classroom;
- be aware of the various forms of bullying;
- be alert to the signs that bullying may be taking place;
- supervise key areas around the school where bullying is likely to take place;
- create and maintain a caring attitude which encourages the victims of bullying, witnesses to incidents and students in general to speak out;
- deal appropriately with situations as they arise using clearly defined procedures for investigation of incidents;
- keep detailed records of incidents;
- support and counsel both the victim and the bully;
- emphasise prevention by using a variety of means to communicate the messages about bullying to students, parents and staff;
- communicate our values, beliefs and actions to all concerned;
- participate in training events and learn from examples of good practice either from colleagues within the school or from other schools.
- engage with the healthy relationship agenda

## **Guidelines for Staff**

- be alert, observe the social relationships of the students in your tutor group, do not turn a blind eye to any incident whilst on duty or merely walking through the school;
- be aware of telltale signs such as absenteeism, under-achievement, emotional outbursts, frequent reporting to medical room, withdrawal from social time with other students or from participation in PE, the student that appears to be a 'loner';
- treat all incidents seriously; do not dismiss them as 'rough and tumble' or 'tittle - tattle' or as someone else's problem;
- listen to students' points of view by developing their confidence in discussing problems, perhaps through relevant activities during the 20 minute morning registrations and PSHCE activities;
- follow the agreed procedure for responding to incidents;
- try not to react aggressively yourself - your response should reflect the severity of the incident;
- show that you have a committed position on bullying by following up incidents at prearranged times;
- deal with minor incidents yourself, remembering to keep a detailed record, but do not hesitate to involve other members of staff, especially Heads of Years;
- ensure that any perceived racist, sexist or homophobic incidents are logged appropriately.

## **Procedure**

- if the situation is not immediately resolved it must be referred to a Head of Year;
- all students involved will write individual statements;
- the Head of Year will record their discussions with both parties;
- where groups of students are involved, they will all be spoken to;
- both victim and bully may be counselled;
- all sets of parents will be informed and meetings arranged, if necessary, to discuss issues relating to their child;
- sanctions may be used against the bully as appropriate - if the incident was particularly violent or malicious this may include a period of exclusion;
- outcomes can only be discussed with the parents/carers of their child. Information and student academic records cannot be shared with other parties due to confidentiality and data protection.

## **Bullying examples**

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which are often combined.

### **Verbal abuse:**

- name-calling
- saying nasty things to or about a child.

### **Physical abuse:**

- hitting a child
- pushing a child
- physical assault.

### **Emotional abuse:**

- making threats
- undermining a child
- excluding a child from a friendship group or activities.

### **Cyberbullying/online bullying:**

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

### **Impact of bullying**

The emotional effects of being bullied include:

- sadness, depression and anxiety
- low self-esteem
- social isolation
- self-harm
- suicidal thoughts and feelings

Bullying can affect students' performance and attendance at school. They may find it hard to concentrate on schoolwork and homework, or be too afraid to go to school

### **Complaints**

Should a parent or student feel unhappy about the way that the school has responded to an incident, their complaint must be heard. This may be with an Assistant Headteacher or the Headteacher. However, the governors may become involved, through the Disciplinary Sub-Committee, if parents remain dissatisfied. Parents and students must follow the guidelines set out in the Complaints and Resolutions Procedure.

### **External support/information agencies:**

- [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- Childline: 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- NSPCC: 08088005000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Samaritans: 08457 909090
- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in three years (earlier if any legislative change).

November 2018