

THE PARK SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At The Park School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. 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/her 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.

The Park School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school 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.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. 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. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

Our policy is intended not only to help staff and pupils deal with bullying when it occurs but even more importantly to PREVENT it

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages), 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.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racial, sexual/ sexist or homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, special educational needs and disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone – pupils, other younger people, staff and parents.

1. There are many definitions of bullying but they all have three things in common.
 - a) It is deliberate hurtful, targeted behaviour.
 - b) It is often repeated over a period of time.
 - c) It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

2. Bullying can take many forms but the three main types are:
 - a) Physical – hitting, kicking, taking or interfering with belongings
 - b) Verbal – name-calling, insults, sexual/sexist, cultural, religious, homophobic, special education needs and disability or racial remarks
 - c) Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone; excluding someone from social Groups
 - d) Cyber - social websites, mobile phones, texting, photographs or email.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: www.cyberbullying.org defined this unpleasant and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying 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.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo, Facebook and Myspace, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

At The Park School, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

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 visits to the Medical Centre with 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.

Bullying is a form (albeit extreme) of children learning how to pattern their behaviour in society. It may also include bystanders (innocent or otherwise).

There are a number of important reasons for challenging bullying behaviour in schools:

- a) The safety and happiness of pupils. A bullied pupil is an unhappy pupil who may come to harm through physical or psychological damage and may even consider suicide.
- b) Educational achievement. An unhappy pupil may lose concentration and their work will suffer.
- c) Providing a model for helpful behaviour. Bullying that goes unchallenged may teach pupils that it is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.
- d) Reputation – recognition as a caring school with a pro-active anti-bullying policy.

At the Park School we aim to provide a happy, secure atmosphere for both pupils and staff recognising that bullying is an unfortunate part of modern life that should be minimised or prevented. We should always try to emphasise that all are special in God's sight and that we should love our neighbours, always look for the good in people and not criticise or put others down. Pupils should not identify bullying as a problem in the school.

However, bullying can happen in any school. Recognising its existence is the first stage of dealing with it and attempting to minimise it is a vital step forward. The following should be considered in order to minimise bullying:

- a) Pupils should be encouraged to behave responsibly with good manners and respect for others.
- b) Pupils should be listened to and opinions respected and valued.
- c) Items of value should not be brought to school and personal property should be respected.
- d) Pupils should be encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff.
- c) Staff should respond in a professional manner.
- d) Any investigation should ensure that both sides have a fair hearing.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first week at The Park School. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction.
- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE 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.
- Educational elements such as personal, social and health education (PSHE) and assemblies (mentioned above), projects, drama, stories, literature historical events, current affairs and so on will be used to promote the school's policy on anti-bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- Raising awareness of staff through training; taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. Safeguarding and Anti-bullying training will be provided to all staff and will form part of every new member of staff's induction programme. Support staff will also be provided with a copy of this policy document.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are asked to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- In the boarding house, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the House Parents. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the House Parents and parents/guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- We provide leadership training to our Head Boys/Girls and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We have banned initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation.
- We reserve the right to 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
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

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

- Take the incident or report seriously and investigate as quickly as possible
- 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 an appropriate member of the pastoral team 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/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.

- The incident should be recorded.
- All tutors and Heads should be informed. Report findings to Head of Juniors (Junior Department) or Deputy Head (Senior Department) as appropriate.
- In very serious incidents, the Head teacher should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself. Re-assure the victim(s). Ensure they clearly understand the course of action that has been taken. Do not make them feel inadequate or foolish. Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions. Explain clearly the punishment and why it is given. Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove. Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed calmly, clearly and concisely, and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought. Re-assure both sets of parents that the incident has been dealt with and will not be held against anyone.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, 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, and only after the Head teacher has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of The Park to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- Keep full records of all incidents and any action/resolution using the formal "incident slip procedure". Information should also be transferred into the pupil's file.
- Inform other colleagues of the incident especially if it arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant, e.g. Unsupervised areas.
- Bring the incident to a close to ensure it doesn't linger on.
- Think ahead to prevent a recurrence (if you have found the trigger) and record bullying clearly in such a way to enable patterns to be identified.

Things to avoid:

- a) Being over protective. Refusing to allow the victim to help him/herself.
- b) Assuming the bully is all bad. Try to look objectively at the bully and the incident.
- a) Keeping the whole incident to yourself because you have dealt with it.
- b) Trying to hide the incident from the parents of the victim or the bully.
- c) Informing the parents without having a constructive plan to offer both sides.

Communicate:

- a) Keep publicising this policy to pupils and staff.
- b) Integrate this policy with the normal curriculum.
- c) Keep parents informed. Let them know the school acts to prevent bullying not just to deal with bullying incidents.
- d) Build on what the school values.

A nominated member of staff will have overall responsibility for the implementation and promulgation of this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour policy, where the sanctions for bullying are clear (strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying).

A copy of this policy document, and any subsequent amendments/reviews, must be provided to parents of boarders, boarders and all staff, including junior and recently appointed staff.

There are no initiation ceremonies in the boarding house intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

EYFS CHILDREN

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The Head of the Nursery Department, is in day-to-day charge of the management of behaviour in the Nursery Department.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the Head of the Junior School, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed and, in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's Teacher and the Head of the Nursery and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled. The complaints policy explains how to complain to Ofsted.

Guidelines for Teachers – Assessing the Risks

Know your school

Try to look at the school afresh. Where might bullying occur? Consider:

- A survey
- Spot checks
- Getting pupils to write about the school
- Getting pupils to draw a plan of the school, with “danger” areas marked.

Support your pupils

Ensure pupils who are being bullied are suitably supported, and pupils who may bully others are also given suitable help and guidance.

Re-assess how you look after your pupils generally. Consider:

- Do all pupils know that the school cares about bullying?
- Do all pupils know they should speak out?
- (Junior Department) The available and accessible person clearly designated to help pupils is named on the annexe attached.
- (Senior Department) The available and accessible guidance staff are named on the annexe attached.
- What messages do you give new intakes about bullying?
- What are your procedures for integrating a pupil new to the school - use of Prefects.

Support is offered to victims and bullies using the following considerations

- Can the victim be trained to be more assertive or more skilled socially?
Who can do this, how and when?
- Can the bullies learn to control their aggression or be more empathetic?
Who can help do this, how and when?
- Can other pupils be drawn in to help victims and bullies.

Approved by the Governing Body -
5th March 2010

Annex 1

- (Junior Department) The available and accessible person clearly designated to help pupils is; JENNY ELLIS
- (Senior Department) The available and accessible guidance staff are: SARAH SCANNELL