

3.5 Anti-Bullying Policy

3.5.1 Statement of Intent

Sussex House prides itself on the happiness and well-being of pupils and their social integration in class. 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 pupils can develop his full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Sussex House fosters an atmosphere of respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Sussex House in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. Bullying is recognised as being a cause of psychological damage. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Addressing bullying is the responsibility of everyone in our community, so anyone witnessing such behaviour has a duty to report it.

If a child is bullied to the extent that he is at risk of significant harm the matter becomes one of child-on-child safeguarding. Please refer to the Bi-borough Threshold of Need Guide (available from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for further details.

The practices presented in this policy reflect the best practice advised in the DfE non-statutory advice *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)*.

3.5.2 Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person over a period of time, by physical (including sexual), verbal (including chat room, texts and email), and emotional means (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. We take very seriously the potential for physical and emotional (which can lead to psychological damage) harm.

A modern form of bullying can centre around the making and sharing of nude and semi-nude images (previously referred to as 'sexting'). This is a very serious issue as it breaches the threshold for Child Protection and/or criminal proceedings. Please refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for further guidance.

Bullying may be motivated by (but not exclusively) prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special education needs and disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may also relate to other physical attributes such as hair colour or body shape. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time, including by means of technology, when it is often described as cyber-bullying (social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, digital photography and e-mail – see Section 3.6.5). We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

3.5.3 Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent complaints of symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

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.

3.5.4 Preventative Measures

We take the following preventative measures:

- We raise awareness of staff through training at the start of the school year and later as appropriate, so that the principles of the school policy are understood. Staff are made aware of actions that will be taken to resolve and prevent problems, and which sources of support are available (Deputy Head, School Counsellor, School Chaplain etc.). Should the school ever take pupils with more specific needs such as those with special educational needs or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils, external professionals will be employed to train and support staff.
- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our RE/RSE/HE programme is structured to give pupils 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, and so that pupils know how to deal with bullying if it occurs and are clear in the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they are bystanders.
- Other lessons, for example English and RS, 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.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. The member of staff should then report the matter to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. The record of such incidents is maintained by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), who is responsible for monitoring and identifying any patterns or trends in bullying.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Form Teachers and subject teachers who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.

- Our pastoral team gives support guidance and training to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- The School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who may refer themselves to him, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community.
- Staff, supported by members of the 6th Form, are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Our notice board displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- All pupils have access to the School Office telephone, enabling them to call for support.
- We will always investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils. The school takes its 'in loco parentis' duty very seriously.
- The whole school community (staff, parents and pupils) acknowledge a duty to uphold anti-bullying measures both in and out of school, guided by the school's published procedures. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns about bullying issues so that the school can be given an opportunity to address them. We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will always follow up any such information.

3.5.5 Cyber bullying – Definition

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

"Cyber bullying involves 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."

Cyber bullying can involve Social Networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

3.5.6 Cyber bullying – Preventative Measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Sussex House:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the Internet. We have recently installed more refined content filtering (which also applies to staff accounts) and are due to roll out a new protocol for accessing the school's Wi-Fi. Individual access will be granted only to boys who need it to support their SEN requirements, which enable a more tailor-made safety system. All student and staff data is handled in accordance with GDPR.
- Makes it clear to pupils through assemblies and other training (e.g. Childnet) that with the use of technology comes with responsibility not to use it for harmful; purposes.
- Provides annual training sessions for parents, pupils and staff with the Childnet group, which raises awareness of staying safe on line and suggests measures to counter cyber-bullying.
- Recommend that parents ensure at least one adult is included in any social media chat group, which are often useful for prep support but which can be mis-used for bullying. This helps to regulate content.

- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the Internet.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the Internet.
- Provides staff and students (IT room only) with clear guidance about appropriate use of IT systems in class and beyond. Students are not allowed to access social media of any sort on school facilities, and staff access is also restricted.
- Does not allow boys to retain their mobile phones during the school day. This helps to restrict access to unfiltered (4G / 5G) internet use. Breaches of this rule may result in the privilege of bringing a phone to school being withdrawn.
- Does not permit the use of cameras on mobile phones in the school.

3.5.7 Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

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

- 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.
- He/she will inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral) as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his own.
- The bully, as well as all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually.
- The incident should be recorded.
- All teachers should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Headmaster should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him why revenge is inappropriate. He will be offered support to develop a strategy to help himself cope.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He will be offered guidance on modifying his behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, if appropriate, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases as defined by the Bi-borough Safeguarding Authority's 'Threshold of Need Guide' it will be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. In such cases staff should follow the school's published procedures but they may also contact the Bi-borough Safeguarding Authority directly (see the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for contact details).

3.5.8 Sanctions for Bullying

While some form of punishment will be given to a pupil who commits bullying, the school strongly believes that it is most important for the pupil to realise the gravity of what he has done and to understand why his behaviour is wrong.

Stripes

A Stripe will be given boy who has bullied another pupil. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) informs the parents who will be invited to discuss the matter further.

Suspension

If bullying has been persistent, or deemed very serious, then a pupil may be suspended from school. Parents are immediately informed of the reasons for the suspension.

Expulsion

Should a pupil who has previously been suspended for bullying carry on with the behaviour, it may be necessary to exclude the pupil permanently from the school.