



# Dame Alice Harpur School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy sets out the aims of the School in relation to bullying behaviour. It provides a framework within which any actions against bullying can be implemented and their effectiveness reviewed.

### Guiding Principles

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify that, within our school community, bullying is always unacceptable. This anti-bullying policy document reflects our commitment to encouraging an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without inhibition. Every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected when she is feeling vulnerable.

The objectives of our anti-bullying policy are to:

- clarify the school's collective understanding of the nature of bullying;
- establish an agreed code of conduct for all school members;
- encourage staff to maintain awareness and understanding of potential for and effects of bullying in the classroom;
- make bullying an explicit theme in assemblies and through the curriculum; e.g. Personal, Social and Health Education
- provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to share and consider relevant behavioural issues in a secure learning environment;
- encourage liaison between the school and parents;
- maintain a regular review of this policy.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is the conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be physical, verbal or emotional in nature. It may take the form of repeated:

- physical assault or restraint
- name calling, teasing, taunting and constant criticising
- racist, religious, cultural, sexist, sexual and/or homophobic comments
- taunts concerning mental or physical disability
- rude gestures or a deliberately intimidating look or stare
- extortion or threats
- hiding, damaging or stealing the victim's property
- generating fear in the target of the bullying in order to dominate her
- isolating the victim often by ignoring her
- cyberbullying: an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend herself
- unwanted text messaging, e-mails, hurtful comments or passing on of photographs in internet chat rooms



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Definitions of bullying vary, but there are three essential elements that are always present:

- an unequal power relationship between the bully and victim
- the deliberate use of aggression
- the causing of physical pain and/or emotional distress

### Who is the object of the bullying?

Any pupil is at risk, but there are certain indicators:

- lacking close friends in school
- being shy
- coming from an over-protective family environment
- being from a different racial, religious or cultural group
- being homosexual or lesbian
- having a mental or physical disability
- being different in some obvious respect from the majority
- having specific learning difficulties
- being a 'provocative victim' (a child who behaves inappropriately with others, barging in on their games or being a nuisance)
- the obviously sensitive child

**None** of these factors can excuse bullying.

### What are the signs of bullying?

Young people may:

- be frightened of walking to and from school
- be unwilling to go to school
- change their route to school
- begin doing badly in school work
- come home with possessions missing or damaged
- become withdrawn and anxious/change in their usual behaviour
- suffer psychological damage
- have nightmares
- seem to lose a lot of possessions
- ask for or steal money
- continually appear to lose pocket money
- refuse to say what is wrong
- give improbable excuses for any of the above situations
- be anxious about checking computer messages, e-mails or texts
- self harm
- consider or attempt suicide



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### Encouragement to Tell

It is important that we aim to create an atmosphere in the school where a pupil who is being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action will be swift but sensitive to their concern. Not telling protects the bully or bullies and gives the message that they can continue, perhaps bullying others too. We encourage girls to approach any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable or any Head of Section, Senior Tutor, Pastoral Assistant Head or any member of SLT.

### Procedures

To allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures. In the first instance it is important to make it clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate and to the bully that her behaviour is unacceptable, and has caused distress. Every effort is made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties, where an understanding of the bully's motivation should be sought and addressed. The bully should be helped to face up to the harm she has caused and both bully and recipient of the bullying behaviour encouraged to develop resistance to unacceptable behaviour and attitudes.

At this stage, it is usual for the parents of both parties to be informed of what has happened, and how it has been dealt with. It is vital that everything that happens is carefully recorded by the member of staff dealing with the incident in a clear, factual way as documents to be stored in the files of bully and victim. Conversations with parents should also be noted and added to the girls' files.

If the bullying behaviour continues, then sanctions (such as removal of the bully from social time at break and lunch, exclusion from lessons while being kept in isolation on SLT corridor, or in more serious cases, fixed term or permanent exclusion) will follow and the situation will continue to be monitored over a period of time.

The person who has been bullied will be encouraged to build up strategies in order to support her in the weeks following the bullying incident. A review of the situation may be appropriate after several months have elapsed.

(See also 'Rewards and Sanctions Policy' and 'Discipline and Exclusions Policy')

### Parents

An advisory leaflet is published for girls and parents.



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### Teachers

Teachers are advised that if they think that bullying is happening, they should talk to the girls concerned and ask them what has occurred, ensuring that a written record is made and passed on to the relevant Section Head. Section Heads discuss their input to Anti-Bullying Week at a Section Heads' Meeting; minutes of the meeting are published on the intranet. Support Tutors have discussed different scenarios at a meeting led by the Pastoral Assistant Head. Duty staff are directed to be vigilant and sensitive to the potential of bullying situations.

### How the anti-bullying policy is supported in the curriculum

- An information leaflet on bullying is issued to all parents
- Issues such as bullying, friendships and related topics are raised in our Personal, Social and Health Education Programme, and in other lessons such as English and Drama
- Issues are raised in assembly themes e.g. friendship, mutual respect, being different, tolerance, often led by girls
- The issue of cyberbullying is dealt with in ICT lessons and assemblies and an E-safety Policy has been published.
- Anti-bullying week in November leads to heightened consciousness through posters, discussions in form time, in School Council and assemblies. Anti-bullying screen savers on school computers during this week and recommendations to girls to read PowerPoint recommended by Anti-Bullying Alliance help to reinforce the message.
- Student listeners are available to give support if required

### Government Guidelines

The DCSF website gives guidelines for schools, particularly through the initiative 'Bullying: don't suffer in silence'. There are also links to other useful sites, such as 'Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools (September 2007)', 'Safe from Bullying' Guidance for Local Authorities and other Strategic Leaders on Reducing Bullying in the Community (April 2009). Go to [www.dcsf.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bullying) to view this site.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has a range of information and resources on their website. It has launched an online local authority Anti-Bullying Toolkit, designed to meet the demand from local authorities for support in developing strategic approaches to tackling bullying in Schools. Visit [www.anti-bullyingalliancetoolkit.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliancetoolkit.org.uk)

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