

Anti-bullying policy

Introduction

Fortismere School does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. We believe that all of us are equal and should be enabled to achieve success. In order to achieve this, we have the right to work in an environment in which we feel valued, respected and safe. Bullying deprives us of this right and denies access to a full education. More seriously, bullying can have destructive long-term effects on its victims. It may also have a negative effect on achievement; preventing us from reaching our potential and succeeding. This may apply both to the bully and to the student who has been bullied.

There is no hierarchy of bullying - all cases will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning policy.

The aim of this policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The policy also aims to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs.

All members of the school community, including Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the school policy on bullying.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention. Reports of bullying will always be taken seriously.

This policy is available on the school website and the shared staff area on the school network. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy
- Wellbeing/RS Schemes of Work

This policy has been written in line with advice and guidance in:

- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, 2014. Dept for Education
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, Oct 2014. Dept for Education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2016. Dept for Education

All available to download at www.gov.uk

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Pupils feel safe and supported and able to report any incidents concerning themselves or others.
- Parents/carers feel safe and able to contact the school to express their concerns
- School staff feel safe and enabled to discuss any concerns and to know they are not acting in isolation.
- All adults feel supported that appropriate action will be taken by Senior Leadership and the Governing Body.
- Bullying is dealt with immediately and effectively.

2. Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually but not exclusively repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally. It is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and it is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable bullying behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault
- Racist, sexist, homophobic abuse
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail (please refer to the E-safety Policy)
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours
- Campaigning to cause emotional distress
- Sexual harassment
- Stealing others' property or taking money
- Threatening behaviour
- Taunting in front of an audience/humiliation
- Provoking or 'winding up.'
- Giving 'dirty looks.'
- Spreading rumours
- Making personal comments

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but it may also be hidden and subtle.

Specific types of bullying include bullying related to race, religion or culture, gender or sexual orientation, special educational needs or disability. The School has a legal duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will act to prevent and deal with any incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation of members of the school community.

3. The effects of bullying

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is one of major concerns that parents have about their child's safety and well-being, both at school and while travelling to/from school. Bullying is also a primary concern among 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

students' attendance and attainment at school, it marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people. It can be psychologically damaging and, at worst, it has been a factor in young suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may also need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victims. All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Students are educated through Wellbeing, assemblies, and the wider curriculum to raise awareness of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice.

The school will use the college pastoral system and where appropriate, engage with external agencies to support the victims of bullying and those who have bullied others.

There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff feel that a criminal offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

4. Where bullying can take place

Bullying can happen at any time and in any number of places, both in school and out of school. This is a major reason why all members of the school community have to be involved and committed to the whole school approach to this issue. Some of the most common danger areas or times are:

- Playground, field and walkway
- Corridors and toilets
- Canteen
- The journey to and from school
- Cyber bullying at any time

Regardless of where it occurs, students and their parents/carers need to know that their concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with in a consistent manner, whoever they report it to.

There may be occasions when a victim of bullying does not want to name those involved. In these circumstances the school, without putting undue pressure on the student who had been bullied, will use the college pastoral system to try and address the situation.

5. Communicating with parents/carers

The school will contact parents and carers if they become aware that a student is being bullied or engaging in bullying behaviour towards others.

6. Confidentiality

The school will ensure that all staff will assure students that any disclosure of bullying is treated in confidence and that sharing of that information is with the student's agreement, except in circumstances where there is any implication of a child protection issue. Students will always be made aware of our responsibility to refer safeguarding concerns to a Child Protection Officer if this situation arises.

All members of the community will treat any information and disclosure that is brought to them with care and sensitivity to all individuals involved.

7. Fortismere Anti-bullying procedures

7.1 What to look for:

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy or nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work, lack of concentration or truanting. Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying; legal responsibilities are known and community members should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with the policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, most people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on fail to take action.

7.2 What to do:

The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action should be taken if incidents arise.

If you are the victim?

1. If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think what they are doing is wrong.
2. Share your feelings with someone else.
3. If possible talk to a member of Staff who you trust about the incident. This is mostly likely to be your VT tutor but may be a subject teacher or your Head of College. You may have a particular teacher you feel most comfortable talking to. You may prefer to talk to one of our learning mentors or counsellors. They may well be able to advise you on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can. There are also people outside the School who would be willing to help you.

Childline	Call 0800 11 11 www.childline.org.uk
Anti-bullying Alliance	www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/chidren-young-people
'The Place to Be' school counselling service	Students can self-refer to 'The Place to Be' school counselling services in the student referral boxes in both North and South wing receptions

If you are a student that witnesses bullying?

1. Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
2. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
3. Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Head of College or Tutor on their behalf.

If you are the parent of a student who has been bullied?

1. Listen to your child and talk to them about the situation. Make it clear to them that they should not be tolerating this type of behaviour.
2. Talk to them about what can be done to deal with the situation. Decide with them if this is something that they can deal with themselves or whether it would be best to involve someone who can help resolve the situation.
3. If you feel that the situation needs the school's intervention to achieve resolution contact a member of staff at the school who your child has a positive relationship with.

This is likely to be their tutor, a Head of college or a Learning Mentor. The pastoral school team expect to help support students with these types of worries. They will be able to advise on appropriate measures to support your child and resolve the situation.

Procedure for Staff who witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to them

1. Reassure and support the student involved.
2. Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of their college team. (Form Tutor, Head of College, a member of SLT).
3. Inform an appropriate member of the college team as soon as possible.

7.3 What will happen?

The member of staff who is supporting a student who is a victim of bullying will contact their parents to inform them of the situation.

The student who has reported bullying will have a conversation with either their Form Tutor or Head of College, on their own, and be asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. They will be given support and advice and counselling will be suggested if deemed appropriate. This type of conversation is, in our experience the most effective way to approach this type of incident and find a solution that will improve the situation

Once the Tutor and Head of College are clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be spoken to individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. They will seek to get as much corroborating evidence as possible. This may be from witnesses, social media or CCTV.

Details of the incident may be recorded in students' files. In the first instance, and depending on the severity of the case, usually the tutor, Head of College or Senior Teacher will interview the student(s) whose behaviour has caused distress and give them a warning, making it clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered to be further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. They will be referred to this policy. Support and counselling may be offered. An appropriate consequence may also be given.

A range of responses organised to support a student who has reported that they have been bullied. This may include:

- Heads of college, form tutors or learning mentors may organise a group intervention response. This may involve a group discussion between the students involved to air the concerns and address the behaviours that have occurred.
- School might insist on an apology (written or verbal) from the bully.
- School may engage a group of parents to come in and discuss cases with a view to ensuring that issues are dealt with.

If the Head of College decides it is appropriate, or it is a repeated bullying offence, an Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will become involved. The following sanctions may be applied in accordance with the school Behaviour policy.

- **C4:** the Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will speak to the student/s involved and will contact the parents/carers giving details of the offence and will notify them of the severity of our concerns and the need for the student to spend a day in isolation to reflect on their behaviour. Specific work around bullying will be followed as part of the C4 curriculum.

- **Exclusion** at the Headteachers' discretion (according to the school Behaviour policy page 9, 'Harassment or intimidation of a member of staff or student at school or off site')
- **Permanent Exclusion** at the Headteachers' discretion (according to the school Behaviour Policy page 10, 'Persistent serious bullying' may result in permanent exclusion)

In very serious cases, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm, the incident is treated as a child protection (CP) concern and it will be necessary to make a report to Social Services or the Police.

8. Prevention strategies

The School will raise the awareness of staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. Key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on school notice boards and will be discussed with students during Tutor led sessions and through assemblies. It will also be revisited as necessary during wellbeing sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama or physical education. Student leaders and ambassadors have a clear focus on anti-bullying as part of their remit and will provide leadership and peer support in school.

Examples from the following list demonstrate our strategy for the implementation of this policy. These are activities that take place in our calendar or are due to take place. This section of the policy is updated annually to reflect current practice.

- Anti-bullying focus week in November which includes awareness assemblies
- Peer counselling and mediation
- School counsellors available through pastoral staff
- Year 7 lunchtime space in North Wing
- A range of extra-curricular clubs to provide a supportive environment for students who feel vulnerable
- Signage and posters – 'What to do' and 'Where to go' posters
- Student leadership team providing opportunities for discussion
- Student Ambassador 'Team London Young Leaders' part of a Haringey-wide project on anti-bullying – feedback sessions and assemblies
- Cross-curricular activities in wellbeing and other subject areas
- Regular communication with parents

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee and agreed by the full Governing body

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Responsibility	Zoe Judge and Karen Allaway