

Anti-Bullying Policy

ANTI-BULLYING

Ethos

Bullying is any **persistent** behaviour which harms others who do not have the skills or resources to counter it. It does not normally apply to one off acts of aggression. For bullying to exist there has to be the repeated exercise of unequal power over a period of time.

Introduction

The control and management of bullying is important for all schools, particularly in the light of recent high profile cases and court rulings which have emphasised schools responsibilities and duty of care in this issue.

This document sets out the school's policy in relation to the issue of bullying. It reflects a belief that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances (zero tolerance) and that it is best prevented through the development of a school ethos based on mutual respect, fairness and equality. It also acknowledges that bullying behaviour is problematic for the victim and perpetrator alike and embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

Principles

All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them.

There is **no justification whatsoever** for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim alike.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve school staff; parents/carers and other professionals involved with students who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour.

It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying and staff require advice, training and support to manage it with confidence.

Information about School's policy and procedures should be readily available in 'user-friendly' form to students and their parents/carers.

Aims

- To fulfil School's statutory responsibility to respect the rights of students and to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- To clarify the School's responsibility for responding to incidents of bullying and to emphasise to staff, students and their parents and carers the School's zero tolerance attitudes towards bullying behaviour.
- To eliminate intimidating behaviour and promote a school ethos in which each student is safe and able to realise their full potential.
- To address the problem of bullying and to bring it under control through the implementation of whole-school policy and procedures.
- To reassure parents and carers that School takes their child's welfare seriously and that they are being educated in a safe and secure environment.

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Objectives

- To develop and implement an anti-bullying policy based on a consistently implemented whole school approach
- To raise awareness among staff; parents/carers and students about the issue of bullying and the school's attitude towards it and to create an environment in which bullying is seen as inappropriate and unacceptable.
- To be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- To make students, parents/carers and staff aware of what steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred.
- To demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and to reassure victims that action will be taken to keep them safe.
- To clarify the extent of the problem and ensure that School allocates a proportionate amount of time and energy to bringing it under control.
- To accurately record all incidents of bullying and to monitor the effectiveness of strategies for bringing it under control. (Bullying forms and bullying forum).
- To address with bullies their problematic behaviour in a fair and firm, non-oppressive manner, and to provide them with support to enable them to change their behaviour. (Bullying forum).
- Marland School will take firm and decisive action to deal with any incident of bullying which is witnessed by or reported to any member of staff.

Definition

Any interaction between an individual or group of people with a more powerful individual or group which is perceived or intended to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect. Direct forms include physical violence and threats; verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion; unwanted sexual interest or contact. Examples of indirect forms of bullying include ignoring and the withdrawal of friendship; excluding; malicious gossip and spreading rumour; abusive or oppressive graffiti.

Cyber bullying is the use of information technology to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner. For further information refer to E-safety policy.

Marland School takes all forms of bullying seriously and is particularly concerned to take action in relation to any incidents which involve racist*, sexist, disabilities or homophobic elements.

In such cases these issues will be specifically addressed with the bully (and his/her parents/carers where appropriate) in the course of post incident management.

* Incidents of bullying with racist content or motivation should be recorded in line with the "Guidelines and Procedures for Dealing with Racist Incidents".

Scope

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on school premises. This includes transport to or from school as well as transport to and from school activities. The School is not **legally** responsible for bullying which takes place elsewhere. (L.B.S.v Sussex C.C.)

However, the school has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its students and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school thus:

If it emerges that if a student is responsible for bullying other students outside school then this matter will be addressed and (if appropriate) the bully's parents informed.

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If a student is found to be the victim of bullying outside school then help and support will be offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in future. The victim's parents will be informed.

If there are more general concerns about students safety outside school then the local police will be contacted and their help sought in making the area around the school premises more secure. If concerns arise in relation to school transport then the issue will be raised with the transport companies and their help sought in dealing with the problem.

If information is received that a student is being bullied by a sibling outside school this will initially be discussed with the parents. If concerns persist then the matter will be referred to the Community Services Department (see Child Protection Procedures).

If students are being bullied by students of another school the Head of that school will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.

Prevention

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of students will be made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to apply the schools policy of zero-tolerance consistently when episodes of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will constantly reinforce the message to students that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

The aim of an intervention will be to make life easier for the victim. Care must be taken not to put the victim under more pressure as a result of reporting the problem. Distancing the victim, to reduce the typical response of bullies to focus the blame on victims. Generalise about the behaviour.

Increase supervision. This can also serve as a disguised sanction by restricting opportunities for unsupervised time during breaks during the period we feel the need to keep a closer eye on things because of the behaviour of a few bullies.

Deal with the issue rather than blame individuals. Use assemblies & group tutorials to highlight the unacceptable behaviour and ask students to look out for it. Give illustrations which clearly identify the problem as located with the bully. Conduct questionnaires to identify what sort of behaviour students link with bullying. Even use confidential questionnaires to identify people who behave in that way. Cognitive approaches can then be used with bullies to work out ways to prevent their behaviour being "misunderstood".

Where the bully is capable of empathy 'no blame' approaches can be used. Remind the bully how it feels to be a victim.

EXPECTATIONS

- Everyone will be physically safe.
- People will be free of insults, teasing and derogatory comments.
- People will be able to keep their possessions and money without being harassed.
- Victims will be able to discuss their problems in safety and without fear.
- Colluders will be able to voice their concerns in safety.
- Bullies will be able to contribute towards making things better

WARNING SIGNS

- Threats whether implicit or explicit.
- Dominating and humiliating behaviour.
- Unkindness which is often justified as a joke.
- People who often seem to be using or borrowing other peoples possessions but never need to lend their own things.
- People who often expect favours or presents but never seem to offer them.
- People who often seem to have others doing jobs for them, but never seem to reciprocate.

In addition the issue of bullying will be raised with students at a number of levels including:

- At whole school level – through assemblies when students will be informed of the school's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place.
- At classroom level – during form periods, tutorial groups, circle time, projects, PSHE and Citizenship
- At individual level – students who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or who have suffered from bullying in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance.

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Students who have bullied others will be given advice and support and taught strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control and to prevent further incidents.

School recognises that there are particular times when students may be more vulnerable to bullying – lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times there is adequate supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.

Also, there are locations about the school in which incidents or bullying are more likely to occur and again arrangements will be made to ensure that these are properly supervised or students will be forbidden access to these areas.

Students will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously and ensure that the matter is fully investigated.

Parents who believe their children are the victim of bullying should share their concerns with school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with school to keep their child safe in future. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Similarly if parents believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with school so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to prevent further incidents and the bullying child helped to change their behaviour.

All of these preventative strategies operate within a school ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment. In order to help students learn and develop appropriate responses to others, all staff at all times will treat each other (and students, parents and carers) with courtesy and respect and will model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Parental Involvement

School is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents and believes that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers are able to work together when bullying occurs.

School recognises the important influence which parents/carers have on their children and would wish, using the home/school agreement, to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as victim or a perpetrator.

If a student is involved in a single serious incident of bullying or there is evidence that the same student is involved repeatedly in less serious incidents (either as a victim or a perpetrator) school will inform parents and invite them to become involved in the management of the problem and the prevention of further incidents. Isolated and less serious incidents will be managed by school staff and parents informed.

Implementation

School is committed to creating a bully-free environment and will ensure that its zero-tolerance policy is applied rigorously. All staff involved in the teaching and/or supervision of students will take responsibility for addressing incidents which fall with the school's definition of bullying and ensure that the victim receives what support is required; the bully is informed of the unacceptability of his/her behaviour and a record is made of the incident.

All students need to be aware that staff wants to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

Post Incident Responses

For the Victim

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a student may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated.

School will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to student who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular students individual needs and may include:

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- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the students safety
- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully
- strategies to prevent further incidents
- sympathy and empathy
- counselling
- befriending
- assertiveness training
- extra supervision/monitoring
- creation of a support group
- informing/involving parents
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)

For the Bully

School takes bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way. School does not believe that the use of punishment is helpful in managing this problem but is of the view that the positive use of sanctions can be useful in demonstrating to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and in promoting change.

School will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. The following options will be considered:

- immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress
- engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of school rules and is unacceptable
- Paying back time.
- detention
- removal from class/group
- withholding participation in 'privilege' activities
- parents informed
- counselling/instruction in alternative ways of behaving
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim)
- fixed periods of exclusion
- permanent exclusion and / or involvement of the police (in extreme cases which may involve violence)
- rewards/positive reinforcement for children in order to promote positive change

Monitoring and Evaluating

Each incident of bullying falling within the school definition will be recorded. Any incidents with a racist, sexist, disability or homophobic element will be identified.

An annual report will be made to the Governing Body indicating the extent of the problem and any trends which may emerge. This information will be shared with parents/carers and students.

Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any ongoing concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and students.