



# Gosfield School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with our School's Behaviour Policy.

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Gosfield 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, including Early Years 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. This is expressed in a code of conduct.

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

Bullying, harassment, 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**.

Gosfield School complies with the following guidance:

"Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools", DCSF

"Preventing and Tackling Bullying", DfE, July 2017

"Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff", DfE, November 2014

The policy is made available to all parents, staff and pupils via the School website.

### DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual/sexist), verbal (including telephones), cyber (including chat room, mobile phone SMS/text messages, email, social networking sites and photographs), 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 also involves actions or comments that are racist, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or which focus on a pupil's academic abilities (this applies particularly to pupils with special educational needs, who could be victims of bullying if, for example, they have in-class support). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously as bullying, particularly severe or persistent bullying, can result in psychological problems for the victim. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

## **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 spoiled 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 Sick Room 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, experiencing 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.

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

We take the following preventative measures:

- We raise awareness of staff through training.
- We take action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.
- 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 trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. This is then passed to the relevant tutor/class teacher for investigation.
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme and our tutor programme are structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programmes are structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. Through discussion we acknowledge the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.
- Other lessons, including Religious Education, Drama and ICT 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 reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors/Class Teachers, Heads of House, and a Pastoral Coordinator in the Prep School who are all supported by the Head of Pastoral. They are expected to handle any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.

- Where necessary, and if requested by the parents, the school can provide details of external support services. Such services are advertised in school and coordinated by the safeguarding team in conjunction with the pastoral team. Appropriate networks are also included in the pupil planners.
- At various locations around the school, advice is displayed on where pupils can seek help. These include details of Childline.
- All pupils have access to a telephone, enabling them to call for support in private.
- 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.
- The policy is provided to parents and staff and is presented to recently appointed staff as part of their induction programme.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

### **CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION**

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org> defined this unpleasant 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 FaceBook, Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

### **CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Gosfield School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its rules for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our ICT Department monitors pupils’ use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on cyberbullying in ICT and PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts and how to report abuse.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not allow the use of cameras on mobile phones in washing and changing areas.

## **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 Tutor and/or Head of House/Pastoral Coordinator as soon as possible.
- The appropriate member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- A member of the pastoral team will interview the victim on his/her own as soon as possible. They will be interviewed separately from the alleged perpetrator and asked to give an account of events. 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.
- The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually afterwards by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and asked to give an immediate account of events. 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, as stated in the school's behaviour policy.
- The incident is recorded and passed to all relevant members of the pastoral team.
- The Head of Pastoral maintains a central log of any incidents and monitors progression. Dates and details of ongoing situations are logged and the Senior Leadership Team are kept informed. An holistic picture is maintained between different aspects of school provision such as teaching and health care and the Head of Pastoral forwards relevant information to all concerned.
- All appropriate staff will be informed. In very serious incidents, the Deputy Head, Head of Prep and/or Principal will be informed.
- When necessary, the parents/guardians of all parties will be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support will be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be agreed. It is important to recognise that suitable support is needed both for pupils 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.
- Those involved will be closely monitored by the pastoral team, led by the Head of Pastoral.
- Strong sanctions such as behaviour contracts or exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Principal has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services. However, it is the policy of Gosfield School 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.

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**Ratified by the Governing Council of Gosfield School**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors) Date \_\_\_\_\_