

Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

Making the School safe for everyone is our priority at Silcoates. It is vital that all pupils feel safe and free from harassment in the School environment. It is equally important that pupils, parents and staff feel secure in the knowledge that any report of an incident of bullying is treated with the utmost seriousness by the School and will be dealt with swiftly and consistently.

Statement of Intent

The Silcoates School community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Silcoates School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community. Parents have an important role in supporting us in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration, and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Aims and Objectives

- To create a happy, well-ordered and caring community;
- To raise awareness among pupils, parents and staff as to what constitutes bullying behaviour;
- To communicate to pupils, parents and staff why bullying is unacceptable, that it will not be tolerated and that victims will be supported;
- To reduce incidents of bullying through the implementation of appropriate strategies, preventative and proactive as well as reactive;
- To ensure that pupils have knowledge of, and access to, a support structure within school so they can share worries and seek help;
- To implement strategies for treating bullies and victims which affect appropriate behaviour changes.



- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying strategy against the All Together Anti Bullying Alliance criteria with a view to maintaining the Gold Award standard which was achieved in April 2020.

Definition of Bullying

A clear definition of bullying helps us to recognise it when it occurs. Bullying is normally but not always repeated over time and may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person or group. It is often motivated by prejudice and can take the form of racial, religious, gender-based, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic, special educational needs and disability-related bullying, or could occur because a pupil is adopted or is a carer.

It could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, cyber (including social networking, chat rooms, e-mail, e-photos and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, and/or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide, and is a significant contributory factor in mental ill-health in children and young people. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is the use of information and communication devices and services to bully, harass or intimidate an individual or group, for example:

- Bullying by texts, messages or calls on mobile phones;
- Through the use of intimidation or exclusion in online gaming;
- Using mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites;
- Deliberately excluding others from friends' lists on social networking sites.

The School regards incidents of cyber-bullying as it does bullying in any other form and the School's Anti-Bullying Policy will be applied in the same way, including the sanctions set out in the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, and in line with the guidance in the ICT Policy – Pupils.



Informing Principles

The principle underlying the Anti-Bullying Policy is that a pupil who is a victim of bullying, or who witnesses an incident of bullying, should feel free to approach any member of staff for help. The member of staff is expected to act in accordance with school policy. All staff have a vital part to play in making it clear that bullying is not tolerated, in being vigilant and proactive if they note what may be developing into a bullying relationship and in being approachable and willing to offer help and support to any pupil who feels the need to discuss an incident. In particular, staff need to be alert to those children whose personal circumstances may make them vulnerable to being bullied.

The following procedures with regard to bullying **must** be followed:

Prevention

- Opportunities to reinforce the School's values are taken through school and year assemblies, teaching subjects, the Personal Development programme and class/tutor time;
- Guest speakers will contribute to the delivery of the anti-bullying message;
- Appropriate opportunities are taken within the curriculum to consider issues relating to bullying;
- Pupils will be taught that differences between bullying and banter;
- All allegations of bullying will be investigated in a timely manner
- Incidents of bullying are recorded on CPOMS in order to spot patterns and to allow appropriate intervention to take place;
- Incidents of bullying are reflected upon and discussed when they occur so that lessons can be learned;
- Through appropriate training and induction, all staff are made aware of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy, including new staff and support staff (this includes relevant training namely how bullying fits with child-on-child abuse);
- Teaching staff, support staff and Prefects contribute to a suitably deployed supervisory presence around the School;
- All staff are asked to be vigilant and to be willing to take appropriate action if they suspect that a pupil is being bullied;
- All pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place;
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Class Teachers, Form Tutors and Heads of Section who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral), trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and alert to possible signs of bullying;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies;
- The anti-bullying coordinator works alongside the well-being ambassadors, meeting every half-term to discuss issues relating to bullying
- Parents play a role in guarding against bullying. There are resources for parents on the pastoral Firefly pages and the Anti-Bullying policy is available on the School website. The School runs parental information events on topics such as e-safety where cyber bullying is discussed.



- The School Nurse gives support and guidance to pupils who are able to refer themselves to her when they are struggling, either physically or emotionally. The Clinic displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline. This information is also displayed in tutor areas and on Safeguarding noticeboards;
- We operate a Peer Mentoring Scheme, whereby Sixth_Form pupils are paired with tutor groups in the Senior School.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and/or in the vicinity of the School, involving our pupils;
- We inform parents about the actions taken to prevent bullying such as the School's involvement with the All-Together programme. We welcome feedback from parents on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and act on observations when required.
- Information for pupils about what to do if they are being bullied is displayed around the School and includes telephone numbers for other organisations that can help.
- Staff are made aware of the increased risk of bullying for SEND pupils and form tutors should have increased vigilance in their observations and conversations with those pupils.

Reporting, Investigating and Managing Incidents of Bullying

Staff to whom an incident is reported, or who first discover an incident, must:

- Stay calm and avoid making snap decisions or attaching blame;
- Make the situation safe, if necessary;
- Report the matter to the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Heads of Section, Head of the Junior School (as appropriate) in the first instance.

Any member of staff who investigates an allegation of bullying should take accurate notes from all parties. The voice of the student must always be included. Copies should be given to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) as soon as possible, who will then record the information on CPOMS and take any follow up action as necessary.

SEND students are at greater risk of bullying. If the student is on the SEND register, then the SENDCO should be informed and will usually be involved in meetings with the student. Involving the SENDCO will help put the student at ease and will ensure the extra pastoral support is provided.

Junior School

It is recognised that younger children may require a different response as their understanding of personal relationships develops. The following guidelines are specifically given to staff in the Junior School (though many of them are applicable to the Senior School as well):

If there is evidence of a child bullying another child or children then staff action is as follows:

- intervene to stop the child harming the other child or children;
- explain to the child doing the bullying why his/her behaviour is inappropriate;
- give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;



- meetings with the victim may be appropriate (restorative justice);
- help the child who has been bullying to say sorry for his/her actions;
- ensure that the child who has been bullying receives praise when he/she displays acceptable behaviour;
- do not label children who bully;
- when a child has been bullying, this is discussed with his/her parents and a plan is worked out for handling the child's behaviour;
- when a child has been bullied, this is shared with his/her parents, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving and that his/her parents have been informed.

Follow Up

It is important to note that not all incidents will require use of all of the following steps. In many cases, a quiet word of warning is sufficient to modify behaviour.

In all cases, the level of response is determined by the facts that emerge from an investigation into an incident.

- The Head of the Junior School, Head of Section and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (as appropriate) take responsibility for initial investigations of any reported incidents;
- Pupils are interviewed in order to ascertain what happened;
- Written statements may be required from all parties involved, signed and dated;
- If it is decided that further action is required, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) is informed;
- The pupils involved, both bully and bullied, may be brought together with a member of staff present to try to talk it through, with the aim of apology and reconciliation, if this is appropriate;
- Clear guidelines for future behaviour are issued to both parties and a code of conduct agreed. Pupils should know that the situation will be monitored and know of consequences for the bully if bullying continues. Parents of bully and bullied should be kept informed, where necessary, at appropriate times during an investigation;
- If admitted, the perpetrator should give a verbal and written undertaking that it will not happen again. They should also apologise to the victim;
- The perpetrator will be offered support to explore the reasons to help avoid further issues;
- If not admitted, the victim should be supported included clear guidelines on what to do if there were to be any further issues;
- Class Teachers, Form Tutors and Heads of Section monitor the situation;
- If no improvement is seen then the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head of the Junior School implements further sanctions;
- Details of the sanctions which might be applied are set out in the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. However, it should be clearly noted that a pupil who persistently makes life unhappy for others may face suspension from school or be asked to leave the School in extreme cases.
- When bullying has occurred, both the bully and the bullied require support. For the bully, this will involve parental meetings and conversations with an emphasis on



empathy, trying to understand the reason for the behaviour. For the bullied, staff will be asked to increase vigilance and the pupil may be added to the vulnerable students list. Other support may include organised peer support, peer mentoring, a dedicated staff member to check in with or finding suitable social time activities to get involved with.

In serious cases, and depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary to report an incident to an external agency. For example, the School's safeguarding policy and procedures will be used if there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering significant harm or is likely to.

Monitoring

The Anti-Bullying Policy is monitored by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) through liaison with the Head of the Junior School and Heads of Section, who evaluate the effectiveness of the policy in the School.

In the Senior School, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) also monitors the policy through discussions with key post holders, through the Heads of Section meetings and discussions with pupils, in addition to checking the records of incidents which are reported and through feedback from parents if appropriate.

In instances where bullying has occurred, the students may be placed on the vulnerable students list which is displayed in the Quiet Common Room. Follow up meetings are held with the student until such a time that it is felt that they are no longer required.

Review

The policy is reviewed annually by the Head and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Summer Term.

The School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

Reviewed by:	Mr Evans – Deputy Head (Pastoral) Mrs Moss – Head of Junior School		
Date of last review:	May 2024	Date of next review:	May 2025

