

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all members of this community and takes account of the DCSF Guidance, "Safe to Learn - Embedding anti-bullying work in school".

Everyone has the right to live their lives without feeling bullied, threatened or unsafe. Bullying, although unfortunate and wrong does happen and we at Woodhouse Grove are committed to minimising its occurrence and dealing with it effectively when it arises. It is important however, to distinguish between 'What is bullying' and 'What is not' and be aware that certain incidents depending on their nature will be dealt with differently. **Bullying is deliberate, harmful behaviour over a period of time which either intentionally or unintentionally, upsets or intimidates another pupil/group of pupils.**

Part of our school's ethos is to value individuals and this is a culture we seek to nurture which has been commended by recent Inspection reports.

ISI March 2007

- The school provides a high standard of pastoral care for its pupils, and arrangements to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. The school has continued to maintain, and has enhanced, the caring environment identified at the time of the last inspection.
- The school states that pastoral care is the responsibility of the whole community. This philosophy is borne out by both arrangements for pastoral care, and the relationships to be seen between staff and pupils, and within the pupil body. The support and guidance offered by staff to pupils is both generous and effective.
- An ethos of mutual respect has been fostered and developed within the school. This is evident in the excellent relationships amongst pupils, and between them and staff. Pupils are tolerant and understanding of one another, regardless of race, gender or background.

OFSTED Boarding February 2008

- Boarders feel safe and are very well behaved.

- Staff provide high standards of care and support.
- The caring community ethos in the school helps pupils develop personally as well as academically.

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils live and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school acknowledges that bullying can lead to psychological damage and even suicide. (*See Death of a pupil - a policy for pastoral care*).

There is a need for all the community to be constantly vigilant to eliminate any instances of behaviour that is upsetting or otherwise stressful to an individual or group. Staff are encouraged to take action to reduce the risk of bullying in this community and it is school policy to raise staff awareness through training and inset.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. It is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Woodhouse Grove School. When bullying is identified the incident will be investigated sensitively and the perpetrator dealt with firmly. If bullying problems, once tackled, persist, the school reserve the right to exclude the bully from school.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour:-

1. Physical: a child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at etc.
2. Intimidation: this can include gesturing, miming, signals, tone and physical proximity, aggressive or threatening looks.
3. Verbal: verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, culture, sexuality, ethnic origin, creed, physical/social/learning disability or personality etc.
4. Exclusion: a child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.
5. Damage to or hiding of Property or Theft: a child may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the student hands over property to them.
6. Cyber-Bullying: the sending or posting of harmful or cruel texts or images using the internet or other digital devices.

There are lots of different types of cyber-bullying:-

- a) text messages - unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- b) picture/video clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed eg Happy Slapping.
- c) mobile phone calls - silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victims phone and using it to harass others to make them believe the victim is responsible.
- d) e-mails - threatening or bullying e-mails, often sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
- e) chatroom bullying - menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chatroom eg MSN.
- f) instant messaging - unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online.
- g) bullying via websites - use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. This includes websites such as Bebo, MySpace and FaceBook.
- h) webcams -goadng/provoking, encouraging others to be involved in inappropriate behaviour.

Some Cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws including:

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Malicious Communications Act 1998

Public Order Act 1986

The age of criminal responsibility in the UK starts at 10.

Who are the bullies?

Anyone can be both children and adults. These may be some of their characteristics.

- People who are trying to get attention.
- People who may be having problems at home.
- People who have themselves been bullied.
- People who think they will impress others.

Why do they bully? Possibly...

- They enjoy the power.
- They are insecure and cowardly.
- They are prejudiced.
- They are jealous.
- They are easily led and want to impress their peers.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

No one should feel embarrassed or shy about telling someone about being bullied. If no action is taken the bully/bullies may get away with it. The longer they have power the more difficult it is for the victim to break free from their ordeal.

REMEMBER THAT YOUR SILENCE IS THE BULLY'S GREATEST WEAPON

- a) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is **WRONG**.
- b) Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
- c) Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's reaction.
- d) Where possible stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.

- e) Be assertive. Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff. This will show the bully/bullies you mean business.
- f) Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support. Teachers will take you seriously and treat each case sensitively.

Read and follow the Woodhouse Grove Anti-Cyber bullying Code.

What to do if you think someone else is being bullied:

- Encourage them to tell an adult eg. teacher or parent.
- Support them by talking about the problem and helping them
- If you cannot persuade them to tell an adult then you should tell a teacher about the problem.

If someone is being bullied somebody ought to do something- that person could be you. Don't be a watcher - even if you don't take part in bullying but see it and walk away, you are ignoring your responsibilities. Get help, give sympathy to the person being bullied.

WHAT THE SCHOOL WILL DO

Once a bullying incident is reported or identified by staff:

- a) The incident will be recorded (to enable patterns to be identified) and reported to an appropriate staff member to be investigated further eg Head of Year, Senior Master/Mistress, Second Master.
- b) The bullying behaviour will be investigated and efforts made to stop the bullying quickly.
- c) Where appropriate pastoral support will be offered to the victim and where helpful to the resolution of the problem an appropriate apology will be made.
- d) The bully will be told not to comment or make any remarks relating to what has happened to others. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.

- e) Should the bullying persist the bully's parents will be informed and concerns will be communicated to the victim's parents.
- f) An unsuccessful outcome of the above procedures will result in a formal meeting with parents and the bully which may result in suspension for a period of time and in certain cases the school reserves the right to permanently exclude.

WOODHOUSE GROVE WORKS TO COMBAT BULLYING BY:

- Providing a PSHE programme which promotes personal well being.

In every year bullying is covered in a variety of topic areas from Racism to Cyberbullying.

- Contributions from other subject areas including Drama, English, History, RS & MFL covering the effects of bullying including stereotyping, prejudice, racism and discrimination.
- Cyberbullying Code.
- AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) - read and signed by pupils who use the internet confirming they understand the school's rules and expectations regarding use of school computers.
- AUP on use of mobile phones.
- Assemblies
- Extra curricular activities promoting teamwork and valuing contributions of individuals.
- Trips/tours/exchanges/Gap students/language assistants which promote appreciation of other cultures and ways of life.
- House and Pastoral System including Boarding
- Mentoring and support of overseas students.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Head of PSHE at Woodhouse Grove will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

BULLYING

Advice for Staff

All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching should deal with any incident of suspected or observed bullying by:-

1. Taking action appropriate at the time.
2. Listening to the pupil and giving reassurance that the incident will be dealt with.
3. Producing a written statement of what has happened and the initial action taken.
4. Reporting the incident in the first instance to the Head of Year and Chaplain.

At this point they will decide if the incident merits the involvement of others such as the Senior Mistress/Senior Master/Second Master/Deputy Head

NB All staff have a responsibility to treat complaints of bullying as sensitively as possible without taking sides. Everyone has a responsibility but certain staff should be informed to follow up any investigations eg Head of Year and Chaplain. Confidentiality should be maintained as far as possible, particularly when the complainant may be vulnerable to reprisals. Great care should be taken during investigation that the complainant is comfortable with the procedure and subsequent action. **It is important that staff document any report of bullying in an incident file and conclude on the nature of the incident(was it bullying or an isolated incident etc), and any action taken.**

The staff investigating the incident will:

1. Arrange for support and reassurance for the pupil.
2. Interview the person/s responsible for the alleged bullying.

3. Contact the parents/guardians and inform the Headmaster.
4. Take appropriate disciplinary and pastoral action.
5. Should actions taken so far not be successful the matter should be referred to the Headmaster.
6. Work with the pupils/parents/guardians and other teachers to support those involved and prevent bullying in the school.

Boarding Staff

Housemasters/Housemistresses/Boarding Tutors/Sisters/The Chaplain play a major role, acting "in loco parentis" for the pupils during boarding time. They should refer any instances or complaints of bullying during boarding time to the Senior Boarding Master and the Chaplain.

Support Staff

All support staff have a responsibility to report any incidents or reports of bullying to the Operations Manager who will then inform an academic member of staff at the earliest opportunity.

School Prefects/House Prefects

Prefects and House Prefects will be encouraged to talk to and support younger pupils as part of their leadership role in the school. They are also expected to set a good example in the way they behave towards each other. They should report any incidents of bullying to the Housemaster/Housemistress/Senior Boarding Master or Second Master at the earliest possible opportunity.

School Staff will:

1. Encourage students to treat everyone with respect.
2. Organise and supervise the school community with the help of the school prefects to minimise opportunities for bullying.
3. Use timetabled opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other eg PSHE programme, assemblies.
4. Review the school policy on bullying and its effectiveness, The discipline policy should be firm but fair.
5. Treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our school
6. Set a personal example of how they treat pupils and each other.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents should always encourage their child to speak out about bullying. Incidents of bullying are more likely to be prolonged if the bully knows that he/she can upset or intimidate the victim without being detected or punished. At Woodhouse Grove, pupils' and parents' concerns will be carefully and sensitively investigated.

What should you do if you feel that your child could be a victim of bullying?

Talk to your child about your concerns.

- Encourage your child to talk about the problem and give reassurance of your support. Try to listen calmly and do not overreact.
- Contact school (your child's form Tutor or Year Head) to discuss the problem.
- Under no circumstances should you take matters into your own hands by challenging the bully yourself and avoid contacting his/her parents. This often makes matters worse!
- Beware of labelling an incident too readily as 'bullying'

What should you expect if your child is suspected of bullying?

Parents will usually be informed of incidents involving bullying by a Year Head or senior member of staff and should be prepared to support the school when appropriate sanctions are given.

What should you do to deal with cyberbullying?

Many children get caught up in cyberbullying simply by not thinking of the consequences of their actions. Parents should understand and monitor the ways in which their child is using the internet and/or their mobile phones and should discuss appropriate and inappropriate use of such technology.

Give your child the advice listed in *WGS Anti-Cyberbullying Code*.

WOODHOUSE GROVE ANTI CYBER BULLYING CODE

- Respect Others - what may seem like a joke to some can be hurtful to others. Forwarding unpleasant messages or pictures assists the bully in his/her campaign and therefore is inappropriate.
- Think before messages are sent - what is sent can be made public very quickly and can stay online forever.
- Secrecy - passwords should be changed regularly and should be chosen so that they are hard to guess. Mobile numbers and personal website addresses should only be given to trusted friends. Social networking site profiles should always be set to 'private'.
- Replying to a bully's messages - don't reply to offensive messages as the bully will be hoping for a reaction.
- Save the evidence - keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
- Block the bully - most responsible websites enable this to happen.

Reporting the incident - report an incident immediately to the following:

- a) a responsible adult
- b) school (form tutor or year head) - if the incident involves a pupil at school
- c) A mobile phone operator eg O2 or Vodafone, a social network provider e.g. Bebo, Facebook or an Instant Messenger provider eg MSN Messenger. Most responsible service providers have a 'report abuse' facility or a nuisance call bureau
- d) If cyberbullying is serious or if a potential criminal offence has been committed consider contacting the police. They will follow it up and take it seriously as shown in this example

Telegraph & Argus 19.3.08

'Happy-Slap' Death Film Girl Gets 2 Years

A 15 year old girl who used her mobile phone to film two teenagers brutally beating a vulnerable man, who later died, has been sentenced to two years in the first conviction of its kind in the country. The attackers also sent the film of the beating to friends' phones.