



SHERBORNE



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS) - SHERBORNE SHORT COURSES

Originally written by Deputy Head Pastoral, September 2023;

Adapted by Compliance Operations Manager; approved by Director of Short Courses: November 2023

Next Review: September 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with other School policies:

- *Safeguarding Policy*
- *Behaviour Management Policy*
- *Procedure for Conducting a Search*

Anti-bullying policy statement

The overarching aim of the School is to provide an education that enriches students' lives, develops their character, confidence and capacity to learn, and prepares them for the complex challenges and opportunities of modern adult life in an ever-changing world.

A further aim is to provide a pastoral education that nurtures physical and spiritual health, emotional, moral and social maturity and an appreciation of relationships and responsibilities in the wider world. This education should foster respect for the needs of others, for the importance of co-operation and collaboration, and for the responsibilities of living in any community. We believe that we are a community that celebrates diversity rather than merely tolerating it.

The School, at all times, expects the highest standards of morality, integrity and honesty from all who work and study here.

Aims

1. to define bullying behaviour
2. to state clearly that bullying is always unacceptable
3. to suggest actions to be taken to prevent or reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour
4. to suggest ways of monitoring students' behaviour in general and the incidence of bullying behaviour in particular
5. to state procedures to deal with alleged incidents of bullying

This policy gives due regard to the DfE document 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017).

1. Definition of bullying behaviour

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. (DfE - 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)).

Bullying behaviour is any repeated behaviour which intentionally hurts or causes distress by taking advantage of another person in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable, humiliated, frightened, helpless or threatened. Bullying behaviour may occur directly or via cyber-technology.

Examples of bullying behaviour are:

- hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting
- name calling, taunting, teasing, insulting
- intimidating, isolating or excluding from the group
- spreading rumours or writing unkind notes
- using improperly any form of e-technology, such as computers and mobile 'phones
- inappropriate use of images and video
- taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- demanding money
- talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- initiation or hazing type violence

Bullying will often involve more than one form. The School is determined that no type of bullying will be tolerated by staff, students, agents, guardians or parents; abuse is abuse and will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim. As a consequence, those being bullied will find it difficult to defend themselves. The power imbalance may manifest itself in a number of ways including physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of someone through the threat of violence or by isolating them physically or online.

Low level disruption and the use of offensive language can also have a significant impact. Students learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption. If such behaviour is left unchallenged or dismissed as 'banter' or 'horseplay' it can lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention, whether in a lesson, during activities or in a House, helps to set clear expectations and boundaries regarding what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and helps to stop negative behaviours from escalating. By stepping in to prevent such behaviour the School creates a safe, disciplined environment where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

The School will also act upon bullying that occurs during breaks and outside of the School's premises. This includes for example, incidents that occur in town or on public transport.

In this document the terms "perpetrator" and "victim" are used. "Perpetrator" is used of someone who has manifested bullying behaviour; "victim" is used of someone who has received bullying behaviour. The terms are used for ease of reference. There is no suggestion that these are discrete categories of people, or that their involvement in bullying behaviour is necessarily either pervasive or persistent.

All aspects of bullying behaviour affect the victim. A victim may be bullied because of prejudice against particular groups. This can apply to age, physical appearance, nationality, culture, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation (LGBT+), religion, political or immigration status, home background, different family situations, special educational or health needs and disability (SEND) or because a student

is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. A student can also be bullied if they are new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. A student may also become a target because of an irrational decision by the perpetrator.

Bullying behaviour may hurt or distress the victim and, over a period of time, can lower their self-esteem and make them depressed. It can be a barrier to learning and have a serious impact upon mental health. In extreme cases, bullying, especially if it is left unaddressed, can cause psychological damage, pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

The School recognises that bullying can occur from staff to staff, from staff to student, from student to staff, from student to student, from parent/agent to staff, from staff to parent/agent, from parent/agent to student and from student to parent/agent. The School considers all forms of bullying unacceptable and recognises the potential that bullying has to damage an individual's self-belief and confidence long after the incidents have happened.

The nature and level of support provided for a student will depend upon the individual circumstances and the level of need. Such support can include that provided by the Short Course Management Team, Teachers, House staff and Matrons, engaging with parents/agents, and working with external agencies. In addition, the School will always work with external agencies (such as Social Care or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)) to best support the students in our care. We recognise that some forms of harassing or threatening behaviour/communications are a criminal offence and will seek assistance from the Police in such cases.

2. School code on bullying

All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that, so far as it is possible, every student feels safe and happy at School and feels supported and protected at all times.

The School expects all members of the School Community to uphold the School Code on Bullying:

1. Every student has the right to enjoy his learning and leisure time free from intimidation.
2. Our School Community will not tolerate unkind actions or remarks, even when these were not intended to hurt.
3. To stand by, when someone else is being bullied, is to support bullying.
4. If you are being bullied, or you know of someone who is being bullied you should report this to a senior member of staff.
5. Bullying will always be taken seriously.

3. Ways of preventing or reducing the incidence of bullying

Bullying thrives in secrecy, so the chief aim is to lower the 'threshold of disclosure' which deters bullied children from telling adults what is happening and thus encourages bullies to continue or even to escalate their actions. This threshold can be lowered by:

1. An open, positive, caring and trusting atmosphere is nurtured in the School.
2. Staff:
 - a) celebrate achievement
 - b) provide support
 - c) anticipate problems

- d) discipline sensibly and fairly
 - e) make opportunities to listen to students
 - f) act as advocates of students.
3. Students are encouraged to feel able to share problems with staff:
 - a) to turn to anyone they trust if they have a problem
 - b) not to feel guilty about airing complaints.
 4. Students are informed that bullying will not be tolerated in the School.
 5. Meals are pleasant social occasions.
 6. Practices that support the Equality Act (2010) are observed in School and Houses:
 - a) any discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable
 - b) positive attitudes towards difference are fostered through class discussion, assemblies, House meetings etc.
 7. In Houses:
 - a) there is an appropriate staff presence
 - b) staff are actively involved with students and in all areas of the House when they are on duty
 - c) attempts are made to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among students
 - d) there is space available for students' quiet withdrawal
 - e) there is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms.
 8. Staff are aware that concerns must always be shared as no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and what might appear to one member of staff as a one-off minor incident may very well not be. Everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action so as to act in the best interests of the student.
 9. The Short Course Management Team ensures that records are kept of bullying incidents allowing patterns to be identified and the effectiveness of the School's approach to be evaluated. This data may be used to report to the Governors' Pastoral committee. In addition, an annual report is available to the governing body through the Governors' Pastoral Committee on the prevention of bullying and the anti-bullying strategies being followed by the School. The policy will be reviewed as part of this process.

4. Monitoring students' behaviour, including bullying

The School proactively gathers information about issues between students which might provoke conflict and will always act to prevent bullying occurring in the first place:

1. Members of staff are vigilant at all times, but particularly outside rooms before and between lessons, and in the Dining Hall.
2. House and Pastoral staff are alert to the possibility of bullying in Houses, particularly in study bedrooms and common areas.
3. There is close cooperation between School and House staff:

- a) House Staff are informed of issues and incidents in the classroom and the wider School, and are informed of bullying incidents as soon as possible
 - b) House Staff report to other staff in the School issues and incidents involving individual students
 - c) there is effective and close liaison between the Matrons and both the House and School staff.
4. Record-keeping on the welfare and development of individual students:
- a) is efficient and well-maintained
 - b) is sensitive to individual changes
 - c) includes all relevant information to provide staff with information about welfare at all times
 - d) enables staff to spot changes in the well-being of individuals in time to take appropriate action.
5. Houses keep records and communicate details of events which need to be monitored and known to other members of the House staff team. Heads of Houses must keep up-to-date records (Bullying Incident Log) of all incidents and how they were managed.
6. The Director of Short Courses monitors the Bullying Incident Logs and Pastoral Notes regularly.

5. Procedures to deal with alleged incidents of bullying

1. Where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, 'significant harm' a bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. In the event of such disclosures about child-on-child abuse all the children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being at risk'. Where this is the case, staff must discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will report the concerns to Dorset Children's Services and work with them and other relevant external agencies as to the appropriate action to take, including the timing of informing parents. Parents will be informed as soon as possible, unless it is not in the best interests of the child to do so.
2. Any student being bullied or knowing that someone is being bullied (by whatever means, and whether or not the bullying has occurred inside School) should report what is happening to a member of staff within the School or parents/agents, in accordance with the School Code on Bullying. The following are available:
 - Welfare Leads
 - Heads of Houses, or any other member of House Staff
 - Matron
 - Any Teacher
 - Any member of the Short Course Management Team
 - a School Doctor or a nurse in the Health Centre (if available)
 - the Lead DSL or Deputy DSLs

A student may also wish to contact:

- Dorset Social Care and Health (01202 228866)
- ChildLine (0800 1111)
- Dept for Education (03700 002288)
- Office of the Children's Commissioner for England (0800 5280731),
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

3. A victim or a witness of bullying may be uncertain about taking this step, for a variety of reasons:

- a. they are afraid of 'telling tales'
- b. they do not want the perpetrator to be punished
- c. they are afraid of what the perpetrator will do
- d. they have become demoralised and feels that they do not deserve any better.

There should be an atmosphere within the School which encourages students to be completely open regarding bullying. Moreover, students should be encouraged to realise that it is always better to tell someone, because:

- a) sharing what is happening will help the victim to deal with their feelings
- b) bullying thrives on secrecy – it is best dealt with by being brought into the open
- c) it may save other people from becoming victims of the same perpetrator.

4. Any member of staff who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- a) firstly, offer advice and support to the alleged victim
- b) report the allegation to the Director of Short Courses as soon as possible.

5. The Director of Short Courses will record this in the Bullying Incident Log and, if they consider it appropriate, interview both the alleged victim and perpetrator and any possible witnesses. The members of staff carrying out the interviews will take into account any relevant specific SEND needs of the students involved and will adjust their approach accordingly. These interviews will be recorded in the relevant House Incident Book, together with action taken in the case as a whole.

6. In many cases where it is felt that bullying has taken place, the action in the first instance may not be disciplinary. It may sometimes be the case that the perpetrator genuinely has not recognised the distress caused to the victim by their behaviour. It may also be judged preferable to issue a warning before sanctions are applied. Regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken, an educative response to the incident must be made. The motivations behind the bullying behaviour will be considered paying attention to whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is found to be the case the child engaging in the bullying behaviour will also need appropriate support.

7. However, if the student responsible for the bullying behaviour repeats it, sanctions will be applied in conjunction with further pastoral education in this area. The aim is always to clearly show that bullying behaviour is wrong. Ultimately, a perpetrator who does not change their behaviour may have to leave the School.

8. It is essential that Heads of House of both the victim and the perpetrator continue to monitor the situation regularly. If the victim and the perpetrator are from different Houses, the relevant Heads of House should discuss their findings regularly whilst both victim and perpetrator remain at School after an alleged incident, until they are satisfied that further incidents are unlikely. They should record their results in the Bullying Incident Log.

9. Heads of House must notify the DSL of all alleged bullying incidents. Copies of interviews, incident reports and a recommended course of action should be sent as a written report to the DSL within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

10. The DSL will notify parents/agents of both the victim and the perpetrator about the case and any action taken.
11. The DSL should consider sharing information with some or all colleagues and with students in the House, in order that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain students closely.
12. The welfare of the victim should be considered of paramount importance. The student should be informed of any actions taken. They may need help to deal with their feelings and to understand and overcome their vulnerability.
13. The perpetrator should be given help and support in trying to change their behaviour.
14. If the Head of House believes that bullying has occurred or is occurring involving a student in their House or that bullying behaviour has occurred after warnings have been given to the perpetrator, or a student has made a formal complaint and they consider that the matter cannot be dealt with internally, they may ask the DSL to conduct interviews within the guidelines set out below.

6. Procedure to be followed when the DSL is asked to investigate an alleged incident of bullying

1. The DSL interviews the alleged victim, perpetrator and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. The DSL will take into account any relevant specific SEND needs of the students involved and will adjust the approach taken during interview accordingly. An appropriate second member of staff will be present.
2. A summary of the findings will be sent to the relevant Head of House.
3. The DSL will also interview the alleged perpetrator, in order:
 - a) to confirm the facts of the case, if considered necessary
 - b) to establish a course of action to help the perpetrator and, if considered necessary, to issue a warning of sanctions or apply them.
4. The DSL will notify the parents of the students concerned, informing them of action taken. At this stage, it might be appropriate for individual behaviour management plans to be put in place.
5. Relevant House/Pastoral Staff monitor the situation, evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and raise staff awareness of the specific situation.
6. If the victim does not feel that the procedure set out above has resolved the issue, they should inform either the Head of House or the DSL.
7. If the victim's parents do not feel that the procedures detailed above have resolved the issue, they should follow the procedure laid out within the School's Complaints Policy.
8. The DSL may need to inform relevant external agencies as soon as possible.
9. The perpetrator may be asked to leave the course if circumstances cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Note: The term DSL applies to both the Lead DSL and the Deputy DSLs.

7. Cyber bullying

The School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy contains further information on what the School does to try and prevent and tackle Cyber-bullying.

The term refers to any form of bullying that takes place using electronic technology, for example text messaging, images or video-clips, email, chat rooms, social media or gaming activities, instant messaging, web logs, online personal polling sites, personal websites and so on. The opportunities for bullying within this sphere are growing as the technology becomes more widespread. Cyber-bullying can occur at any time of the day and has a potentially bigger audience.

The School has the following safeguards in place:

1. All students and members of staff are required to sign a statement of agreement as part of the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
2. All e-communications used on the School site or as part of School activities off-site are monitored.
3. All access to the internet by students is filtered and bars are placed on a variety of unsuitable websites.
4. All students are made aware of the policy with regard to the use of mobile technology.
5. Members of staff are aware of the need to be vigilant and to act accordingly when a problem arises.
6. Members of staff are able to confiscate electronic technology from students if the technology is being used inappropriately.
7. The School's search policy applies to electronic devices.

The Police will always be informed of serious incidents involving cyber bullying, pornographic images of a child or extreme pornographic images.

This policy has been written with reference to the following DfE publications: Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017), Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School staff (Nov 2014); Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016) and should be considered alongside the School's Safeguarding Policy as part of the School's safeguarding procedures.