

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Whole School

1. AIMS

1.1 The aim of the policy is to prevent bullying of any sort; to promote a culture of kindness and one in which bystanders are courageous and thus ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, safe and caring environment. Kent College Pembury operates a zero tolerance approach towards bullying. The school treats bullying as a safeguarding issue and any incidents are taken seriously, as it can cause damage to individual pupils, both physically and emotionally.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone. We do all we can to prevent bullying, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is not tolerated.

1.2 Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school but if bullying does occur, all pupils should feel able to discuss the issue and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All staff have a duty to promote fundamental British values which do not tolerate bullying. Reports of bullying will always be taken seriously.

1.3 This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Safeguarding and Child Protection (which contains the Peer on Peer abuse framework)
- Online Safety
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Equal opportunities
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

1.4 This Anti-Bullying Policy is also compliant with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for school Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2017
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2015), Standard 12: Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships Equality Act, 2010
- SEND Code of Practice 2015: 0 to 25 years

Definition of Bullying

1.5 Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually but not exclusively repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally. It is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and it is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable bullying behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Online abuse, which is defined as the use of IT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours

1.6 Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidating but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair, colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs and/or disability, or because a child is adopted or a carer.

1.7 The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough and is among the highest concerns that parents have about their children's safety and wellbeing. Bullying is also a primary concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. It can be psychologically damaging and, at worst, it has been a factor in pupil suicide.

1.8 It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victims. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Pupils are educated through our PSHE programme, assemblies, and the wider curriculum and culture to raise awareness, the celebration of differences between people, the importance of avoiding prejudice and understanding the criminal laws that apply to harassment, discrimination, assault and threatening or controlling behaviour. If staff feel that a criminal offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

1.9 We acknowledge that sometimes group dynamics can lead to negative behaviour and that assigning victim and aggressor labels can be counterproductive. In such situations we aim to educate the group around appropriate, healthy and positive behaviour through role play and other means.

1.10 We recognise that bullying may occur any time of day or night, in or outside school and may involve any members of the school community, including adults (staff or parents), and we are committed to responding to it in all its forms.

2. ACTION

2.1 The School will raise awareness of pupils' needs through staff training, including the needs of SEND and LGBTQ pupils, and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for pupil committees and groups, such as School Council.

2.2 It should be made clear to all pupils what forms bullying might take. The messages contained in this policy are explained to pupils in person by the Deputy Heads, Student Managers and tutors. They will also be re-visited as necessary during PSHE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves, such as assemblies, Drama, Literature or at the time an incident takes place and through the use of stories in the Prep School.

2.3 The importance of reporting incidents of bullying and onlookers to an appropriate person must be impressed upon everyone in the school. When a case of bullying is reported it should be dealt with immediately before further incidents occur. Similarly, if a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being bullied this should be followed up at once. Incidents of bullying in both the Prep and Senior School will be recorded in the bullying log. The Deputy Head Pastoral will monitor this frequently to check for any emerging patterns of behaviour and the document will be reviewed and signed off by the Executive who will consider the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

2.4 Depending upon the severity of the bullying recorded, matters will be dealt with using the sanctions included in the Behaviour Policy. This could in the most severe instances result in the involvement of external agencies, eg police or social services, where criminal activity or safeguarding concerns arise.

2.5 Members of staff who believe that they are the victims of bullying are encouraged to discuss the matter with a member of Executive, HR, the chaplain or the medical team. The school has a written grievance procedure which may be invoked in instances of bullying of staff.

3. ROLE OF THE HEADMISTRESS

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Headmistress to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying.

3.2 The Headmistress ensures that all children are educated concerning bullying, and that it is understood to be unacceptable behaviour in the school.

4. ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND SUPPORT STAFF

4.1 All staff in our school are expected to take all forms of bullying seriously, and to seek to prevent it from taking place.

4.2 If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Executive. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the pupils concerned.

If any bullying is seen between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. We would usually invite the pupils' parents into the school to discuss the situation and refer as appropriate. Senior staff will establish action in line with behaviour policy.

5. THE ROLE OF PARENTS

5.1 Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact the school immediately, in the first instance this would usually be the class teacher in the Prep School or the Form Tutor in the Senior School. Parents should feel able to contact other members of staff in addition. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Headmistress. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure.

5.2 Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

6. THE ROLE OF PUPILS

6.1 Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied or if they are aware of someone else being bullied.

6.2 Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying through School Council in both the Prep and Senior School and worry boxes.

Senior Deputy Head: April 2009

Agreed by SLT: June 2009

Approved by Education Committee: September 2009

Reviewed: SLT November 2011

Approved by Education Committee: March 2012

Reviewed by SLT: March 2015

Approved by Education Committee: March 2015

Reviewed by Compliance Committee – November 2017

Approved by Education Committee – March 2018

Reviewed by Deputy Head Pastoral – October 2020

Approved by Education Committee: November 2020