



Anti-Bullying Procedures

Created by AOS/SPA: July 2020

Agreed by the Local Governing Body Sept 2020

Next Review Date: Sept 2021

Aim

We aim to ensure a safe and secure environment in which every member of the school community feels valued and respected and is able to focus fully on their work, free from intimidation. Every member of the Fort Pitt community should feel safe and happy so that she/he is able to learn and achieve her/his potential.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is the repetitive, wilful, conscious desire to hurt another person and to put them under stress. Bullying causes a member of the school community to feel unhappy, insecure, threatened or excluded. Occasionally, students “fall out” and **may** resort to some of the behaviours associated with bullying. When ‘relational conflict’ occurs, both parties are involved but are keen to resolve the problems quickly and amicably. The following persistent behaviours are considered to be forms of bullying and it is recognised that these can happen anywhere, at any time of the day or night given a presence on social media:

- deliberately ignoring others and excluding them from groups or activities
- making others feel uncomfortable
- passing notes or spreading malicious rumours
- exchanging "looks"; making others feel uncomfortable
- teasing or making improper comments about a person’s race, sexuality, religion, dress, religion, looks, family circumstances, looked after children, fostered, etc
- threatening, including verbal threats by telephone, e-mail, text message or social networking site
- Inappropriate use of social media
- hitting and using physical violence such as pushing
- unwarranted advances – including up-skirting
- demanding money
- damage to others’ property

Effects of Bullying Behaviour

When a student is bullied, life is made miserable, not only in school, but also outside and at home. The sense of unhappiness may often affect concentration and learning or even create a fear of coming to school. In the worst cases it is proven that over time a loss of confidence and self-esteem can develop, which can continue into adult life affecting general health and may lead to periods of depression, self-harm and possible suicide. The key objective is to develop a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and is always challenged. Bullying can only thrive in a climate of silence. We encourage “speaking out” by those who are bullied (“Don’t suffer in silence”) and by those who witness or hear of incidents of bullying. We will then seek to tackle it sensitively, systematically, consistently and efficiently.

These arrangements are publicly available within and outside the school and we recognise the need to have the co-operation of parents and families in stamping out bullying, to have a coherent and consistent framework for addressing bullying issues and a commitment to anti-bullying education. Our pastoral managers maintain a record of all bullying incidents ensuring that the policy is adhered to and constantly reviewing its effectiveness.

The Framework

To:

- Reveal / Report Incidents
- Collect Evidence and Record of Incidents
- Act on findings
- Monitor and Evaluate

Revealing / Reporting Incidents

To encourage people to “speak out” with confidence and to make the reporting of incidents as easy as possible, we aim to provide as many initial contacts as possible for students to report incidents with confidence within the school. It has to be the student’s choice as to whom they reveal the problem. This can be to any member of staff or student in the school community who will then disclose the information to the relevant pastoral/safeguarding leads to follow up.

Collecting Evidence and Recording Incidents

The person to whom the student has revealed their problem will immediately inform the pastoral team and/or the form tutor (depending on the severity of the incident) giving as much information as possible. The information should include where possible:

- Who is involved
- The nature of the bullying
- How often it has happened and for how long
- Where it takes place
- Names of any witnesses

The Head of House or Form Tutor should ensure that the victim’s parents are informed that day either by telephone or a note sent home with the victim. The parents should be reassured that the report is being investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

If the victim and alleged bully/bullies are in the same tutor group, the tutor will hopefully be able to resolve the matter. However, the tutor can call upon senior staff or a member of the pastoral team for assistance in handling the situation.

Written statements may need to be taken from the victim and any witnesses to the bullying incident. When in no doubt that bullying has taken place, details of the case will be passed on to the DHT Pastoral for monitoring purposes.

Actions

The school will not respond to all incidents of bullying in the same way. In cases where intervention is early and no physical violence is involved, we recognise that the most important outcome is that the bullying should stop. Therefore, in such cases we may adopt a “**No Blame Approach**”. A member of the pastoral team will meet with the victim and the bully separately initially in order that the bully can realise the anguish and upset that has been caused. If the bully wishes to change their behaviour then, in agreement with the victim, support will be given to resolve the problem in terms of a restorative meeting.

In cases of more severe incidents, those where physical aggression is involved or repeated incidents of bullying behaviour by the same person, then sanctions within the school's behaviour policy will be dispensed and parents of the bully will be informed.

In extreme cases of physical and/or psychological assault, bullying behaviour can become criminal and should be reported to the police. Following sanctions it is the expectation that the bullying will stop. If further bullying or retaliation occurs then the following actions will be taken:

- Further punishment - isolation from other students particularly during social time
- A pastoral support programme (PSP) put in place which may include mentoring or counselling support from a trained counsellor or from an outside agency
- Fixed term exclusion
- Involvement of School Liaison Police Officer which may result in the development of an Anti-Social Behaviour Agreement and Anti-Social Behaviour Contract
- Permanent exclusion

Help, Advice and Support

Support for the Victim

- We undertake to provide support for our students by taking their concerns seriously and by dealing with the problem quickly and sensitively
- We shall try to gain support for the bullied person from friends and classmates.
- We shall inform the bullied person and their parents about the actions taken.
- We shall give advice as to what to do if there is a further incident.
- We offer counselling support if needed or requested.

Support for the Bully

- The school believes that bullying is totally unacceptable
- We recognise that it does occur and that students who bully do so for different reasons
- Bullies often have low self-esteem and are, or have been, bullied themselves.
- It is vital that everyone recognises that it is the “**bullying behaviour**” and **not the student** that the school will not tolerate.
- We are committed to providing any support necessary to provide the bully with the skills needed to build lasting and meaningful friendships.

Monitoring and evaluating the arrangements

The DHT (Pastoral) will monitor and evaluate the arrangements in two ways:

1. **via the Bullying Incident Reports:** This will yield information such as: who are the bullies, who are the victims, what are the total numbers of each across the school and within year groups.
2. **via a regular questionnaire or review:** Students will be asked to complete a questionnaire, or review the arrangements to inform the school of its effectiveness. The arrangements will be reviewed annually.

Education

Fort Pitt Grammar School has an established PSHEE programme. Within the programme, bullying is a topic that is covered in different year groups. The PSHEE programme does have the flexibility to deal with aspects of bullying as and when the need arises, either within a year or learning group. To reinforce with students that such actions are unacceptable, bullying is also a theme for either whole school or year group assemblies.

The Anti-bullying Email Facility

(address: antibullying@fortpitt.medway.sch.uk)

Students or parents may use this facility if they do not wish to speak to someone directly about a bullying incident. If an incident is reported in this way, it is dealt with as a report made by telephone or letter or directly to a member of staff.

Responding to incidents of bullying reported by parents

We recognise that such reports need to be dealt with as quickly as possible to allay the fears of the parent.

Therefore, the following procedures will be adopted:

1. Telephone call noted by office staff who inform the parent that a response will be given as soon as possible but definitely on the same day as the request.
2. Message passed to the pastoral team or Head of Sixth Form who will ring the parent immediately to take details of the problem and to reassure that an investigation is underway.
3. The Form Tutor may become involved; this will depend on the severity of the situation.
4. Statements will be collected from the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses.
5. Appropriate action will occur based on information gathered and further investigation.
6. Contact made with parents as soon as situation has been investigated and resolved (may need "interim" calls if investigations are lengthy).
7. The DHT (Pastoral) is informed of outcome.

Advice to Staff

We ourselves should:

- set an example of good relationships
- make clear that aggression is unacceptable and intervene early
- be on time for lessons, so that no bullying takes place while the students are waiting
- demonstrate caring, empathetic and respectful behaviour
- watch for signs of distress in our students – deterioration in work, isolation, a desire to be always near adults. Erratic attendance, although possibly symptomatic of other problems, may be signs that a student is suffering at the hands of a bully.
- if a student confides in you concerning a bullying incident, please be sympathetic, listen carefully and make a record of the reported incident. They will probably have chosen you because they trust you.
- offer the victim support and help by putting the school's procedures into operation
- while on duty, or while moving between lessons, please visit places within the site where bullying may take place. Your presence reassures the students.
- in terms of sanctions against bullying and acts of violence, the school's procedures as outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy are to be followed

Advice to Students

Unfortunately, bullying takes place in all schools and in work places. It can happen to children and adults. Bullies only prosper where there is a culture of silence and fear.

We are a “speaking out” school where bullies will not be tolerated or prosper. They will be exposed because people will tell. Bullies only thrive when they know that their actions will go unreported.

Act: do not remain silent. Report what you see.

- Leave the scene immediately and tell a member of staff/older student
- Do not tolerate bullies in your circle of friends or social groups. Bullies will soon stop if they are made aware that **their** friends think that they are acting badly.
- If you are bullied, there is nothing wrong with you. The bully is in the wrong.
- Don't fight back. It could make matters worse. Get your friends to support you
- Make use of our peer and cyber mentors and other senior students in your form