

## **BULLYING/ ANTI BULLYING**

Bullying is seen as part of the generally unacceptable inter-personal behaviour which can occur between children learning to live with one another. Its manifestations are discussed as part of the PSHCE course, where the point is made that verbal abuse and isolation can be as damaging as any physical harm. Regularly it will occur as a theme of assemblies as will examples of positive mutual support, establishing the school's intention to operate as a humane culture. The topic of bullying is sometimes also raised in drama lessons, through project work and through the use of relevant literature.

Despite our best efforts, instances of individual and group persecution will occur and we should always be on the look-out for them – coming upon a scuffle around a corridor corner, becoming aware of a suddenly reluctant participator in lessons or activities, or sensing that a remark passed in class or an outburst of laughter in response to a child's actions may not be as 'innocent' as we first assumed. Be aware that bullying can occur through the use of mobile phones, social networking web-sites and email and this can be equally as hurtful as face-to-face bullying.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is persistent unwelcome behaviour, mostly using unwarranted or invalid criticism, nit-picking, fault-finding, also exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently, being shouted at, humiliated, excessive monitoring, having verbal and written warnings imposed, and much more. It may include racial, religious, cultural, sexist and homophobic attacks (both verbal and physical). Remarks made about a person's disability can also be labelled as bullying.

Examples of the mistreatment of others will be dealt with promptly as individual cases. As all other disciplinary matters, they are likely to move through the hierarchy from form tutor until the matter is resolved.

While straightforward punishment may be appropriate in some cases, individual and group counselling and discussions involving parents will also be considered.

At Boundary Oak pupils have the right to work in an environment which is free from bullying and harassment. Everyone has a responsibility to respect the feelings and concern of others to behave in a way that does not cause offence. Sometimes individuals may be unaware that their behaviour is causing offence and there may be no malicious intent. The impact of behaviour on a person affected by it is more relevant than the motive behind it.

All complaints will be thoroughly investigated and taken seriously. The aim is to decide the best course of action and to resolve the issues raised.

**Pupils are expected to** live by the School Rules drawn up by past and present pupils in the school.

**Gap Students** are asked to be alert to what they see and what the grapevine is telling them and to share concerns with a member of staff.

**All Staff have a responsibility to** make every effort to ensure that harassment and bullying do not occur in the classroom try to resolve any incidents of which they are aware or inform tutors of any incidents seen and any suspicions generated by pupils' behaviour respond sensitively to any pupil who makes an allegation of bullying. Staff's awareness of bullying is raised through training on how to support victims and bullies; on how to reduce bullying at times where it is most likely to occur (changing rooms, break times, in boarding and any other 'free time' situations)and on the seriousness of bullying.

**The following policy** provides a framework for dealing with complaints confidentially, fairly and consistently. It should enable problems to be resolved quickly without fear of victimisation.

## **POLICY**

### Options for pupil

- \*Talk to person about behaviour causing distress. Ask for it to stop.
- \*Discuss with prefect or form tutor.
- \*Ask tutor or deputy head to take up the matter on your behalf.

### Options for prefect

- \*refer to form tutor or another member of staff
- \*any intervention of your own must follow and not precede this referral.

### Options for staff

- \*Speak to pupil to explain complaint – give opportunity for response.
- \*Obtain agreement that behaviour will stop.
- \*Talk to the pupils involved together.
- \*Monitor situation.
- \*Consult others in form.
- \*Mediate if all are in agreement.

## **FORMAL PROCEDURE**

### Options for pupil

- \*Pupil or parent should make complaint in writing to form tutor/deputy head.
- \*Person against whom complaint is made will be given copy of complaint and given opportunity to respond.

### Option for staff

- \*Discuss with the pupils involved separately to try to agree resolution
- \*By agreement arrange meeting to try to resolve issue.
- \*Involve the Head and Deputies.

### Outcomes

- \*Commitment that action will not recur.
- \*Resolution.
- \*Formal punishment.
- \*Misunderstandings resolved

Support and help should be given by staff to both the victim and the bully. The nature of the support given may well vary depending on the child, the nature of the bullying and the background to the incident/s.

### NOTES SHOULD BE MADE OF BOTH FORMAL & INFORMAL PROCEDURE

to be retained during a child's school career in his/her personal file.

- *The school fully recognises the serious nature of bullying and that it can result in psychological damage and, in extreme cases, even lead to suicide.*