

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE

This whole school policy sets out our approach to bullying in accordance with our Mission Statement as a Catholic and Christian community. It is framed within the guidelines offered by the Diocese of Shrewsbury, Wirral LA and the Department for Education. We stand firm in the belief that respect for one another is a fundamental and essential element in our daily relationships. At Upton we firmly believe that we are all equally important in God's eyes. We pride ourselves on creating a safe and nurturing environment where student wellbeing is at the centre of everything we do.

AIMS

- to ensure that all those connected with the school understand what is meant by the term 'bullying' and are made aware that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- to nurture the values of responsibility, duty and respect, both for oneself and for others.
- to ensure that each person feels safe and secure within the school community.
- to ensure that any behaviour which threatens or intimidates any member of the school community is dealt with firmly and fairly.
- to provide a transparent, easily understood system for responding to incidents of bullying.

GUIDELINES

- all members of the school community should be aware and alert to any form of bullying and must report it to the Form Teacher and the Head of Year of the pupil involved.
- all incidents of bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the situation.
- all members of the school community should be aware of the procedures to be followed when bullying occurs.
- confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, nor should it be offered.
- the issue of bullying must feature in the PSHE programme.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The success of the school's policy on bullying will be measured using the following criteria:

- no pupil is perceived to suffer physical, verbal, electronic or indirect bullying
- all staff and pupils display a heightened awareness of the effects of bullying
- an improvement in learning and attainment at KS3, GCSE and A Level as a consequence of an atmosphere of mutual support

Friendship issues

At Upton Hall, we believe that not all aggressive behaviour is bullying. It can be the case that children fall out with one another, or that children are equally aggressive towards each other. Unless serious exclusion of one member from the group, and/or imbalance of power is taking place, then it may be the case of individual differences. At Upton Hall, we acknowledge the importance that friendship plays in the lives of young people – girls in particular. The school supports girls who fall out with each other by applying a new approach 'Girls On Board'. This programme is an empathy raising approach that empowers girls to resolve possible friendship turbulence for themselves; adults support but do not always interfere unless bullying is taking place. See girlsonboard.co.uk for more information on this approach.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY BULLYING?

There is no legal definition of bullying but the NSPCC defines bullying as "behaviour that hurts someone else. It included name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally."

Bullying is part of a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident that causes distress.

Bullying can take many forms:

- physical: hurting someone or someone else's property
- verbal: someone or calling someone names or commenting on their family, appearance or ability
- emotional and mentally: making a person feel isolated and alone by encouraging others to exclude or ignore them.
- Indirect: damaging the reputation or character of the target
- Cyber: intimidation through the use of technology such as email, the internet, mobile phone texting or another mode of social media communication
- Racist: use of racial slurs, taunts, gestures and graffiti
- Homophobic: focusing on issues of sexuality
- Disability: name calling, using words and/or gestures to torment or threaten targets, because of or focussing on, the issue of disability of special educational need

In the event of a hate crime, it can be reported to the Police on 111 or online by the target, friend or family member using the website: https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force

Bullying is usually a repeated attack which causes distress not only at the time of each attack, but also by the threat of future attacks.

Definitions of bullying written by pupils at Upton:

- A bully is someone who picks on you and hurts you physically or with what they say
- A bully is someone who threatens people, calls you names and gets pleasure out of making fun of people
- A bully is someone who makes your life very unhappy
- A bully is someone who goes out of their way to upset and depress others for their own enjoyment

What should we do if we think bullying is happening?

If I feel I am being bullied, I should:

- talk to my Form Teacher, my Head of Year, a member of staff or a Senior.
- tell my parents/guardians what is happening.
- be prepared to write down what has happened and my feelings about it.

If I think someone else is being bullied I should:

- offer support in a quiet manner.
- be prepared to tell my Form Teacher, my Head of Year, a member of staff or a Senior Prefect.
- refuse to be drawn into any group situation in which one person is feeling isolated or mocked.

If I am bullying someone, I should:

- stop the behaviour immediately and reconcile our differences where possible.
- try to put myself in the shoes of the other person and treat them as I would want to be treated myself.
- make a real effort to behave in a kind and courteous manner to the person I have bullied.
- Access help and support to understand the consequences of my actions on the target. This could include but is not exclusive to counselling, school chaplain or external agency support such as the charity child line.

Useful organisations/helplines:

- BullyingUK: 0808 800 2222

(Advice for parents/carers on dealing with bullying)

- Carers UK: 0808 808 7777

(Information, advice and support for people who need help looking after a friend or family member)

- CASS: 0808 800 8088

(National organisation that supports women and girls affected by self-harm)

- Childline: 0800 11 11

(Free confidential service to help young people under 19 with any issue they are experiencing)

- Family Lives: 0808 800 2222

(Offers information, advice, guidance and support on any aspect of parenting and family life, including bullying)

- Kooth: www.kooth.co.uk

(UK's largest digital mental health provider to the NHS for children and young people aged 10-25, offering digital mental health services)

- MIND: 0208 215 2243

(A Mental Health charity that offers advice to people with mental health issues)

- Refuge: 0808 2000 247

(Information and advice on violence against teenage girls and young women)

- Runaway Helpline: 116 000

(Provides information, help and support and options for young people thinking of running away or are already away)

- Samaritans: 116 123 or 08457 90 90 90

(Crisis support for anyone in emotional distress or suicidal)

- Scope: 0808 800 3333

(Support for disabled people, their families and professionals)

- Victim Support: 0845 30 30 900

(Free and confidential support for those affected by crime)

PROCEDURES FOR STAFF IF BULLYING IS SUSPECTED OR REPORTED TO THEM

- talk to the person who is being bullied in a quiet and not obvious place.
- listen to them and encourage them to write down details of incidents and how they have felt.
- speak to other responsible members of the form and/or class in order to build up a clear picture.
- if the situation can be resolved in a quiet manner, talk to the person named as bullying and monitor the situation.
- any other member of staff should, in the same way, inform the Form Teacher in the first instance.
- Form Teachers must ensure that the page **What Do We Mean By Bullying** is displayed in each form room and by appropriate reference to this issue a culture of mutual support is engendered.
- if the problem seems to be continuing, the Form Teacher should inform the Head of Year.
- Anti-bullying to be promoted through form time and year group assemblies.
- Raise awareness through PSHE themes such as conflict, trust, friendships, kindness.
- Where appropriate, issues may be raised at School Council meetings.
- Signpost students to information and advice in the Pupil Planner. This includes websites for outside agencies that deal with issues such as bullying.
- Each case is individual and deserves consideration and response.

If the bullying issue cannot be resolved by the process outlined above, the Head of Year should:

- Reflect on what actions can be taken to resolve this matter as sanctions should not be considered the first response to tackling bullying.
- Liaise with the parents of both the target of the bully or group of bullies in a manner appropriate to the situation i.e. by phone if simply to inform or reassure; by letter if an interview is appropriate.
- Liaise with the school counsellor who may signpost the target to further support such as Charities e.g. Childline, Mind or other agencies to support the targeted child further.
- Senior Prefects should be encouraged to be vigilant and can be of great support in cases of bullying.
- Targets of bullying should be informed that any information they disclose cannot be kept secret if the bullying is to be addressed.
- In the case of cyber bullying, advice to the target and/or the parents/carers may focus on ways to block anyone who posts abusive or threatening messages. The parent/carer should report anyone who is bullying your child to the social media platform that's carrying the offending comments, audio, image or video.
- The Deputy Head (KS3, KS4 or Director of Sixth Form) should be kept informed and should become actively involved if the situation does not improve after the parents have been interviewed.
- Where deemed appropriate, Parents/carers of the bully and the victim should be informed and what action will be taken discussed with both. If possible, pupils will be reconciled with each other.
- Where bullying persists, the parents/carers of the bully and the target may will be required to attend a meeting with the designated lead person to discuss possible solutions to the issue.
- In cases of severe and persistent bullying, and the procedures have been followed and failed to have an effect, more severe sanctions will be considered.
- The Deputy Head or Director of Sixth Form should keep the Headmistress informed of the action being taken.

SANCTIONS

Due to the often complex issues surrounding the problem of bullying, the application of sanctions is not a straightforward affair. Punishment of any kind is sometimes inappropriate as the bully may require support

and help too by engaging with agencies and a behaviour contract. We must always strive where possible for reconciliation between the target and the bully.

In more serious cases, the usual range of sanctions are available for use when deemed appropriate and proportionate. These include detention, withdrawal of privileges and withdrawal from class. In serious cases other agencies such as the Police may need to be involved but criminalising young people is only considered in the most serious of cases and may sometimes be considered as part of an advisory route. For extremely serious or persistent offences, fixed-term or ultimately permanent exclusion is at the disposal of the Headmistress where deemed legal and all evidence has been gathered and considered.

SAFEGUARDING

Parents should be aware that the school will take any reasonable action to secure the safety of its students. Where there is reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff have no alternative but to follow Child Protection Procedures and inform Social Services of their concern when deemed appropriate.