

STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY - BULLYING

(Originally approved by Governors 06.06.95)

(Revisions approved by Governors 01.07.03)

(Further Revisions 2007 and 2009)

(Revisions approved by Governors 06.10.09 and 12.10.10)

In accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 the school has drawn up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils in both the Senior School and the Junior School.

In accordance with DCSF guidance, we define bullying as any behaviour which is repeated over a period of time with the intention of hurting someone in any way or making someone feel uncomfortable or unhappy. This could be physical, verbal, emotional, personal, sexual or fuelled by prejudice – racial, religious, homophobic – against children with special educational needs or disabilities or who are perceived as different in some way. It may include the use of cyber-technology (usually mobile telephones or the internet) to send unpleasant or aggressive messages or photographs. Pupils may be bullied for a variety of reasons – and for no reason.

Bullying is unacceptable in this school and will not be tolerated. The school also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school. The school will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate such bullying.

The whole school community, whether teachers, pupils, parents or support staff, has a role to play in ensuring that bullying is prevented throughout the school. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, eg becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or seeking attention from adults. There may be changes in work patterns, a lack of concentration or truancy. There is the possibility of a bullied person attempting/ committing suicide.

REPORTING BULLYING

Anyone who suffers, observes or becomes aware of any instance of bullying must refer the matter immediately to the Headmaster either directly or through a teacher or Deputy Head. The Proctor will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems, ensuring that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies. The School encourages pupils to 'Speak Out' as bullying thrives in a climate of silence. Pupils who are being bullied should report the incident as soon as possible. In the first instance in school pupils should speak to any member of staff they feel comfortable with, including the School Nurse, support staff or Peer Mentors.

PROCEDURE

The Headmaster or a Deputy will investigate the matter or they may, depending on the seriousness/nature of the bullying, involve members of the Pastoral Staff. Written accounts will be kept of the instance and all relevant background information.

- The events reported by the bullied pupil will be recorded by the Proctor or Deputy Head and the bullied pupil will be asked to record the details of the incident in writing.
- The bully will be asked to write an account of the incident.

- The member of staff will record all discussions with both/all parties.

After discussion and when it is clear that bullying has taken place, the appropriate measures, in line with the School Disciplinary Procedures, will be actioned. Incidents will be dealt with at different levels depending on the incident.

Sanctions, which may include temporary or permanent exclusion will be imposed as appropriate and within the disciplinary guidelines laid down in the Whole School Policy – Discipline of Pupils. The School will, of course, cooperate with external agencies such as the police if appropriate.

Sanctions will be fair, proportionate, consistent, reasonable and take account of special needs. They have three main purposes:

- To impress upon the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
- To deter him/her from repeating that behaviour; and
- To signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

They are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused.

At the first level parents will be informed at the discretion of the Proctor (or Deputy Head). In cases of persistent bullying the parents/carers of the pupil will always be informed. The parents of the victim and the bully will be advised of the findings of the investigation, their implications regarding the Whole School Policy on bullying and the measures the school intends to pursue in accordance with the Policy to prevent any repetition. Form tutors, subject teachers, Heads of Year and Heads of Section in the Senior School, class teachers and the Infant Co-ordinator in the Junior School will be kept informed of the findings and of the school's proposed response. They will also be required to monitor the effectiveness of the school's remedial action until such action shall be deemed to have achieved its purpose.

From the outset the victim will be offered the reassurance, support, advice and direction of the form tutor or class teacher, the Head of Year, Head of Section, a Deputy Head or the Headmaster as necessary in order to restore his or her self-esteem and confidence.

RECORDING

A record of a serious bullying incident will be held on the pupil's personal file until sufficient time has elapsed for a Deputy Head or the Headmaster to feel confident that the pupil has reformed.

The Proctor (or Deputy Head) will keep and consider reports on serious incidents and make a termly report to the Headmaster. The Senior Management Team will regularly review and analyse the operational effectiveness of this policy, taking full account of the views of pupils in order to maintain the momentum in action against bullying.

The Governors will receive an annual report and review the operational effectiveness of the policy and its implementation through the Education Committee.

ANTI-BULLYING EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

In the Senior and Junior Schools, programmes of personal and social education endeavour to ensure that pupils are fully aware of the suffering engendered by bullying and the importance of eradicating it. The School Rules and Acceptable Use Policy outline expectations for the responsible use of mobile telephones, the school ICT network and

equipment to pupils, staff and parents. These programmes and procedures are reviewed at regular intervals by the Pastoral Team and reinforced in assemblies and tutorial meetings. Particular attention is given to the needs, sensibilities and vulnerability of pupils who suffer any disability.

Pupils are also informed of the procedures they should follow if they find themselves the victims of bullying.

The school will regularly review general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure that this reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying can be defined as 'the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else'. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity, and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Research into the extent of cyberbullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. It may also affect members of school staff and other adults; there are examples of staff being ridiculed, threatened and otherwise abused online by pupils.

Cyberbullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images (including what are sometimes misleadingly referred to as 'happy slapping' images), and manipulation. It is never acceptable.

Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but other incidents of cyberbullying may be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.

In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, e.g. by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is important that pupils are aware that their actions can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated. Pupils acting as 'accessories', who actively support cyberbullying will be dealt with under the terms of the Bullying Policy. The School endeavours to minimise the occurrence of incidents of cyberbullying through awareness-raising and promoting understanding of its characteristics and how it differs from other forms of bullying. The activities include discussion of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), staff-development activities, home-school events and addressing cyberbullying within curriculum delivery (especially in Life Studies and ICT lessons).

Incidents of cyberbullying will be investigated, recorded and monitored in the same way as other forms of bullying. Sanctions will be applied as appropriate and practicable within the context of the Bullying Policy.