

# ANTI BULLYING POLICY

## 1. Statement of Intent

Our school community is based upon honour, pride, respect and wisdom. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our students can develop his/her full potential. We expect all members of our school community to treat each other with courtesy and cooperation so that the school can operate in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

The School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they cooperate closely together. We expect all families to accept this policy.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our students and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Management Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

## 2. Links

This policy should be read in conjunction with school policies and rules relating to child protection, behaviour, ICT and mobile phones.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the school's Anti Bullying Policy are:

- a) To clarify for students, parents and staff that bullying is always unacceptable.
- b) To ensure that every student has the right to be safe and happy in the school, and to be protected when he/she is feeling vulnerable.
- c) To create an atmosphere where students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and be believed, and that action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concerns.
- d) To make clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate, and to the bully that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress.
- e) To resolve problems through a variety of methods.

## 4. Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional and targeted hurting, harming or humiliating of another person usually over a period of time. It can take the form of racial, regional, religious, cultural,

sexual, sexist, homophobic or disability related bullying. It could involve physical (including sexual intimidation, or bullying by verbal, cyber (including social websites, chat rooms, email, e-photographs, mobile phones and text messages), or emotional means (for example by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences which we always treat very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's social and moral principles and the code of conduct.

## **5. Signs of Bullying**

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student is being bullied include:

- a) Unwillingness to return to school.
- b) Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- c) Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others.
- d) Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged.
- e) Asking for money or stealing money (to pay the bully).
- f) Torn clothes.
- g) Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary, or stopping eating).
- h) Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence.
- i) Frequent visits to the school nurse with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches.
- j) Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- k) Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to lessons.
- l) Choosing the company of adults.
- m) Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- n) Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares.
- o) Talking of (or attempting) suicide or running away.
- p) Giving implausible excuses to explain any of the above.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of, these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

## **6. Prevention of Bullying**

Our first priority is to educate students in the seriousness of bullying with the aim of preventing it from happening in the first place. Our programme of education promotes an awareness of the psychological damage that bullying can cause to students (including suicide), and reminds students about the possible sanctions that can be imposed for bullying. Our programme includes:

- a) Lessons delivered through the PSHE scheme, which is structured to give students an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells students whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another student is being bullied.
- b) Appropriate assemblies, which are used to reinforce our Anti Bullying Policy.
- c) Other lessons within the curriculum that highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- d) Staff are always on duty at times when students are not in class and patrol the school site, paying particular attention to areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- e) The school recognises the importance of staff acting as exemplary role models at all times, being careful never to exhibit any indication of bullying in their dealings either with students or with each other.

## **7. Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying may be defined as the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

The school recognises that cyberbullying can involve social networking sites like Facebook, emails and mobile phones used for text messages and as cameras. In addition to the preventative measures described in section 6 above, St. Stephen's International School takes the following precautions to reduce the risk of cyberbullying in school:

- a) All students are expected to adhere to the Computer Network Agreement. Certain sites are blocked by a filtering system and the ICT Department monitors students' use.
- b) Sanctions may be imposed for misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet.
- c) Guidance is provided on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying.
- d) Guidance is provided on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- e) All students are expected to adhere to the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, which includes the use of cameras on mobile phones, and other school rules related to the use of electronic devices.

## **8. Procedure for Reporting Bullying**

- a) All our students are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- b) Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations.
- c) All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. The school always monitors reported incidents. Records are kept so that patterns may be identified.
- d) The school reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our students.

## **9. Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying**

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- a) The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- b) He/she will inform either the appropriate Key Stage Manager or a senior member of staff as soon as possible.
- c) The victim will be interviewed individually and asked to write an account of events. (In the case of very young children a written record of the interview will be made by the interviewer).
- d) The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, and any independent witnesses, will be also interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. (Again, in the case of very young children the account may be written by the interviewer).
- e) The incident will be recorded.
- f) All relevant staff will be informed. In serious incidents the Principal will be informed.
- g) After the incident has been investigated, the victim will be interviewed by their Key Stage Manager, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- h) The alleged bully will also be interviewed by their Key Stage Manager, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- i) The parents/guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support will be sought. A way forward, including any disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be confirmed.
- j) This procedure will recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for students who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- k) At staff discretion, a meeting led by staff and involving all the parties will be convened to agree a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- l) A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- m) It is the policy of the School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures. However, in very serious or persistent cases, including those where a criminal prosecution is possible, and only after the Principal has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to any relevant outside agencies..

## **10. Sources of Help and Advice**

- a) In the Secondary School there is a strong and experienced pastoral team of Key Stage Managers who support the Pastoral Leader. In the Primary School strong pastoral care is provided by class teachers who support the Head of Primary and Assistant Head (Pastoral).
- b) All staff are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- c) The pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow up work with both victims and bullies.

- d) Feedback is welcomed from members of the school community on the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **11. Further Advice to Students**

Treat those around you with respect and consideration. Witnessing bullying and doing nothing suggests support for the bullying. If you do witness someone you know bullying another student you should try to make clear to the bully that you disagree with his/her actions. We all have a responsibility to make sure that bullying is not allowed to continue in the School.

### **12. Further Advice to Parents**

If you think your child is being bullied, or is involved in bullying in some way, please let the School know straight away. Talk to your children about the subject. Let them know you will be supportive and encourage them to confide in you. Reassure your child that the School will deal with the matter sensitively.

**SMT**

**September 2022**