

Anti-Bullying Policy



The aim of The Spires College Anti-Bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the College policy on bullying: therefore the aim is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- ▲ physical (including sexual) assault;
- ▲ verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks;
- ▲ cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include: using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail;
- ▲ indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; and destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need support themselves. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All students deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Students are educated through PSHE, assemblies, and through work with the pastoral teams.

Anti-Bullying Procedure

What to look for

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from college.

Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying; legal responsibilities are known and community members should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with College policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, **MOST** people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

What to do

The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise:

If you are the victim

- ▲ If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.
- ▲ Share your feelings with someone else.
- ▲ If possible talk to a member of Staff, your Form Tutor or your Head of Year about the incident.
- ▲ Speak to a College Kindness Ambassador, they will have advice as to what to do.

Procedure if a pupil should witness bullying behaviour

- ▲ Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
- ▲ Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Head of Year or Tutor on their behalf.

Procedure for members of Staff should you witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you

- ▲ Reassure and support the students involved.
- ▲ Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of the pastoral team. (Tutor, Head of Year).
- ▲ Inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.

What will happen?

The victim will be spoken to by their Tutor or Head of Year, on their own, and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Once the Tutor and Head of Year are clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

Details of the incident will be recorded on the students' files. The pastoral team will decide on an appropriate course of action. In the first instance the Tutor or Head of Year will interview the student or students whose behaviour has caused distress and give them a formal bullying warning; making it clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered to be further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. A suitable sanction will also be given.

If the Head of Year decides it is appropriate the parents of the perpetrator/s will be informed by letter or telephone. The following sanctions may be applied in accordance with the College Behaviour Policy.

- ▲ Internal Exclusion
- ▲ Fixed term exclusion
- ▲ Permanent exclusion

These are minimum sanctions. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the College to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

The College will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the College's actions to prevent bullying.

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