



## Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all pupils and staff of Abbot's Hill school including EYFS irrespective of their age and whether or not the pupil is in the care of the school when / if bullying behaviour occurs. It should be read in conjunction with the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#), the [Behaviour Policy](#), the [Online Safety Policy](#) and the [Exclusion Policy](#).

This policy is published on the school's website and is available on request from the Main Reception. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

This policy has been drawn up with assistance from guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), [Preventing and tackling bullying \(July 2017\)](#) and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time.

This policy takes account of [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) and [The Equality Act 2010](#).

### Additional advisory materials for parents and staff

The DfE has also published the following advice notes to supplement [Preventing and tackling bullying \(July 2017\)](#):

- a) [Cyber Bullying: Advice for Head teachers and School Staff](#)
- b) [Advice for Parents and Carers on Cyberbullying](#).
- c) [No Health Without Mental Health; Implementation Framework 2012](#)

The following websites provide a source of information and advice:

[Changing Faces](#) [Stonewall](#)  
[Show Racism the Red Card](#)  
[Anne Frank Trust](#)  
[Thinkuknow](#)  
[Childnet International](#)  
[Digizen](#)

### Aims and objectives

The school as a whole aims to teach the value of integrity, morality and a concern for others and to develop pupils' self-confidence and independence so that they are well-equipped to play an active role in society. The school's Code of Conduct explicitly states that pupils should show courtesy, respect and consideration for others. All members of the school community, pupils and staff, should be free from the fear of bullying. Everyone should feel able to speak out and report any concerns about bullying in the knowledge that they will be listened to and that the matter will be investigated. Bullying has never been nor will it be tolerated at Abbot's Hill school.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety.

Bullying is wrong and damages children. We, therefore, do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incident that may occur and to comply with the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the prevention of bullying in our school.

This policy relates to any bullying incident whether on or off school premises and inside or outside school hours.

## **1. Bullying**

1.1. It is a regrettable feature of the modern world that bullying can be found in many areas of life. Bullying is not confined to any particular gender, age, ethnicity or occupation. In schools in the UK, bullying is thought to affect many thousands of pupils. Bullying can cause profound unhappiness, psychological damage and even suicide.

### **Bullying and Safeguarding**

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 and Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **1.2. Bullying and the Law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence, if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

### **Bullying which occurs outside school premises**

Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances.

### **What Bullying is**

1.3. There are various definitions of bullying, but most have these things in common:

- Is repeated over time
- Is intentionally hurtful to another group - physically or emotionally
- Is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups especially those with protected characteristics for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or a carer
- May occur directly or through cyber-technology
- Often involves an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

1.4. Bullying is behaviour which harasses, humiliates, intimidates or oppresses other people. It may take the form of abuse of person or property, verbal criticism, teasing or taunting, psychological pressure, or sexual harassment and be:

- racist, or regarding someone's religion, belief or culture
- sexual - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- sexist - related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic)
- related to pregnancy or maternity
- related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance
- related to a person's home circumstances for example being adopted or being a carer
- related to a person's intellectual or other abilities or lack thereof and/or
- cyber (through social media and gaming, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

1.5. Sometimes bullying is just thoughtless. It can sometimes hurt to be different, or to be made to feel different.

1.6. Any behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying. It is no justification that the bully says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by the bully's actions or words, or that the victim needs "toughening up", "taking down a peg or two", or "to be taught a lesson". Sanctions of any kind against a pupil are the responsibility of staff (on occasion in conjunction with parents), and not of other pupils

1.7. Examples of physical bullying may include: fighting; damaging or hiding someone else's belongings or clothes; setting up someone else to get the blame for a breach of school rules; or so-called initiation ceremonies.

1.8. Examples of psychological bullying may include: excluding someone from a group, activity or place; aggressive name-calling; unpleasant e-mails or telephone calls or unpleasant material placed on websites; racism, negative remarks about appearance, abilities, nationality, religion, disability, gender (e.g. male chauvinism) or sexuality (e.g. homophobia).

- 1.9. Examples of sexual harassment include making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching and using innuendo or inappropriate imagery.

### **Cyber-bullying**

- 1.10. The school's provision and availability of IT hardware is closely monitored. It limits the use of electronic devices by pupils with strict protocols and signed acceptable use agreements to help safeguard pupils. Staff are vigilant around the school site.
- 1.11. Cyberbullying continues to cause concern. Cyberbullying is the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyberbullying is particularly pernicious as it can occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can affect the victim in his/her home or wherever a mobile device is accessed. The school works closely with parents and pupils to help them understand the implications of inappropriate and / or unacceptable use of ICT and to teach positive use of technology (see also the Online Safety Policy).

### **Our responsibility to prevent and respond to bullying**

- 1.12. Bullying causes fear and distress for the victim and may distract him or her from school work. It often affects other children who witness the bullying. It may damage the atmosphere of a class, and even the climate of a school.
- 1.13. The school wishes to enhance pupils' self-esteem without making them arrogant. It aims to provide pupils with a secure and caring environment in which bullying is neither ignored, condoned nor tolerated. The school cannot do this alone; all members of the school - and this includes staff, parents and governors, as well as pupils - have a responsibility to demonstrate that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable and to set an example which reflects that view. Anyone in the school community who witnesses bullying behaviour has a responsibility to report this.
- 1.14. All members of the school should help to create an atmosphere in which bullying will be spoken of openly, taken seriously and responded to with appropriate action. A pupil who is being bullied should tell his/her parents, and preferably:
- Prep School: the pupil's Class Teacher or another member of staff, Phase Leaders, Assistant Head Prep, Head of Prep or Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare;
  - Senior School: the pupil's Form Tutor, Head of Year or another member of staff, Assistant Head Senior, Deputy Head or Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare.

It is important that any cases of bullying are reported to someone whom the victim feels able to talk to. The school wants to help, and has many years' experience of doing so.

- 1.15. In particular the school expects all its members to:-
- treat each other with respect and sensitivity
  - think carefully before speaking/acting in ways which may cause argument, distress or embarrassment
  - respect differences and variety (of origin, appearance, gender, personality and interests) remembering that everyone has both rights and duties
  - realise that sometimes what may seem fun to some (especially a group) may seem much more threatening to others (especially an individual)

- work together to create a school in which people live harmoniously
- help protect and support those who are unhappy or vulnerable
- make a stand against those who ignore or resist these aims.

All of the above apply to interaction in person and in cyberspace (ICT and other electronic communications).

- 1.16. Staff awareness is raised through discussion in staff meetings, and strategies put in place for action to be taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to occur. Appropriate training in all aspects of care will be arranged for staff to ensure they have the necessary professional skills to identify the risks and indications of child abuse and bullying and to deal with cases or potential cases which are detected.
- 1.17. Parents have an important role to play in supporting the school's anti-bullying measures. They should report any concerns to the school as outlined below, listen calmly to their children and provide reassurance that the situation can get better when action is taken. They should not encourage retaliation as this can have negative and unpredictable results. Rather the child should be encouraged to seek help from a member of staff. It is useful to find out what the child wants to happen next, to help identify the choices open to them, the potential next steps to take and the skills they may have to solve the problem. Encouraging your child to get involved in activities that help to build self-confidence and esteem and form friendships is also helpful.

## **2. Reporting bullying complaints**

### **2.1. Nursery, Prep and Senior Schools**

**Parents:** Parents who are concerned that their child or another pupil is or may be being bullied should contact the child's Room Leader (Nursery), Class Teacher or Phase Leader (Prep School) or Form Tutor or Head of Year (Senior School) without delay.

**Pupils:** A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil who is or may be being bullied should seek help without delay by telling his/her parents, or any member of staff or a friend. They can also call Childline on 0800 1111.

## **3. The implementation of the policy**

- 3.1. Positive values of mutual respect and concern will be promoted by explicit encouragement in a wide range of contexts from assembly and tutorial time-periods to informal discussion. The PSHCEE programme addresses the topic of bullying periodically in all forms throughout the school. Class Teachers or Form Tutors will also remind pupils regularly of their responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur and to talk to a member of staff if they witness, suspect or experience bullying. Staff are aware of learning opportunities in class (often in projects, drama, stories or literature) avoiding prejudice-based language. Pupils can also help to prevent bullying by following the school's Code of Conduct, informing teachers of concerns and never being bystanders to bullying.
- 3.2. In the event of an observed or reported instance of bullying, the facts will be ascertained from the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s) and/or witness(es). A record will be made of who was involved, what happened, when and where, and this will be passed to the relevant

Key Person, Class Teacher or Form Tutor, who will liaise with:

**Nursery:** Within the Nursery, any friendship issues will be monitored closely by the Key Person and Room Leader with any incidents of bullying to be reported to the Nursery Manager who will record these as required and report them to the Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare. Records will be monitored regularly in order to enable any patterns which might emerge to be identified. Staff will plan activities to promote good behaviour and friendships as well as tailoring activity opportunities to the individual issue. Fundamental British Values are embedded within the curriculum to support practitioners, parents and children.

**Prep School:** The Head of Prep or Assistant Head Prep will record incidents of alleged or confirmed bullying in a file which is kept in the Prep Office files and copies to the Pastoral Hub. The Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare with the Head of Prep will monitor this file regularly and at least at the end of each term in order to enable any patterns which might emerge to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the Prep School as a whole; minor incidents are recorded and monitored to check for any pattern of low-level bullying or other behavioural issues are not emerging; or

**Senior School:** The relevant Head of Year is responsible for ensuring that the Deputy Head/Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare receives a record of the incident investigation. The Deputy Head/Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare will record incidents of alleged or confirmed bullying in a file which is kept in the Pastoral Hub and they will monitor this file regularly and at least at the end of each term in order to enable any patterns which might emerge to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the Senior School as a whole. Minor incidents are recorded and monitored to check for any pattern of low-level bullying or other behavioural issues are not emerging.

- 3.3. The school will keep relevant parents informed if and when it may be dealing with a bullying situation. Parents are asked to let the school (normally in the first instance via the child's Class Teacher or Form Tutor) know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about incidents involving others. The school always tries to handle information discreetly, and while it has obligations to follow up such matters it does not do so without considering appropriate consultation. It is much easier to manage problems or potential problems at an early stage.
- 3.4. Once investigated, every effort will be made to resolve the problem through action including one or more of the following:
- 3.4.1. counselling of all appropriate parties.
  - 3.4.2. advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim, including support from the School Counsellor or from external services such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS.)
  - 3.4.3. advice and support for the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning.
  - 3.4.4. consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour.
  - 3.4.5. disciplinary sanctions against the bully, in accordance with the school's

Behaviour Policy. Sanctions should reflect the seriousness of an incident and carry a deterrent effect. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after appropriate investigations and hearing(s), be required to leave the school permanently in accordance with the school's Exclusion Policy.

3.4.6. involving children's social services or the police after following due process and collaboration with the parents where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.

3.4.7. such other action as may appear to the Headmistress to be appropriate.

Parents will be informed and consulted as appropriate. This process will normally be carried out by:

- The Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager in the Nursery
- The Assistant Head of Prep, Head of Prep or Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare in the Prep School
- Head of Year, Head of Pupil Progress and Welfare or the Deputy Head in the Senior School

3.5. For all incidents of bullying (whether isolated or occurring over a period of time), disciplinary sanctions will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the pupil and the needs of vulnerable pupils. Such sanctions may extend to suspension, required removal or permanent exclusion. Counselling or Restorative Justice may, however, be maintained for both parties even after sanctions have been applied.

3.6. Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is a 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, staff should report their concerns to the local authority children's social care using the procedures set out in the school's Policy on Safeguarding. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the School may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

3.7. This policy applies in respect of all dealings between members of the School, which in the opinion of the school impact, or may impact, upon their conduct at school or upon the reputation of the school.

3.8. The policy will be kept under continuous review in the light of experience and any relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

### **Signed**

Issue Date: October 2018

Review Date: October 2019 or earlier if major change



Janet Mark

**Chairman of the Education Committee**