

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

## **Introduction**

The School recognises that learning takes place most effectively when students feel valued by their teachers, their peers and their family. Much emphasis is placed on the personal responsibility of each member of the school community, staff and students, for ensuring that relationships between staff and students and between the students themselves are positive and caring.

This policy complies with the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998. It takes account of guidance in the DCSF document "Bullying - don't suffer in silence", re-issued in September 2003 and it also incorporates advice from Kidscape. Guidance on cyber-bullying is included, adapted from "Let's fight it together", an anti-bullying package produced in 2007 by the DCSF and Child net International and given to the Principals of the Senior Divisions when they attended the National Anti-Bullying conference in 2008.

## **Aim**

The School aims to provide a supportive, friendly and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a secure and relaxed atmosphere and achieve their academic potential.

## **Objectives**

- To ensure that governors, staff, students and parents understand what bullying behaviour is
- To provide students with personal and social education about friendship; other relationships and social interactions so that they become more aware of the importance of their own responsibilities in maintaining good working relationships and personal friendships

To take preventative measures against harassment by including current research about bullying in the curriculum.

To provide students, parents and staff with a clear set of procedures to be followed by staff if bullying is reported

- To take action immediately if bullying arises
- To help bullies realise the consequences of their actions and to teach them different ways of behaving
- To support victims of bullying and to provide them with guidance on how to deal with harassment

## **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is aggressive behaviour, normally repeated, which makes other people feel uncomfortable, distressed or threatened, whether intentional or not. It can be the action of one student or different students on different occasions.

Amongst other examples bullying can be:

Verbal or image	Being insulting, abusive, offensive, hurtful; spreading rumours; using sarcasm; teasing; using peer pressure on other students to make them act in ways that cause them to underachieve or to lose self esteem.  It can be spoken or written or placed on computer/mobile text messages or images on camera phones/internet sites/chat rooms/social networking sites.
Racist	Offensive mimicry; racist taunts or jokes; wearing of provocative badges or insignia; racist graffiti; making fun of customs, accent or dress; refusal to co-operate or work with others of a different culture
Homophobic	Because of sexuality or focusing on the issue of sexuality
Emotional	Behaviour or body language which others find intimidating, unfriendly, threatening, tormenting; excluding from friendship or working groups Peer pressure to behave in inappropriate ways
Physical	Violence of any form - pushing, kicking, punching, hitting, taking, damaging or hiding belongings

Students but particularly girls frequently experience friendship issues in the early years of secondary school. These can be very distressing, but are not usually classified as bullying. However, girls will be supported in handling such issues in a mature fashion.

### **School Statement of Values**

The following values, relevant to how we treat each other, were drawn up in consultation with students.

At King's we *feel that each individual should*

- respect others, regardless of age, race or background
- help to create a caring environment where all relationships are open and friendly
- keep our school clean and tidy and show respect for each others' property
- be happy at others' success and give support in times of disappointment
- value extra-curricular achievement as much as academic success discourage malicious gossip and realise that teasing can go too far

### **Roles and responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible harassment of students, **to deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority** and to follow the principles and procedures in this policy when following up cases of bullying. Other specific responsibilities are stated below.

- The Governors will (evaluate and review) the anti-bullying policy, and will ensure that it is non-discriminatory.
- The Head of Foundation and Principals will review and amend the policy, using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures and taking account of new legislation and government guidance. The Principals will keep a record of all reported incidents.
- The **Staff Development Officer (INSET)** will ensure that staff receive regular training updates
- The Pastoral Teams will follow up reports of bullying:-
  - Form Tutor                      Minor incidents and friendship issues
  - Head of Year                      More serious incidents
  - Vice Principals                      Very serious incidents
  - Head of Foundation & Principals      Bullying incidents requiring suspension or expulsion
- In all cases, form tutor, the Head of Year, Nurse, Vice Principals, Principals and Head of Foundation should be informed.

The **PSHE Co-ordinator** will provide up-to-date resources to Heads of Year on bullying issues, and will ensure that there are Life Skills sessions on the nature of bullying and how to deal with harassment within the programme at appropriate stages of student development.

- **Subject teachers** will ensure that
  - they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the Form Tutor of such observations
  - they select working groups and pairs so that students have the opportunity to work with a variety of peers, not only friendship groups, throughout the year
  - the composition of groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying
- The **School Nurses**, often the first people to receive reports of bullying, will offer emotional support to the victims, and will alert the relevant Head of Year and Form Tutor. A confidential box is available near the medical room.
- **Parents** are asked, via the Parent Handbook, to inform the Form Tutor or Head of Year if they are concerned that their child might be being bullied.
- **Students** are asked, via the Student Planner, to tell a member of staff immediately if they are bullied or if they witness bullying of any other pupil.

## **ANTI-BULLYING: PROCEDURES FOR STAFF**

### Promoting the policy to students, parents and staff

- Students will be informed of anti-bullying procedures in the Student Planner.
- Parents will be informed of procedures via the Parent Handbook, updated annually.
- The anti-bullying policy will be published in the Staff Handbook.

### Staff guidance: Principles

- Staff will treat reports by students of bullying very seriously.
- Staff will not ignore suspected bullying.
- Unpleasantness by one student towards another will always be challenged and never ignored.
- Staff will take action immediately. This applies to all staff, not only teaching staff.
- If bullying is racist or involves persistent harassment or assault, it is a criminal offence and will be reported to the Head of Year/Vice Principal immediately. This also applies to bullying which targets a student's religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- Students will be encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to the Form Tutor, Nurse, Head of Year or another trusted member of staff immediately. Not telling gives the message that the bullies **can continue**.
- Staff will produce a written record of each bullying incident, to be passed to the appropriate Head of Year who will alert the Vice Principal/Principal
- Staff will respect a student's request that information is not discussed with other students.
- The victim will be supported in the weeks following the reported incident, to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

### Staff guidance: if bullying is reported, or if staff notice a bullying incident

Minor incidents will be reported to the student's Form Tutor, who should investigate the incident and inform the Head of Year in writing of the outcome.

For serious incidents of bullying, staff will inform the Head of Year and the Vice Principal/Principal.

Normally, the procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.

Tougher sanctions will be needed if there has been violence, but this is a rare occurrence in our school.

1. Interview the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses separately.
  - Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students interviewed, for example by texting.
  - If a student is injured, take the student immediately to the Nurse for a medical opinion of the extent of the injuries.
  - Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
  - Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgemental at this stage.

- Be non-confrontational.
- Ask the alleged bully and the alleged victim to write down details. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture. It may be appropriate to use the 'guidance questions for interview' available from Year Heads.
- Ask additional witnesses/Bystanders for information, preferably written.
- Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
- Listen carefully to all accounts - several students saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
- Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach which moves a bully on from justifying themselves. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the situation can be improved.
- If the bullied student might have provoked the bullying incident, help them to understand how.
- Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other students.

## **2. Record details of the bullying**

- Write a very brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet is needed for each student involved.
- Place these interview sheets in the individual files of each student involved.
- Write a more detailed single account and attach written statements of alleged victim, alleged bully and witnesses. Full names of all involved should be included in this account. Send this to the Principal.
- The Head of Year should keep a record of all incidents of bullying for their Year Group.

## **3. Take appropriate action to deal with the bully**

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the student to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further intimidation. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used if the bullying is repeated.
- If possible, try for reconciliation and genuine apology from the student.
- Realise that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing and are willing to change their behaviour. Do not, however, force a face-to-face meeting. This must be the decision of the students.
- Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the student to face their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
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- Inform parents about bullying incidents and what action is being taken.
- If initial attempts to stop the bullying fail, apply an appropriate level of sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the bullying. (see Sanctions)
- Form tutor/Head of Year informally monitor student over the next half term
- If bullying is racist, inform the Principal immediately.
- Support the bully

#### **4. Support the victim - follow up checks**

- If the student visits the Nurse, the Nurse should check informally whether the bullying has stopped.
- The Form Tutor should check informally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.
- The Head of Year should check formally the week after the bullying and again during the same half term.
- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by asking staff to assign places in classes and in the form room.
- Most bullying groups have a leader, with other students in the group being frightened of being bullied themselves.
- Encourage the victim to be assertive –
  - Ignore the comments; pretend not to hear
  - Walk away quickly; use body language to look determined, strong and positive
  - Shout "No, go away" as loudly as possible
- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.
- Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups by joining a lunchtime or after-school club or activity.
- Discuss bullying in assembly in drama or in the form or PSHE, and ask the class to suggest possible solutions.
- If bullying is about a particular issue (disability for example), mount an education programme during tutorial time, not focused on a particular child.
- If bullying occurs on the bus, ask a sixth former or bus prefect to take care of the victim.
- If bullying is by students from another school, the Head of Year should telephone the relevant Head of Year/Deputy of the other school and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation.
- Ask another student to befriend and support the victim.
- Give constructive advice if the victim seems to have been bullied because they are being a nuisance or intruding.
- Use peer mediation to resolve conflict if appropriate, using trained students only
- Provide a peer mentor.
- Use theatre-in-education performances on bullying to raise awareness (last one 2008).

#### **5. Sanctions**

Sanctions to deal with bullying behaviour will be dependent on the level, seriousness and persistence of the bullying, but will follow the School's sanctions.

##### **For minor/single incidents**

- an apology and assurance that bullying will stop OR a detention OR
- a piece of extra written work OR community service within the school OR
- temporary exclusion from certain areas of the school premises

**In more serious cases**, the bully may be given a Principal's detention and/or to behaviour targets. Only the Principal can make a decision on this form of sanction in consultation with the Head of Foundation. Parents will be asked to come into school to discuss the problem.

Child Protection Officer to be informed.

If bullying persists, a change of class may be considered for the student.

**In very serious cases**, suspension from lessons or even suspension from school may be considered. In the most extreme cases, a student may be expelled.

Only the Head of Foundation can make a decision on these forms of sanctions.

## **6. Curriculum support**

Issues regarding bullying, methods of dealing with bullying, prejudice and discrimination, stereotyping and will be discussed in the PSHE Programme.

- A Year 7 residential in the early autumn term and Year 9 residential will act as a bonding exercise to enable students to learn to work co-operatively in teams.
- PSHE inputs will cover relationships and friendships, teaching students how to manage their relationships with others constructively as well as in lower school drama.
- PSHE sessions will include co-operative group work to enable students to explore issues by considering different points of view and to become integrated into the peer group.
- Staff will encourage student co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work in teaching methodology. Sport and games staff are particularly effective at promoting teamwork. Students will be allocated to groups selected by the teacher, when appropriate, and these will be changed at regular intervals to allow students more contact with a wider circle of students in their year group.
- Potential victims of bullying should be drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.
- Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events such as drama productions, Theme Days, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, concerts, charity and social events and also by involvement in extracurricular activities.

## **7. Pastoral support**

- The School Nurse will provide a "listening ear" for students to talk through relationship difficulties on a confidential basis.
- The School Council will provide an opportunity for students to suggest improvements to aspects of school life.
- A Bus Code of Conduct is in place, to improve the standard of behaviour on journeys to and from school.
- Each Year 7 and Year 8 Form will be allocated mentors.
- Additional students are available to act as personal mentors on request.
- Drama may be used in Year 7, if appropriate, to explore issues of concern.
- School counsellor is available to students via the nurse or Principals

## Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying has become an increasing problem in recent years. The following information has been incorporated into the Parent Handbook. Staff are asked to follow this guidance when they are advising students who are victims of cyber-bullying.

Most technology is used very responsibly. Young people generally use the internet or mobile phone in a positive way as part of their personal, social and academic development. Unfortunately technologies are also occasionally being used negatively. The School expects that its students will not use technology outside school as part of cyber-bullying and that both student and parents will co-operate with any reasonable investigation of that technology by the School.

**Cyber-bullying is defined** as the use of technology deliberately to upset someone else. The following technology may be involved:-

Mobile phones Email	Instant Messenger	Chatrooms and message boards
Webcams	Social networking sites	Virtual worlds
Video hosting sites	Gaming sites and consoles	Virtual learning environments

The law has recognised that there is no longer a clear boundary between behaviour within a school and the external behaviour of its students. Unpleasant messages or images may be sent outside school time. Naturally we would expect parents to play the main role in dealing with any out-of-school incidents. If there is clear link between behaviour at school and inappropriate behaviour when students are not on the school premises (and not under the charge of a member of school staff) we reserve the right to take such action as is reasonable with a view to regulating conduct. This may involve a ban on bringing a mobile phone onto school premises or a search through a student's phone by a senior member of staff where a student is reasonably suspected of involvement in an incident of cyber-bullying.

The guidance for parents and students below is adapted from *Let's Fight it Together*, an anti-bullying package produced in 2007 by the DCSF and Childnet International. Parents are asked to talk through and discuss this guidance with their child.

### **How to prevent cyber-bullying: advice to students**

- Remember that anything you place on technology (examples listed above), can be made public within seconds. You have very little control over this. Nothing is guaranteed to stay private. Whatever you send to others can travel world-wide and could stay on-line for ever. University admissions officers and future employers may be able to view messages, films and photos posted years before.
- Be careful what you say on-line or in text messages. It is easy to upset someone by not reading carefully what you have written before pressing the SEND key. Be careful what images you send.
- If you receive a nasty or rude message about someone, or a photo of them, do not forward it to anyone. Doing this means that you will be taking part in the bullying.

You could even be breaking the law.

- Keep your password to yourself. Do not let anyone see you key it in. Do not let anyone know it or use it. Change your password regularly. Choose hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers. This makes it harder for others to hack into your account.
- Only give your mobile number or personal website address to loyal friends whom you trust completely. Remember also that some people change friends often, especially in the early teenage years.
- Choose the highest security settings on internet sites; do not rely on default settings.
- Use websites and services that let you **block** someone who is behaving badly or bullying you, and use the blocking facility.
- Use websites and services which allow you to report someone who is bullying.
- If you see cyber-bullying taking place, support the victim. **Report** the bully. Bullies get away with bad behaviour if no one tells.

### **How to respond if you are bullied: advice to students**

- Do not reply to bullying messages.
- Do not retaliate by sending unpleasant messages back.
- Use the blocking and reporting facilities of the website.
- If necessary, change your contact details such as your instant messaging identity or your mobile number.
- Save the evidence. Keep copies, records and dates of offending messages, pictures and on-line conversations. Refer to the BBB Locked section of [www.websafecrackerz.com](http://www.websafecrackerz.com) to learn how to do this. Evidence will be needed by school, internet service providers and mobile phone companies. If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, the evidence may be needed by the police for an investigation.

Note that internet service providers will remove text or photos only if they break the law or the company's own terms and conditions.

#### • To get help:-

- tell a parent, teacher or adult you trust
- call a helpline like Childline on 0800 11 11
- check the provider's website to see how to report incidents
- ask your school for support and advice

If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, your parents may decide to contact the police.

We hope that the guidance given above is helpful to parents. We advise you to be alert to signs of upset or withdrawn behaviour after your child has used the internet or a mobile phone.

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