



# SOLIHULL

## Anti-Bullying Policy

**Owner:** Senior Deputy Headmaster  
**Reviewers:** Assistant Head: Pastoral  
Deputy Head of the Junior School  
**Last Reviewed:** September 2018

Version 6

## **1. Aims and Objectives**

The School aims to create and maintain an environment which fosters the all-round personal development of pupils. Bullying is morally wrong and undermines the maintaining 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. This policy is designed:-

- To prevent incidents of bullying at Solihull School; and
- Where bullying occurs, to assist pupils, parents and staff in dealing with it in the most appropriate manner.
- This policy is informed by:

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance

Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools

Counselling in schools a blueprint for the future: advice for school leaders and counsellors

Independent School Standard Regulations 2014

The Children Act 1989

The Equality Act 2010

A key part of The Equality Act 2010 is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Duty has 3 aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## **2. Definition of Bullying**

The DfE defines bullying as:

*'Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance; cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.'*

Many experts say that bullying can involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways: it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to a reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

*Bullying* includes 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 often reflects an abuse of power. It is often difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Bullying includes any behaviour that intentionally 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

In some cases, thoughtless behaviour of this sort will also be capable of constituting bullying.

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

- Race, or ethnicity
- Religion culture, or belief
- Disabilities
- Special educational needs
- Appearance or health
- Sexual orientation
- Sexual harassment
- Sexism

- Transgender status
- Age

Bullying can take a number of forms. These include:

- 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 that may target any pupils or staff regardless of sexual orientation.
- Cyber-bullying – the rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying (e.g. 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) that can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories for people to forward on content at a ‘click’ (See ICT: Acceptable Use Policy).

### **3. Warning Signs of Bullying**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness and/or 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.

*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. Prevention

All staff should proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference; in lessons, projects and assemblies. Staff should then be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issue that needs addressing. Staff should promote good behaviour at all times, helping to create an ethos where pupils treat one another and the staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others should permeate the whole school environment and be reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

## 6. 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 help 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, Nurse, School Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Head of the Junior School, Head of the Junior School, Deputy Headmasters, Headmaster or any other member of staff or senior pupil/Bencher/J4 Mentor/Senior Mentor.

The School will support **pupils who have been bullied** (and those reporting bullying) by:

- Providing an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with Form Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Head of the Junior School 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 pupils who have been bullied and the perpetrator(s) where appropriate.

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

- Yellow/Red Slip (JS)
- Improvement Card (JS)
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Fixed Term Exclusion
- 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, Year Heads, Deputy Head of the Junior School, 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, Head and Deputy Head of the Junior School will be kept informed as appropriate
- Police and Social Care to be informed where necessary

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, a DSL (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy) should report their concerns to children's social care.

## **7. Bullying Outside School**

This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises e.g. school or public transport, on a trip/visit, or in the local shopping centre. Where bullying is reported, it should be investigated and acted upon.

## **8. 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/Deputy Head of the Junior school 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.*

## **9. Recording**

In order to identify possible patterns of bullying, a recording system is used. In recording each and every bullying complaint, all elements are entered into a specific database; (alleged perpetrator(s), alleged victim(s), date, place, description, action taken, contact

with parents and type of incident). The Heads of Section/Deputy Head of the Junior School will review the information on a weekly basis in endeavouring to fulfil our aim of 'preventing' bullying at Solihull School. The school's Pastoral Support Team (chaired by the Assistant Head: Pastoral), also examines closely, any bullying-related issues.

## **10. 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 staff periodically receive INSET on well-being (with a focus on bullying).

The School also has a PSHEE programme (see Policy) and a **Wellbeing & Personal Development curriculum** which is integral to the promotion of anti-bullying. Related topics for particular year groups are as follows:

- J1 E-Safety, feeling good about yourself, developing resilience
- J2 Recognising and challenging prejudice, gender stereotypes
- J3 E-Safety and cyber-bullying, managing uncomfortable feelings
- J4 Put-downs and conflict, ending friendships and forgiveness.
- 3rds Bullying and friendships, Internet Safety
- Shells Self-Esteem, Dealing with emotions, Relationships
- 4ths Sex and Relationships, Drugs and peer pressure, Prejudice
- Lower 5th Mental Health, Keeping Safe
- Upper 5th Teenagers and the Law (including bullying), Stress

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/Deputy Head of the Junior School 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 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 prevent it and, where it occurs, deal with it appropriately. 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.'*