



Solihull School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

The School aims to create an environment which fosters the all-round personal development of pupils. Bullying is morally wrong and undermines the creation of this environment. Bullying is unacceptable at Solihull School. All members of staff have a duty to be vigilant in and around the School site at all times. This policy reflects and supports the aims and ethos of our school and reflects and supports the principles of the **Every Child Matters** initiative. This policy is designed not only to help staff, parents and pupils to deal with bullying when it occurs but even more importantly, to 'prevent' it. The DCSF guidance on the prevention of bullying is contained in **Safe to Learn**.

2. Definition of Bullying

The DCSF defines bullying as: *'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is any behaviour that is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is usually unprovoked, persistent and can continue for a long period of time. It always reflects an abuse of power. It is often difficult for victims to defend themselves against.'*

Bullying can mean many different things, but includes any behaviour that intentionally or thoughtlessly harms, threatens, intimidates or distresses someone else, for example:

- Insults/excessive teasing
- Cruel nicknames
- Making threats
- Isolating/rejecting someone from peer group
- Physical assaults
- Extortion or coercion by means of intimidating behaviour
- Damaging, taking or hiding property
- Writing or telling lies about someone
- Sending cruel text messages, video messages or e-mails
- Spreading rumours
- Being unfriendly and turning others against someone
- Posting inappropriate comments on websites

Bullying may occur for a variety of different reasons. The reasons may not be immediately obvious. It may be related to:

- Race, ethnicity, religion or culture
- Special educational need or disability
- Appearance or health
- Sexual orientation
- Sexual harassment
- Sexism

And can take a number of forms:

- Verbal, physical or emotional

- Homophobic bullying (looks like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include spreading rumours that someone is gay, or suggesting that someone is inferior).
- Sexual assault and threatening behaviour and may target any pupils or staff regardless of sexual orientation.
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging, email, photographs or abusive phone calls.

3. Warning Signs of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or truanting from school. Staff must always be vigilant for signs of bullying. The seriousness of bullying cannot be overstated. Bullying can cause severe psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

It is important to be aware that children who are being bullied will potentially exhibit symptoms in **many** different ways. Staff should always be vigilant and look out for the following:

- 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 spoilt 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 matron with symptoms such as stomach pains and 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 sleeping, experiencing nightmares
- Talking of self harming, running away or suicide

4. Statement of Policy

We will do our best to:

- Make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable
- Encourage pupils to not suffer in silence
- Eliminate bullying
- Enable all pupils to learn in a caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied

5. Procedures

If a pupil is being bullied, he/she can expect that:

- He/she will be listened to and taken seriously
- Action will be taken to help stop the bullying
- He/she will be given an opportunity to talk about how the bully(ies) has made him/her feel
- If a pupil is ever in fear of their physical safety, staff will take immediate action to keep him/her safe

If a pupil is experiencing any of the issues above, they should talk to a member of staff immediately, even if they think they can handle the situation. There are a number of people who would be happy to listen in order to find a solution to the problem; Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Section, Matron, School Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Headmasters, Headmaster or any other member of staff or senior pupil/Bencher.

The School will support **pupils who have been bullied** by:

- Providing an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with Form Tutor, Year Head or member of staff of their choice
- Offering ongoing support, which may include peer support
- Endeavouring to restore self-esteem and confidence

Support for **pupils who have bullied** may take the form of:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the problems and the need to change
- Informing the family in order to help change the attitude of pupils and gain support for the process
- Counselling will also be offered/encouraged to the perpetrator(s) where appropriate.

The following sanctions may be taken against the bully where appropriate:

- Official warnings
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Suspension
- Exclusion

The following steps should be taken by staff when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be referred to a member of the pupil's Pastoral Team
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and logged by the appropriate member of staff
- Appropriate staff, including Form Tutors and Year Heads, will be kept informed of the situation
- Appropriate actions and/or sanctions will be taken in consultation with all parties concerned
- Headmaster and Deputy Headmasters will be kept informed

5. The Role of Parents

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 their child's Form Tutor, Year Head or Head of Section immediately. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

6. Recording

In order to identify patterns of bullying, a recording system is used. In recording each and every case and example of bullying, all elements are entered into a specific database; (perpetrator(s), victim(s), date, place, description, action taken, contact with parents and type of incident). The Heads of Section and Deputy Headmaster (SAM) will review the information on a weekly basis in endeavouring to fulfil our aim of 'preventing' bullying at Solihull School.

7. Raising Awareness

Through the curriculum the School will raise awareness of the nature of bullying in tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate. This will aid the prevention of bullying. Direct action in assemblies regularly reminds pupils that all forms of bullying are unacceptable. Bullying is a regular topic for discussion in School Councils in each section of the School.

The School also has a PSHE programme which is integral to the promotion of anti-bullying. Related topics for particular year groups in 2009/10 are as follows:

Year 7	Bullying and friendships, Internet Safety
Year 8	Tooled up for School, Self-Esteem, Dealing with emotions
Year 9	Sex and Relationships, Drugs and peer pressure
Year 10	Depression and Stress
Year 11	Sex and Relationships

Anti-bullying strategies are discussed at least annually at School Council meetings. The School takes very seriously the annual anti-bullying week and from time to time, the Heads of Section galvanise the whole School community into engaging in a number of projects ranging from; designing anti-bullying posters, designing an anti-bullying website screensaver as well as departments in the School hosting subject specific competitions, for example; English – anti-bullying poetry competition, Drama – anti-bullying acting competition and Art – anti-bullying painting/design competition. The issues covered during the week are then used as the basis for assemblies during the year.

Each pupil in the Senior School has a School Planner, in which they each have a section on bullying and most importantly how to recognise they are being bullied and what they should do if they are.

It is essential also that the subject of bullying is regularly discussed at Staff meetings; drawing attention to it, alerting staff to the likelihood of it and providing them with strategies to deal with it. The recording strategy allows staff to be informed of particular forms of bullying/particular places around School where bullying has previously taken place in order to reduce the risk of bullying.

The School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy echoes the School's view of bullying stated above; *'Bullying has never been tolerated at this school and will not be excused on grounds of it being part of a game. Bullying is a serious matter which may lead to **removal or exclusion**. You must not bully others and if others bully you, or you see someone else being bullied, you should inform a member of staff immediately or your parents.'*