

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring and friendly environment for all our students so that they can learn in a safe and secure manner. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, students and parents should feel that they can inform us of incidents with the confidence that these will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Objectives of this Policy

All governors, teaching and non teaching staff, students and parents understand:

- What bullying is
- What the school policy on bullying is
- How bullying incidents should be reported and followed up
- That as a school we take bullying very seriously and that bullying will not be tolerated.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is any act or omission which deliberately causes another person to feel physical or emotional pain and distress.

Bullying can come in a number of different forms although in reality, there are often a cross-over between different types of bullying. The main types of bullying are:

- **Emotional Bullying:** Being unfriendly; deliberately excluding someone from an activity; hiding things or behaving in a tormenting way.
- **Physical Bullying:** Any use of physical force or violence
- **Verbal Bullying:** The use of name calling; sarcasm; teasing; spreading rumours
- **Racist Bullying:** Treating someone differently because of their ethnic background; may include racist taunts; gestures and careless use of inappropriate language.
- **Sexual Bullying:** May include unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **Homophobic Bullying:** Bullying behaviours based on sexuality and prejudice about this.
- **Cyber Bullying:** Bullying behaviours that take place using modern technologies such as computers and mobile phones and often involve social networking sites such as Facebook and MSN.

It should be noted that here is a fine line between friendship disputes and bullying, with a large number of reported bullying incidents stemming from broken friendships. These incidents will be followed up in the same way as other bullying incidents.

Signs and Symptoms

We hope that any student that is being bullied will have the confidence to tell a parent, friend or a member of the school teaching/support staff.

In some cases, students may try and keep quiet about what they are experiencing. These students may exhibit certain behaviours that could provide a sign that things are not right. These include:

- A sudden desire not to go to school, perhaps making excuses and claiming more illnesses
- Fear over a certain aspect of school life, for example walking to or from school
- Changes in usual routine
- Appearing generally anxious, withdrawn or lacking in confidence
- Greater or less interest in school work
- Asking for more money; possessions that go missing
- Changes in eating or sleep patterns at home
- Becoming unreasonable, aggressive or attention seeking at home
- Unexplained physical marks

If parents are concerned that there is an unexplained change in their child's behaviour, happiness and general well-being, they should make contact with the school who will investigate further and offer appropriate action/support

Procedures

Please see the flow chart in Appendix 1.

In reality, there are many different types of bullying incident and staff will respond to each case differently. At all times the emphasis will be on:

- Respecting the feelings and fears of the victim/their families
- Taking all allegations seriously
- Carrying out thorough investigations which are sensitive to the demands of the situation
- Maintaining discretion and not putting students at any greater emotional risk
- Being as open and honest as possible about the outcomes that have been reached without breaching student confidentiality
- Offering support where it is needed

It should be recognised that whilst we will do everything within our power to successfully investigate and deal with bullying incidents, there are times where it may be one child's word against another. In these cases we will be as just and fair as we can be and will ensure that situations are closely monitored.

Prevention

We use a range of methods for helping students to prevent bullying. These include:

- Bullying Awareness Week: Year group focus on the types and impact of bullying
- Increased focus through PSHE and the wider curriculum on SEAL (The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning); discrete units within KS3 PSHE and Citizenship on Bullying and Conflict Resolution
- Regular assemblies about bullying and anti-social behaviours that can affect the well-being of other students
- Student involvement in Peer Mentoring Training Programmes
- Development of the Student Governing Body and, in particular, the Health and Well-Being Committee and the Behaviour Rewards and Sanctions Committee.
- Developing a culture whereby students do feel that they can report incidents to their Form Tutor/Head of Year/Inclusion Staff
- The use of Student Leaders and Prefects.

Appendix 1: Procedures

