

Weald of Kent Grammar School

Anti-Bullying Policy - 2022

This policy is based on DfE guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017 and the model policy supplied by Kent County Council. It has been produced in consultation with students of the school. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” and DfE Guidance on ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’. This policy is further supported by the school’s:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy, including Acceptable User Policy Agreement
- Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Furthermore, there are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989

The School Council have produced a student version of this policy that is displayed around the school.

1. Aims

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We strive to create an open atmosphere of mutual respect in which bullying behaviour is unnecessary and unacceptable. Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students.

This policy outlines what the school will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. The school is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

2. Definitions

Bullying can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017).

Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of peer on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

Forms of bullying include:

- **Physical:** pushing, hitting, kicking, and threatening gestures; damaging or stealing property that belongs to someone else; violent behaviour and assault.
- **Verbal:** name calling, teasing, taunting, intimidating, humiliating, spreading malicious gossip, sexual harassment, racial abuse, homophobic and transphobic abuse.
- **Written:** text and email messages, notes spreading rumours.

- **Cyberbullying:** name calling, teasing, taunting, intimidating, humiliating, spreading malicious gossip, sexual harassment, racial abuse and homophobic and transphobic abuse on social media, on email, in 'chat' rooms and forums and online gaming sites.
- **Silent:** exclusion from group activities and conversations, rude gestures.

It is important in respect of this that students learn that one person's good-natured teasing may, to another person, be unkind and even cruel bullying. It is not necessarily the way the behaviour is intended, but the way that it is received that is important in identifying and tackling incidents of bullying.

Some young people are more likely to be bullied than others. These are recognised specific types of bullying:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture.
- Bullying related to SEN or disabilities.
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions.
- Bullying related to sexual orientation or gender.
- Bullying related to young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances.
- Sexist or sexual bullying.

Students may be bullied in relation to other aspects of their lives, for example:

- Students who are gifted and talented.
- Students who do not have English as a first language.
- Students who do not have a lot of friends.
- Students who are shy and sensitive.

It is important that all members of the school community can identify signs of bullying. Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and happiness, impact on their peers and the community. Common indicators of bullying can include:

- Changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous or withdrawn.
- Feigning illness, taking unusual absences or truanting from school.
- Clinging to adults.
- Evidence of changes in work patterns.
- Lacking concentration.
- Uncharacteristic aggression.
- Being excluded from groups both at social times and in the classroom.

3. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure this policy is adhered to in practice, and monitored through regular meetings with Senior Leadership.
- Review this policy annually.

The Headteacher will:

- Communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership group has been identified to take overall responsibility for it.
- Implement procedures to prevent bullying among students and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents/carers and students.

School Staff will:

- Support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.

- Be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy.
- Be approachable and listen carefully and without prejudice to students with concerns around bullying.
- Provide high quality tutoring and PSHCE lessons that promote welfare and wellbeing, positive relationships and friendships.

Students will:

- Follow the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and school values, showing tolerance, respect and kindness to other members of the school community.
- Know to report any bullying concerns immediately to a member of staff, and feel comfortable and confident in doing so.

Students who have been bullied will be reassured and supported in order to restore their self-esteem and confidence. This may be through:

- One-to-one meetings with the Form Tutor or other pastoral member of staff.
- Peer mentor counselling session.
- School counsellor referral.
- In rare exceptions, a change of form group will be agreed.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened to discover why the student became involved.
- Establishing any wrong doing and need to change.
- An ongoing and transparent dialogue with parents or carers to help change the attitude of the student.
- On occasion, we may recommend and refer to an external agency for support and guidance.

Parents and carers will:

- Ensure that they both understand this policy and support the school's approach to anti-bullying and pastoral care.
- Ensure that school staff are kept informed of any changes or incidents that occur outside of school that may impact on the behaviour and well-being of their child and recognise that confidentiality of this information will be recognised and respected in all incidences. Information-sharing will only take place to keep a child safe (for example, an external referral or to inform staff of certain instructions).
- Recognise that safeguarding procedures will be followed at school when there is a risk of harm to a young person.

Advice for students and parents about how to deal with bullying if it is happening to them or their child, or if they are witness to the bullying of another student can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Implementation of Anti-Bullying Policy

We employ both **pro-active** and **re-active** anti bullying strategies.

Pro-active includes assemblies, PSHCE lessons, form time activities, peer mentor activities, awareness raising during calendar events. Our Positive Behaviour Policy emphasises the importance of kindness. Our school values emphasise the importance of tolerance, individuality and respect. There is an expectation that all members of the school community, students and all staff treat one another with consideration and respect.

Annual staff safeguarding training reminds staff that they are role models for students and should set a good example of positive behaviour. They should ensure they do not misuse their power (i.e.

avoid sarcastic remarks, derogatory nicknames, dominating and humiliating behaviour) and that all rewards and sanctions should be implemented within school policy.

The school will work with students to tackle bullying in school, by:

- Involving students in policy writing and decision making
- Ensuring that students understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Regularly canvassing students' views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensuring that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensuring that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Utilising student voice in providing the above.
- Publicising the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites

Re-active strategies will be employed to tackle problems that arise from bullying and social interaction problems:

- No-blame meetings.
- Mediation.
- Peer Mentor scheme.
- Restorative justice
- Flexible curriculum planning for PSHCE to target issues as they are raised.
- Sanctions (also see Positive Behaviour Management Policy).

Dealing with Bullying incidents

All reports of bullying and alleged bullying are taken seriously. The first priority is to keep the 'victim' safe.

The first point of contact is often the Form Tutor. They will listen and then inform the relevant Heads of Year. The Head of Year will work appropriately with the Form Tutor, Student Services team or other staff to support those involved and keep all students safe.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head of Year.
- The Head of Year or another member of staff will meet with those concerned and may need to ask others who may have witnessed the incidents.
- Statements may be taken from students and staff.
- The student will be kept apprised of what action has been taken.
- In cases of more serious or persistent incidents parents/carers will be contacted.
- Where a student is at risk of harm, or harm has been caused, staff will follow the Safeguarding Policy and make a referral to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- All bullying is taken very seriously and the following disciplinary steps can be taken:
 - Official warnings to cease offending.
 - Meeting with parents and carers.
 - Setting a Behaviour Plan.
 - Exclusion from certain areas of school premises.
 - Exclusion from 'social time' with peers.
 - Isolation during the school day.
 - Suspension.
 - Permanent expulsion.

Staff will record all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying on a centrally-held document. Staff who lead on an investigation will record their actions and decision-making, including making a record of whether allegations are substantiated or unsubstantiated.

Staff will record details of all racial incidents, ensuring that parents/carers are informed of such incidents and of the action taken to deal with them. Bullying relating to race must be reported to the Headteacher immediately, as schools are required to investigate all allegations of racial incidents. The allegation can be made by the victim, perpetrator or any other person.

As an enhanced approach to record keeping, Weald of Kent will record all incidents of harassment or intimidation (bullying) relating to other protected characteristics, such as homophobic and transphobic, gender based or disability-based behaviour. These incidents will be reported to the Headteacher, and to the Board of Trustees in regular meetings with the Senior Leadership group.

5. Cyberbullying

Cyber bullying is any form of bullying which takes place online or through devices such as smartphones and tablets. The internet and social media have changed the way in which young people experience bullying.

There is a clear policy for the use of mobile phones and similar technologies that are often involved in incidents of bullying. Cyberbullying involving mobile phones or computers is treated as seriously as any other type of bullying with the additional concerns of child protection issues regarding the internet.

The appropriate use of technology in school is implemented not only to avoid bullying behaviour but to encourage effective and diplomatic communication between students. The school's Online Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy as well are robust in their acknowledgment of the dangers of Cyberbullying.

Further details can be found at Childnet <http://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools> and Internet Matters <https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/>

Signs that a student may be experiencing cyberbullying are as follows:

- Being emotionally upset during or after using the Internet or the phone.
- Being very secretive or protective of one's digital life and avoiding discussions about computer or mobile phone activities.
- Withdrawal from family members, friends, and activities.
- Avoiding school or group gatherings.
- A change in work attitude or grades.
- Change in behaviour such as "acting out" in anger at home or school.
- Changes in mood, behaviour, sleep, or appetite.
- Wanting to stop using the computer or phone.
- Being nervous or jumpy when getting an instant message, text, or email.

Cyberbullying can take many forms but includes the following:

- **Threats and intimidation:** can be sent by mobile phone, email, online games, via comments on websites, social networking sites or message boards. Threats can include violence, including sexual threats.
- **Harassment or stalking:** Repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages or making phone calls (including silent calls). This can also include using public forums or message boards, to repeatedly harass, or to post derogatory or defamatory statements. Tracking someone's activity and collecting information about them.

- **Vilification/defamation:** Posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual on line, or name calling, general insults and prejudice-based bullying, for example sexist, homophobic and racist messages. 'Slut-shaming' can be defined as the practice of attacking (primarily) girls and women on the grounds or perceived or fabricated transgressions or socially acceptable sexual behaviours.
- **Identity theft/unauthorised access and impersonation:** This covers cases where sites have been set up which make use of school logos and name, or using photographs of staff or students taken from the school website without permission.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - Looking at use of the school systems.
 - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses.
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
 - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
 - Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and also the school searching and confiscation policy. (Note: Schools should ensure they access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet Cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the schools powers are used proportionately and lawfully).
 - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the student responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of any students responsible, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
 - Advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply.
 - Providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists.
 - Helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

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Appendix 1 Advice for Students and Parents

What can students do if they are being bullied?

Students are encouraged to report bullying in schools. If unchallenged, students who bully others are unlikely to stop. Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon. If you are being bullied, follow these guidelines:

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Be proud of who you are, it is good to be individual.
- Try not to show the bully you are upset
- Stay with a group of other students if you can.
- Be assertive, let the perpetrator know that you believe you are being bullied, walk away confidently. Go straight to a member of staff.
- Share your fears with your parents.

What can students do if they know someone is being bullied?

Those who witness bullying often harbour the fear that it could happen to them next. It is, however, important that if you know that someone is being bullied you let a member of staff know it is happening.

What can a parent do if their child is being bullied?

It is extremely difficult for parents whose child is being bullied but the most important things to remember are:

- Listen carefully to your child.
- Encourage them to write down the incidents that have happened, where they happened and who, if anyone, saw them happening.
- Encourage them to report it to a member of staff. If they do not want to let the school know immediately that it is happening.
- Do not get involved directly and contact the students involved or parents of the perpetrator.

Appendix 2 Useful Links

DfE, 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff':

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying':

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Childline: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Childnet: www.childnet.com

Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk