

ARTS EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure in school. We aim to encourage everyone to respect and value one another. All pupils are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, intimidation, oppression and abuse. It is the responsibility of all staff that this takes place in an atmosphere that is caring and protective.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

The policy has been produced to co-exist with the 'Every Child Matters' Framework, the School Behaviour, Sanctions and Rewards Policy, the School Code of Conduct and the School Mission Statement. The aim of this policy is to produce a safe and secure environment where all children can flourish; an environment where bullying is unacceptable and measures are in place to reduce its likelihood.

This Anti-Bullying Policy and the School Behaviour Policy are seen as working towards the same end and both policies have been developed concurrently. The following statements from the Behaviour Policy provide the rationale behind the Arts Educational Anti-Bullying Policy:

- a) The school expects a high standard of good behaviour and value is placed on the qualities of self-discipline, independence, initiative and mutual respect.
- b) Our aim is to have firm but fair discipline in a relaxed, caring and friendly atmosphere.
- c) Students are expected to consider other people and their feelings. They should treat others as they would expect to be treated themselves.

BULLYING, OF ANY KIND, VIOLATES THESE STATEMENTS AND THEREFORE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- a) To provide a happy, friendly school environment where bullying is not tolerated.
- b) To promote an anti-bullying message through the academic and pastoral curriculum and to encourage all members of the school to act with tolerance, courtesy and consideration towards others at all times.
- c) To involve the whole staff and pupil body in combating bullying and making it unacceptable at Art Educational School.
- d) To encourage pupils who are being bullied or who observe bullying to inform staff.
- e) Above all to try and prevent bullying happening in the first place.

WHAT IS BULLING?

Bullying is the deliberate, unjustifiable and usually unprovoked use of force - either physical or mental. This can be initiated by an individual or group towards another individual or weaker group of victims. Bullying-causes physical, psychological and/or emotional pain or damage to a person or persons being bullied. It robs a person of their rights, peace of mind and their self-esteem. It can happen not just once but on numerous occasions. Areas of potential bullying include racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability, intimidation, attack and cyber (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and e-mail). **(See Cyber-Bullying policy appended to this policy)**

Bullying can be:

- Persistent
- Intimidating, fearsome, stressful
- Pre-meditated
- Demoralising
- Physical
- Psychological
- Humiliating, demeaning, threatening
- The use of a superior position of strength to intimidate
- A process designed to lower the self-esteem
- Carried out by individuals or by groups

Bullying includes:

- Name calling or mocking.
- Physical violence – hitting, kicking, punching, damaging property.
- Demands for money or possessions.
- Hiding someone's possessions.
- Pressurising others to do something they do not want to do - for example, another child's homework.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Spreading nasty or false rumours.
- Deliberately leaving people out or not talking to them.
- Teasing and tormenting a person about their social class, race, gender, personal appearance, school performance, possessions, disabilities or other personal traits.
- Sending unpleasant notes or making someone the subject of graffiti.
- Touching another person against their will.
- Sexual harassment.
- Using technology such as e-mail, the internet, texts and the like, to insult, provoke, threaten, demean or otherwise intimidate and upset the victim.

The consequences of bullying and recognising it is taking place

Children who are bullied can suffer great psychological stress that has even resulted in suicide. There are a number of well know symptoms especially if they are the victim of persistent bullying. Behaviour to be aware of is;

- Regularly feeling sick or unwell in the mornings.
- Reluctance to make the journey to and from school.
- Money or possessions going missing.
- Clothes or school bag torn.
- Wanting extra pocket money for no particular reason.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Taking different routes to school.
- Becoming withdrawn, suffering from loss of self-esteem and negative self-image.
- Unexplained behaviour changes, e.g. moody, bad tempered, tearful.
- Nightmares, depression and impaired concentration.
- Not wanting to leave the house or disinclination to attend school.
- Reluctance to talk openly about school friends.

THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

How the School will work to promote the anti-bullying message

What Staff will do:

- All staff will praise and encourage co-operative, caring behaviour.
- All staff will promote positive relationships by demonstrating, through our own behaviour, that it is better for everyone to respect and care for each other.
- Staff will provide an environment where children feel accepted and valued.
- All staff need to be aware of areas of the School where bullying might take place and be sensitive to the times and situations where it is more likely to happen. For example in changing rooms, break time, lunchtime queues. Bullying can take discreetly in classrooms situations; teachers should be observant and act firmly and swiftly if they suspect or find evidence of bullying.
- Staff will treat all allegations of bullying seriously and will investigate each incident. Pupils may see failure to respond to incidents or allegations, as toleration of bullying. Incident Reports will be completed and forwarded to the Form Tutor, Head of Pastoral Care or Head of 6th Form.
- Staff will watch for signs of distress in students. This might present as deterioration of work, late arrival for lessons, hanging back when the lesson is over, regular “illnesses,” isolation, wanting to be with adults rather than peers.

What the Pastoral team will do:

- The Pastoral Team will coordinate and run an Anti – Bullying week which will coincide with the national Anti – Bullying week. Activities promoting awareness and prevention are planned across all year groups.
- School assemblies will be used to promote this Anti-Bullying policy.
- We will promote anti-bullying strategies across the academic and pastoral curriculum. As part of our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, the topics of inter-personal relationships and the effects of attitudes and behaviour on others are covered extensively. In addition, bullying is

discussed in tutor groups, in English and Drama lessons and in whole-school assemblies.

- The Pastoral Head or Head of 6th Form will notify the Head Teacher of any serious cases or of any ongoing situation.
- The School Anti-Bullying policy will be a regular agenda item of meetings of the Pastoral Team.

What the School will do:

- Each department where appropriate will incorporate the anti-bullying message into their teaching.
- An Anti-Bullying statement will be displayed prominently in every classroom.
- This anti-bullying policy will be issued to all relevant parties in order that it is fully understood. It will be discussed amongst staff and students, there will be opportunities to ask questions, scenarios will be given and appropriate courses of action will be discussed.
- This policy will be issued to the parents of every child attending The Arts Educational School. Parents will be expected to sign and return a slip to say that they have read, understood and agreed to it.
- Children identified as victims of bullying will be counselled by an appropriately trained member of staff. If necessary, they will also be offered training in assertiveness and how to deal with bullies.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that any sanctions imposed are fair and appropriate and that they are applied in a non-humiliating, non-bullying way.
- Staff will be given opportunities for training in ways to deal with students who bully and those being bullied. Knowledge gained will be disseminated to all staff.

ADVICE FOR STAFF, PARENTS AND STUDENTS AS TO THE BEST WAYS TO WORK WITH BULLIES AND VICTIMS

FOR STAFF

Working with victims

It must be recognised that the first priority is to support and protect the victim of bullying. Staff should also offer support to counter feelings of inferiority and guilt. Ongoing support is crucial. Staff must take notes when speaking to the victim and if possible ask them to write down a statement. This must be passed onto the student's form tutor and to the Pastoral Head/Head of Sixth Form. She will then decide the best way to progress. An incident report must be filled out and put in the relevant pupils' files.

It is also important to offer support to witnesses and students who join in on the sidelines because they may fear that they may be the next target.

Working with bullies

Bullying is abnormal human behaviour, often caused by insecurities within the bully such as a need to gain power over another human. They are usually bigger and older, have poor school records and are often aggressive to teachers and siblings. They may even have been victims of bullying themselves. In later life bullies may bully in the workplace or become aggressive parents and citizens.

Staff need to consider:

- The antecedent conditions making the bully behave as he or she is.
- The behaviour itself.
- What the consequences of the behaviour are and whether this might be perpetuating the bullying.

Working with parents

Bullying is a highly emotive issue and parents of victims can rightly become very distressed on behalf of their child and can feel helpless. Parents of bullies often do not know and also feel very vulnerable and defensive when they find out.

- Not every single case of bullying will necessarily be reported to parents but the expectation is that most will be. It will depend on the circumstances and severity.
- Staff should make clear to parents of victims and bullies, the actions we are taking, why we are taking them and what they can do to re-enforce our actions.
- We urge parents to contact us immediately if they have any suspicion of bullying, sometimes we are unaware of the problem.

FOR STUDENTS

What You Should Do If Bullying Is Taking Place

If you are being bullied or you know of someone else being bullied - **TELL SOMEONE**. Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

- Tell your parents and, in school, tell your form tutor or any other chosen adult whom you trust.
- If it is urgent **TELL** the nearest adult. If they do not listen tell someone else. Don't give up, if you don't tell things could get worse. If the person you want to tell is very busy ask them when they can see you and spend some time with you.
- Walk away from any dangerous situation and **GET HELP**.

As well as telling, you can help stop bullying by:-

- Being friendly towards people you know are being bullied, including them in your discussions, games, break-times and lunchtimes.
- Not laughing when someone is being bullied.
- Stating out loud that you don't like what is going on.
- Not joining in.

What will happen if you are found to be bullying someone

In every case the incident will be taken seriously and the responses can include some or all of the following:

- You will have to explain your behaviour to a member of staff.
- An account of what you have done will be written down and you will have to sign it.
- Your parents will be informed of the incident and invited into school to discuss the matter.
- The Head of Pastoral Care will keep a record of the incident in your file for a specified period of time.
- You will have to apologise to the person you bullied.
- You will have to replace or repair any possessions you damaged.
- You will have to do something to improve things for the person you bullied.

Depending on the severity of the bullying incident you have been involved in, one or more of the following sanctions will apply

- You will be interviewed by senior members of staff and the Headmaster and severely reprimanded.
- You may be placed in a detention after school or at break or lunchtime.
- You may be placed on daily or weekly report.
- You may be placed on a Behaviour Contract.
- You may be isolated from lessons for a limited period.

- You may be excluded from school for a fixed term or permanently.
- You may be required to explain your actions to the police if you assault another student.

FOR PARENTS

What you should do if you think your child is being bullied

- Talk calmly with your child about his/her experience.
- Make a note of what your child says - particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened, and what has happened. Staff should also collect any evidence e.g. printouts of emails, texts etc
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing in telling you about the bullying and that there is nothing wrong with him/her.
- Encourage your child to report any incidents of bullying to a teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to see your child's Form Tutor or the Head of Pastoral Care, even if your child is reluctant that you do so.
- We can only do something if we know there is a problem
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back. It will only make matters worse.
- Such behaviour could be contrary to your child's nature. More positively, encourage your child to recruit friends. A child who has friends is less likely to be bullied.
- If the bullying only occurs outside school contact a solicitor. Ask for a letter to be sent to the bully's parents, informing them of the legal consequences of a recurrence of such behaviour. You should also contact the school and we will offer as much help and support as we can.

What to do if your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying others at some time or another. Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying and may find it difficult to accept that their child could be involved. Should such a situation arise, we would ask parents to:

- Talk with your child. Explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy.
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- Show your child how he/she can join in with other children without bullying.
- Make an appointment to see your child's Form Tutor or the Head of Pastoral Care. Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing. Discuss with the teacher how you and school can stop him/her bullying others.
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school.
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/she is co-operative or kind to other people.

Bullying of Staff

Occasionally a staff member may become the victim of bullying by a student or another member of staff. It is important that that staff member reports any incident to an appropriate member of staff and that the incident is dealt with in accordance with the above mentioned procedures. Arts Educational School is a community where every person has the right to feel safe and secure; free from humiliation, intimidation, oppression and abuse.