



### 3.3 Anti-Bullying Policy

The following policy covers all pupils throughout the school (Senior School, Junior School and Willow Lodge) and follows the recommendations contained within the Children Act 2004, The Equality Act 2010 and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. It also follows guidance given in Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (2017) and Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff (2014). In addition, it also follows guidance from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) and Cheshire West and Chester's Anti-Bullying strategy.

**The Anti-bullying procedures are reviewed annually in discussion with pupil representatives.**

#### Definition of bullying

**Bullying is defined as actions, behaviour or words that are repeated over time and intentionally hurt another pupil or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs or email).**

#### Aims

The school community:

- Discusses, monitors and reviews the anti-bullying policy on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- Ensures that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that students feel safe to learn; and that students abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Reports back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere.
- There can be no place in the school for persistent bullies.

#### Objective

It is recognised that bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being and it is also a main concern of pupils.

Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery; it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives.

Bullying is a very emotive subject and it is important to be realistic. Human beings are not always kind, gentle, warm-hearted and generous to each other and from time to time students may act in an unthinking manner.

Central to the school's policy on dealing with bullying is the basic principle that whenever a case is reported it is always taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

- 3.3.1 All bullying, including racial, religious, cultural, sexual / sexist, homophobic, disability and online bullying (including sexting) is unacceptable.
- 3.3.2 Bullying may involve physical attack, verbal intimidation or emotional victimisation. This may include communicating hurtful things about someone or it may involve ignoring or excluding another person.
- 3.3.3 Online bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself. This includes use of web sites and email. It may involve the use of mobile devices and include the sending or posting of images as well as text or voice messages.
- 3.3.4 The Headmaster will use the powers, when necessary, specifically granted in section 89(5) Education and Inspections Act 2006 when dealing with issues of online bullying carried out by pupils even when they are not in school.
- 3.3.5 Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils 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 pupil to put right the harm they have caused.
- 3.3.6 The Senior Tutor holds a centralised record of incidents of bullying in the senior school and the Deputy Head in the Junior School.
- 3.3.7 A culture intolerant of bullying is actively promoted throughout the school and specifically as a matter for discussion during tutor periods and PSHE lessons as well as in assemblies. National Anti-Bullying week is used as an additional point of focus.
- 3.3.8 Pupils are encouraged to report any bullying activity that they see, to actively support the pupil being bullied and to show their disapproval of such behaviour by not becoming a passive by-stander. Pupil voice is important and all pastoral leads encourage pupils to behave with tolerance and care.
- 3.3.9 Online safety is promoted throughout the school via ICT lessons and PSHE lessons as well as in the pastoral programme. National Safer Internet Day is used as a focus for both raising awareness and review of current guidance.
- 3.3.10 Victims are encouraged to report bullying since bullying that is not reported cannot be acted upon.
- 3.3.11 Guidelines concerning bullying are published below, as well as in the Staff Handbook; the Student Handbook in the Senior School; and on Form notice boards in the Junior School. They are available to parents via the Firefly parent portal.
- 3.3.12 The school uses general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure that staff are aware of the anti-bullying policy and follow the agreed procedures. Where specific training needs have been identified for particular members of staff, the Head Teacher ensures that those members of staff have access to the advice, training and development opportunities appropriate to their needs.
- 3.3.13 It is recognised that bullying behaviour may at times be difficult to identify. The school shall endeavour to differentiate between sociable (play) and unsociable (bullying) behaviours as outlined in the objectives.
- 3.3.14 A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- 3.3.15 All staff are provided with the relevant *Staff Guide to the Anti-Bullying Policy* (attached below)
- 3.3.16 Guidance to staff, parents and pupils regarding anti-bullying procedures are included in the Student Handbook.

## **Staff guidelines**

The most difficult aspect of handling the bullying problem is the initial action involved in discovering and/or reporting the matter. Many victims are reluctant to come forward for a variety of reasons, including fear of the consequences, loss of face and even a desire to protect the bully, who in certain instances may be perceived as a friend of the victim.

All cases of suspected or reported bullying must be investigated, which may entail following up rumour or hearsay. This may in the first instance be carried out by the Tutor, or another member of staff trusted by the pupil. Members of the pastoral management will be available for support and preliminary guidance.

Irrespective of who has been the recipient of the victim's initial confidence, there is an agreed basic procedure. It is important to take the matter seriously and to follow the guidelines sensitively and carefully in order to build trust. A written account of what has happened must be kept and saved in a pupil's notes on ISAMS (this account may be written up later).

Once a pupil has reported that they are being bullied it is important the information is conveyed to all parties concerned. In the senior school these include the Tutor, the Head of House, the Senior Tutor and Deputy Head Pastoral. In the Junior School these include the Form Teacher, the Deputy Head and the Head of Junior School/Willow Lodge. In the first instance the Tutor will enter the information on ISAMS, whilst Heads of House and the Senior Tutor (Senior School), or the Deputy Head (Junior School) will need to update the information records which they are responsible for.

It is important that the parents of those being bullied and the individuals accused of bullying are kept informed.

The response to bullying must be supportive and the choice of action remains, in the first place, with the victim.

Listen to the problem and offer support. Caution is required because the whole truth is not always forthcoming in the first instance. (If subsequent actions taken are based on what amount to half-truths this can serve only to exacerbate the situation.)

The victim may wish for confidence, particularly from other pupils at this stage, since talking is often enough to help and the situation may resolve itself.

Reassure the pupil that, in telling someone, the correct thing has been done and remind the victim of the advice given in the pupil guidelines.

Ask the pupil to see you again after an agreed time to assess the situation. If the problem does not resolve itself, then further action may be needed.

The problem must then be discussed with an appropriate member of the pastoral management before further action is taken. This may involve alerting staff to the problem; informing parents; speaking to a tutor group, teaching class or even a year group; seeing pupils as necessary with appropriate advice; and possible sanctions.

Sanctions will be used as punishment for bullying when it involves: physical injury; bullying in a public place; online bullying; bullying which inflicts emotional harm; repeated bullying.

Whatever the response it is important to continue to monitor the situation and continue to speak to and support the victim. This monitoring should last a period of seven weeks and involve at least three points of contact: an immediate follow up to the complaint against the individual accused of bullying; a mid-term review; a final review to ensure the issues have been resolved and that all parties can move forward.

A structured programme for the re-education of those who bully should be followed. The Head of House (Senior School) and the Deputy Head (Junior School) should look to draw up a mutually agreed

student contract of behaviour with the individual accused of bullying to indicate our expectations of them.

### **Student guidelines**

If you are being bullied, try to calmly stand up for yourself and ask them to stop their behaviour, or if you are being ignored or excluded, look for ways to be pleasant and friendly to the person or to the individual members of the group. It may be very difficult to do these things.

If you do not receive a positive response, or you do not feel that you can challenge such behaviour, simply tell someone you trust. This might be someone in your family, a teacher, a sixth former, or a friend. Remember just talking to someone may help you to cope and the problem may be resolved.

If you tell a teacher, they will listen to you and offer support. The teacher can also try to defuse the situation and so hopefully stop the bullying. The teacher will see you again to assess the situation and give you advice. There are many ways in which the teacher can act to support you and these will be discussed.

If you report a case of bullying, your Tutor (Senior School) Form Teacher (Junior School) will initiate a process to monitor your situation. The Tutors, Form Teachers and other members of staff are there to support you. If after a period of time when the situation has been assessed and it does not appear to have been resolved, it may be necessary for staff to take further action. This will involve communication with additional staff and may lead to: informing parents; speaking to a tutor group, teaching class (Senior School), Form group (Junior School) or even a year group; seeing pupils as necessary with appropriate advice; possible sanctions. No action will be taken without consultation

The guidance that is given to staff is given below.

If someone tells you that you are causing them upset, accept what you have done and apologise. Do not look to make excuses or deny the impact of your actions. A culture of acceptance and empathy is preferable to one of fear and retribution.

*If you witness bullying you are advised to comfort and support the victim; tell somebody in authority, e.g. a teacher, what you have seen; encourage the victim to talk to someone and remind him or her of these guidelines and if they are in a group where one member is bullying, you should show others that you disapprove, because by doing nothing you support the bully.*

If you are subjected to online bullying specific guidance is available. (See *Advice to Pupils Regarding Online Bullying*)

### **Parental guidelines**

Listen carefully to your child. They need their difficulty to be recognised.

Contact your child's Tutor (Senior School) or Form Teacher (Junior School). We will try to rectify matters, but we can only begin to do so once we know about them. We will listen carefully and make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously and investigated as a matter of urgency. However, such matters may take time to sort out. We will not pass immediate judgement, not least because

interviews with the victim and bully may reveal that the situation is more complex than first appeared.

We will ensure contact with you, either to report back to you if you had originally alerted us, or to alert you of a situation involving your child of which you may not have been aware

Pupils can report an instance of bullying to any member of staff. Tutors, Heads of House and senior pastoral staff are key figures in the reporting of any issues. In the Junior School, Form Teachers and the Deputy Head are the central members of staff in such situations. If individuals in the Senior School would prefer to email a member of staff with their concerns they are welcome to do so. In the Senior School where an individual finds it difficult to speak with a member of staff they may wish to avail themselves of the Peer Mentor meeting request icon on their Firefly home page. This will initiate contact with a Sixth Form peer mentor.



## Senior School Staff Guide to the Anti-Bullying Policy

The King's School is committed to providing a safe environment for all its students where everyone can feel secure.

The purpose of this guide is to provide an easily accessible document covering the key principles of the Anti-Bullying Policy for staff. The policy is published on the school's website and is reviewed annually in consultation with students.

### DEFINITION AND KEY STATEMENTS

**Bullying is defined as actions, behaviour or words that are repeated over time and intentionally hurt another pupil or group physically or emotionally.** It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs or email).

Whilst isolated incidents of unkind behaviour between students do not necessarily constitute bullying *per se* they should never be tolerated when witnessed by staff.

Bullying and associated issues of well-being are among the top concerns of children, young people and parents. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; and destroys their sense of security.

King's takes bullying very seriously and all members of the school community have a shared responsibility to ensure that bullying is not tolerated in any way. If a student is bullied or feels bullied, that student must feel confident that they are listened to, supported and that appropriate action will be taken to resolve concerns.

**Central to the school's policy on dealing with bullying is the basic principle that whenever a case of bullying is reported it is always investigated and taken seriously with appropriate action.**

### GENERAL GUIDANCE

All cases of suspected or reported bullying must be taken seriously and investigated, even if based on rumour or hearsay.

Many victims of bullying are reluctant to come forward for a variety of reasons, particularly where they are concerned it may make the situation worse. **It is therefore always vital to listen to the problem sensitively and offer support.**

The victim should always be allowed to feel that they are in control of this process though one should avoid expressly agreeing with the victim as it is likely they are providing only their view of a situation at this stage.

## PROCEDURE

- Ask the student to explain their concern in full, including the involvement of other students and any students and staff who may have witnessed any relevant actions or behaviours. All information should be written down at this stage.
- Reassure the student that they are doing the right thing by talking to someone and that other students will not be spoken to in the first instance.
- Having listened to the student and provided immediate support and advice, in some cases it may be appropriate to ask them to see you again after an agreed time to re-assess the situation to see if the concern has been resolved. If it has not been resolved or if the initial concern was a significant one the following steps should be taken.
- Report the concern to the student's Form Tutor and Head of House as soon as reasonably possible and discuss as appropriate. The Head of House may choose to inform the Senior Tutor and/or Deputy Head (Pastoral) at this stage.
- It is likely that an investigation will be required at this stage by the Form Tutor or Head of House which, with the agreement of the victim, will probably involve other students (instigators and witnesses) being spoken to. Parents should generally be informed of the situation at this stage.
- The investigation may lead to further actions such as dealing with the instigators (sanctions applied as necessary), alerting staff to the problem and further support/advice to the victim. Parents should be updated at this stage.
- All bullying matters, including actions taken, must be recorded by on the pupil's profile on ISAMS. The Senior Tutor must also be informed separately.
- The situation should be monitored thereafter with ongoing support provided to the victim as necessary. The Form Tutor should review the situation at a later date (within half a term at least) with the victim and parents to ensure that the concern has been resolved.

## ADVICE TO PUPILS REGARDING ONLINE BULLYING

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website, can be really upsetting. This code gives you seven important tips to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in online bullying, and advice on to how to report it when it does happen.

### **Always respect others**

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of bullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.

### **Think before you send**

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else, or before you post information on a website. Remember that this can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Once you post some text or a picture you have no control over its future use.

### **Be careful with your passwords**

Don't let anyone know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you.

### **Don't retaliate or reply**

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

### **Block the Bully**

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features.

### **Save the evidence**

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by your school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the bullying.

### **Make sure you tell**

You have a right not to be harassed and bullied online. There are people who can help.

- Tell an adult you trust who can help you to report it to the right place.
- Tell the school. Your Tutor, your Head of House or the Senior Tutor can support you and can discipline the person bullying you.
- Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile-phone operator or social-network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.

**Finally, don't just stand there.**

If you see online bullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying by speaking to an adult or by emailing [concerns@kingschester.co.uk](mailto:concerns@kingschester.co.uk)

**How would you feel if no one stood up for you?**