

### 3. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*This policy forms part of our Pupil Care Policy (please see full list of policies on the website).*

#### 3.2 Anti-Bullying (Ref: ISI handbook, part 3; ISSR 10)

The following policy follows the recommendations contained within the Children Act 2004 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It also follows guidance given in Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools and Preventing and tackling bullying (2014). In addition it also follows guidance from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) and Cheshire West and Chester's Anti-Bullying strategy. [Also see Policy 1. Admissions, Equal Opportunities Policy]

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

#### Aims

The school community;

- Discusses, monitors and reviews the anti-bullying policy on a regular basis. The policy is reviewed with pupils every year (Last reviewed November 2015)
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- Ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils 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.

#### Objectives

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 children and young people themselves. 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.

The School takes bullying very seriously and all members of the school community have a shared responsibility to ensure that bullying is not a part of school life. The damage done and misery caused by bullying, physical, verbal or via digital media, can be very great indeed. No-one should have to suffer the pain, humiliation and distress that bullying can bring. Bullying must not be tolerated and should always involve considered action.

An important part of growing up is to learn how to cope with adversity and individuals cannot be sheltered from all the problems that they may encounter. The atmosphere of the school must be such that, if a pupil is bullied or feels bullied, that pupil must feel confident that support will be given and steps will be taken to deal with the problem. In many cases both parties may feel justly aggrieved. As well as confronting the bully with the consequences of their actions, other steps may include teaching the victim how to modify behaviour that may actually provoke a hostile response and also to reflect on their emotional response to bullying so that they feel more empowered.

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. Tempers inevitably become frayed from time to time and pupils may act in an unthinking manner. That said, 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.

- 3.2.1 All bullying, including racial, religious, cultural, sexual / sexist, homophobic, disability and online bullying, is deliberate behaviour by an individual or group that is perceived by the victim

- as an attempt to hurt, frighten, intimidate, threaten or undermine, particularly if the behaviour is repeated or persistent. Bullying in any form is unacceptable.
- 3.2.2 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.
- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 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.
- 3.2.5 Sanctions for bullying [Appendix 5a] 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. Heads of Years and the Deputy Head (pastoral) hold centralised records of incidents of bullying. There can be no place in the school for persistent bullies.
- 3.2.6 A culture intolerant of bullying will be actively promoted throughout the school and specifically as a matter for discussion during tutor periods and PSHE lessons as well as in year-group assemblies. National Anti-Bullying week is used as an additional point of focus. Online safety is promoted throughout the school via ICT lessons and PSHE lessons as well as in the pastoral programme. [Appendices 6 and 7]
- 3.2.7 Victims are encouraged to report bullying since bullying that is not reported cannot be acted upon.
- 3.2.8 Guidelines concerning bullying are published in the Staff Handbook; the Student Handbook in the Senior School; and on form notice boards in the Junior School. They are also available to parents via the school website.
- 3.2.9 The school reviews general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development and identify how to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school. 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.
- 3.2.10 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.
- 3.2.11 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. It must also be recognised that peer bullying is an example of an abusive relationship and will be treated as a Child Protection concern if it is believed that the child may suffer significant harm. (3.1.17)  
 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 (this account may be written up later).  
 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. [Confidentiality Parents policy 6]  
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.

Whatever the response it is important to continue to monitor the situation and continue to speak to and support the victim.

### 3.2.12 Student guidelines:

If you are being bullied you are advised to; ignore the bullies, walk away and not let them see that you are upset; calmly stand up for yourself and ask them to stop their behaviour or if they 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 so you should ask for help.

You are advised to tell someone you trust. This might be a friend, a family member, a sixth former, a member of staff. Just talking to someone may help them to cope and the problem may be resolved.

It is also suggested that if you tell a teacher; they will listen to you and offer support. They 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.

**No action will be taken without your agreement and understanding at this stage.** However it must also be recognised that peer bullying is an example of an abusive relationship and will be treated as a Child Protection concern if it is believed that you may suffer significant harm.

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

If you are subjected to online bullying specific guidance is available. [Appendix 7]

### 3.2.13 Parental guidelines:

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

Contact your child's Tutor or Head of Year. 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.