



## **COUNTERING BULLYING POLICY (10a)**

As the mission statement of Queen Mary's is to be a Christian community that values, nurtures and respects every individual this goes to the heart of the School's philosophy to counter bullying. In addition, the School aims to respect individuality and embrace diversity and to enhance character and build resilience, demonstrate our commitment to creating a compassionate community where all are valued and respected. Likewise for many years the four cornerstones of trustworthiness, public spirit, good manners and hard-work have underpinned all aspects of school life.

We aim to provide a safe and caring environment in which pupils can fulfil their true potential without fear. The pupils at Queen Mary's are very supportive of each other and form firm and lasting friendships. However, as a school we are not complacent and our views on bullying are made very clear. We believe that bullying behaviour adversely affects the safety and happiness of pupils and can lead to psychological damage. Bullying causes low self-esteem and a negative self-image; it is likely to affect concentration and levels of achievement both inside and outside of the classroom.

This Policy has regard to non-statutory DfE advice:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2014)
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools (2014)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)
- The School's Behaviour Management Policy and IT Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Aims of this Policy**

- To ensure that the unacceptable nature of bullying and the consequences of such actions are made clear to the whole community, including parents
- To ensure there is a clear procedure for staff, pupils and parents to follow once an incident perceived as bullying has been reported
- To result in consistent prevention and appropriate responses

### **Definition of Bullying**

We define bullying as the wilful desire to hurt, humiliate, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying is behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. It is a process rather than a single act and can take the form of racial, religious, cultural, sexist, disability, special educational needs or related to sexuality, whether this outcome is intended or not.

There are so many definitions of bullying, but some common features exist:

- That it is deliberate and intentionally hurtful behaviour
- That it is repeated over a period of time
- That it makes pupils feel powerless
- That it lowers pupils' self esteem

It should be remembered that harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. Queen Mary's treats bullying with utmost seriousness and it is entirely unacceptable to view bullying as a part of growing up or as a means of toughening up young people.

A bully may well involve a third party for example using a friend to tease or torment their victim. The bully can often influence others to take no action to prevent bullying of the victim, often through fear that they might in time become a victim. Bullying can be overt and intimidate but is often hidden and subtle and is often motivated by prejudice. It may also be related to special education needs, learning difficulties, home circumstances, health or appearance.

### **The four main types of bullying are:**

- Physical: hitting; kicking; pinching; taking; hiding or damaging belongings.
- Verbal: name calling; teasing; insulting; writing and/or passing unkind or malicious notes
- Emotional: being unfriendly; excluding; blanking; tormenting; spreading malicious rumours
- Cyber: includes the misuse of mobile phones and computers in or out of school and includes the sending of unkind or malicious text messages, inappropriate emails, postings, photographs or videos to social websites or other web spaces (please also see IT Acceptable Use Policy)
- Younger children such as in Early Years, are more likely to take part in direct forms of aggression. For them, bullying is simply aggression in general rather than being a repeated act by someone perceived to be more powerful

### **Signs of bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Day Room with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and having poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and members of staff.

### **Preventative Measures**

The issue of bullying is raised in Prayers, Chapel Services and via PSHE courses delivered through the PSHE programme.

- There are specific opportunities for pupils to raise matters of concern:
  - Tutorials
  - Individual conversations with teachers
  - At any time with one of the Boarding Staff
  - Small discussion groups with the Chaplain
  - PSHE lessons
  - School Council
  - The School Nurse
  - The School Counsellor

- RE, English & Drama lessons often highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce the message that bullying is wrong and unacceptable.
- All pupils have access to a telephone and helpline numbers are displayed in the Pupil Planners, boarding areas and classrooms
- There is a “good neighbour” system for new pupils to help them settle in
- The S3 Captains receive training in Safeguarding which focuses on listening skills and supporting younger and vulnerable pupils.
- The school rules relating to bullying apply at all times not just during term time.
- Potential victims are identified and mentoring or support measures are put in place.
- The School Counsellor provides a termly report to the Deputy Head listing the issues raised by pupils

**Communication of such a policy will involve:**

1. The whole school community including governors.
2. The PSHE programme and other opportunities within the curriculum for example in Drama, stories, literature, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.
3. Opportunities in Prayers and Chapel Services to explore topics such as relationships, friendship, conflict, forgiveness, mutual trust and respect through stories, historical events and/or current affairs in order to reinforce the School’s ethos and countering-bullying message.
4. Age-appropriate information about staying safe online to prevent grooming, access to internet sites containing violent or adult content and sharing personal information and photographs.
5. Raising awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available, especially if specialist skills are needed to support those with special educational needs or disabilities, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils.

**Pupils should:**

- Be aware that it is a pupil’s perception of an action towards them that is important
- Be aware of the behaviour we feel is unacceptable that will not be tolerated
- Be vigilant for signs that a pupil may perceive they are being bullied.
- Be clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

**Staff will:**

- Take any allegations of bullying seriously by talking with pupils about their behaviour towards others which could be perceived as bullying and know what to do if they themselves encounter such treatment
- Encourage pupils to tell an adult if they perceive they are being bullied
- Always be vigilant for any signs of bullying
- Respond quickly and appropriately using the procedures outlined below in accordance with their experience and the training they have received.

**Parents should:**

- Always respond quickly
- Take any allegations their child makes seriously
- Notify their child’s tutor or the Deputy Head if they think their child is being bullied
- Reassure their child

## Procedures for Staff

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that staff have the professional skills especially an awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying and how to deal with such cases. Staff should be aware that pupils involved in a bullying incident either do not see their actions as 'bullying' or may even feel their action is justified and therefore will often be very reluctant to admit to them.

- It is imperative that staff build an accurate picture of what has happened and be sure who is telling the truth.
- Any witnessed bullying must be challenged and dealt with immediately and the episode reported to the tutor and Deputy Head.
- The Deputy Head will ask to see those involved and get a written account of events;
- The victim is offered support & advice and may be offered additional emotional support.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed by the Deputy Head and it will be made clear why her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered support to modify their behaviour. An appropriate sanction will be imposed and recorded
- Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of what has happened and invited to discuss the matter.
- Bullying records will be kept by the Deputy Head and in the Central file to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedure and to enable possible patterns or trends to be identified.
- A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm.
- In very serious cases, or when the bullying is repeated, the Deputy Head, with support from the Head, will decide whether to refer the matter to the police or social care services. However, it has always been possible to resolve all such issues internally and it is the intention to continue to use our own disciplinary procedures unless the matter is likely to lead to criminal prosecution.

If the incident is deemed not too serious, for example a first instance of name calling:

- Staff should adopt a 'problem solving' approach by remaining neutral
- Enable pupils to have an opportunity to talk and focus on finding a solution.
- It may be appropriate to issue a sanction or reprimand which reflects the seriousness of the incident given at the staff's discretion in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy.
- The victim and perpetrator should be monitored closely over a period of time following any incident that is reported
- The victim and perpetrator will both need considerable support from staff
- If appropriate all staff will be alerted in a Staff Briefing

At all times the Tutor and Deputy Head should be kept informed who will ensure that full records are kept to enable patterns to be identified. If the incident is serious e.g. physical assault, repeated abusive behaviour including name calling and deliberate exclusion from friendship groups, the Deputy Head should be informed immediately, and she will inform the Head and a joint decision will be made as to the appropriate course of action.

In keeping with Queen Mary's Christian ethos we do not wish to give up on a pupil and exclusion as a response to bullying is used sparingly and always as a very last resort. Exclusion, however, may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying. Reported incidents of bullying and how they were resolved will be monitored very closely by the Deputy Head and pastoral staff. Attention will be given to who, what, where and when, as well as the action taken; and the 'follow up'. Monitoring such incidents also enables patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the School as a whole.

This policy focuses on the bullying of pupils by pupils although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being

bullied or harassed should contact the Deputy Head or Head. Pupils and parents who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out.

Complaints against members of staff will be dealt with in accordance with staff disciplinary procedures.

The Early Years Foundation Stage setting plays a key role in the vision set out in Every Child Matters: Change for Children, focusing on the outcome, Being healthy; enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle. We understand the importance of wellbeing in promoting the development and learning of a child and strive to ensure all children are given every opportunity to thrive in their learning without any hindrance from others. The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2014) acknowledges the Prime Areas of learning and development, which includes Personal, Social and Emotional Development, as 'particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive' (page 7). This plays a major part in ensuring that the social and emotional needs of our young children are met.

Through play, safe and enjoyable activities and pastoral care, Queen Mary's proactively promotes the emotional wellbeing of all children in that we:

- Understand our individual children's experiences and needs
- Support parents and families
- Liaise with outside agencies, as appropriate
- Develop opportunities for creativity, given our understanding that creativity is fundamental to successful learning
- Challenge negative attitudes and behaviour, including bullying.

In Early Years we are aware of the value of Persona and Empathy dolls in broaching the subject of bullying, and are currently using these as part of our provision. We do use the resources made available by Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) that 'say no to bullying'. These materials are versatile across age ranges, but are intended for use in the Foundation Stage and focus on the emotions experienced by all children.

Whilst we acknowledge that bullying does not appear to be a major problem in the Early Years in general, and certainly not within our provision, we feel strongly that it should not be ignored. Through careful observation of our children, we hope to come to a better understanding of this issue for our own professional development and also in order that we are able to instil into our children that bullying is not acceptable

We will take all incidents seriously and will act swiftly and sensitively. However, creating an environment of good behaviour, trust and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils, should go a long way to preventing the negative relationships that lead to bullying.

Mrs C Cameron  
Head

Date agreed: October 2016  
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