



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

For the purpose of this policy we define bullying “as the behaviour arising from a deliberate attempt to cause physical or psychological distress to others”.

It is without question one of the most unpleasant and hurtful experiences that any young person can encounter and is possibly the greatest single cause of unhappiness at school.

AIM:

We aim to create a School where all young people can feel safe, happy and confident and learn in an environment free from humiliation, oppression and abuse.

The School will seek to respond firmly, appropriately and swiftly whenever bullying is identified. Bullying, in any of its forms, is not acceptable.

We consider it the responsibility of teachers, pupils and parents to try to prevent bullying from happening. Where bullying has occurred, however, each case should be dealt with on its own merit in accordance with the following set of guidelines.

1. Responsibilities of the School

- Give appropriate support to all pupils who are being bullied.
- Always take an allegation of bullying seriously and investigate.
- To be concerned about bullying which occurs when a pupil is travelling to and from School as well as bullying which occurs on site.
- Record and monitor incidents in a consistent and agreed way.
- When appropriate, communicate actions taken over bullying with parents and/or members of Staff.
- Seek assistance from outside agencies where this is deemed necessary.
- Give assistance in helping bullies change their behaviour.
- Seek to educate our pupils on the unacceptability of all forms of bullying and to give clear guidance to those who find themselves victims or observers of such incidents.

2. Guidance for Staff

- Be vigilant. By observing your tutor/teaching group, bullying can sometimes be

identified before it becomes a serious problem.

- If an incident of bullying is reported to you always take the allegations seriously. Try to reassure the pupil who is being bullied that something will be done.
- Ask the victim and bully or bullies to record in writing their accounts of the event.
- Record the information about the incident on a communication slip for the Form Tutor and Director of Studies.
- Deal with the problem directly if you feel able to do so.

Where it is considered that a more serious case of bullying has come to light:

- Refer the matter immediately to the appropriate Director of Studies.
- Contact to be made by Director of Studies with the parents either by telephone or in writing.
- Repeated or serious bullying, or the suspicion thereof, should warrant an invitation for parents to come into School. In normal circumstances this would involve both the parents of the victim and those of the bully. They would be seen separately.
- Once bullying has been identified and parents informed a note should be kept on file.
- It is important that once an incident has been investigated, the Director of Studies or Form Tutor should monitor the situation for several weeks.

3. Guidance for Parents

- If you think your child or any other pupil is being bullied, please telephone the School and inform them immediately. The normal contact would be the Head of Year. Names of alleged bullies will help the School to establish their enquiries.
- Please allow the School time to investigate the matter thoroughly and report back to you. Very often bullying is a complex matter to get to the bottom of with a number of pupils needing to be interviewed.
- Be prepared to come into School, at a mutually convenient time, if either you are requested to by the School or feel that you want to talk to someone in person.
- Look out for signs of bullying in your own child. Common signs are a sudden reluctance to attend School, deterioration in schoolwork, spurious illness, missing equipment or general unhappiness at home.
- By keeping up to date with your son or daughter's friendships and social life, both offline and online, you may well learn about disagreements and difficulties.

- Overcoming bullying in School is the responsibility of teachers, pupils and parents. We are more likely to succeed if we can work together.

4. Guidance for Pupils

- If you feel you have been a victim of bullying tell somebody about it. In the first instance this would normally be your parents or a teacher.
- Whenever possible, and particularly in the case of verbal bullying, try to ignore it and not let the bully see that you have been upset.
- Walk away from the bully confidently and quickly and seek help even if your instinct is not to do so.
- Do not stand by and watch others being bullied. Seek help from a member of Staff.
- Be very careful about teasing or personal remarks made to others. This can often escalate into an unpleasant incident and can be taken as bullying.
- Refuse to join other people in bullying another pupil. Have the courage to say that you are not joining in.
- Show that you and your friends disapprove of bullying and do not be afraid to say so.
- Bullies do not deserve the protection of their peer group. Always tell the truth about incidents which you have witnessed which involve bullying.

5. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Whilst we at Bexley Grammar School embrace the endless possibilities of the Internet as an educational and communicative tool we are aware of the less positive opportunities that it provides for those intent on bullying. "Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools – Cyberbullying (DCSF, 2007)" classifies the following acts as cyber-bullying:

- text message bullying
- picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras
- phone call bullying via mobile phones
- email bullying
- chat room bullying
- bullying through instant messaging
- bullying via websites

Cyber-bullying is something that we take very seriously. It invades the homes and personal space of students, circulates problematic messages to a potentially vast audience and involves many online 'bystanders'. Much of it occurs outside of school and can often be anonymous. Where it is possible for us to deal with instances of cyber-bullying, sanctions will be applied

under the school's behaviour policy. In addition, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying, the police may be contacted. In cases where cyber-bullying happens beyond the remit of the school's ability to apply sanctions parents are encouraged to report cyberbullying directly to the appropriate authorities.

Those suffering from cyber-bullying are advised not to retaliate. They are advised to block the offender where possible and inform a parent or appropriate adult. Pupils and / or parents are encouraged to provide visual evidence to the school, which may involve contacting social networking sites or mobile phone companies.