



# GATEHOUSE SCHOOL

# ANTI-BULLYING CODE

## PRINCIPLES

Every person has the RIGHT to feel secure and happy at Gatehouse School. Our school community will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks.

Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time (or in extreme cases, such as racist language, as an isolated case), is defined as bullying.

- No pupil should suffer verbal abuse.
- No pupil should suffer physical violence.
- No pupil should feel victimised by another.

Every pupil has a RESPONSIBILITY to ensure that harassment is not tolerated.

Every pupil is ENTITLED to the respect of others.

Pupils are expected to report all forms of bullying.

Staff guarantee to take the matter seriously and deal with each incident appropriately and discreetly.

Bullies can expect to be punished.

Persistent offenders may be excluded, in extreme cases permanently.

We are a 'telling' School – bullying is too serious not to report.

Bullying is one aspect of behaviour which causes hurt and anxiety to pupils. The possibility of any form of bullying taking place in school is an issue which often causes parents some concern.

A child is considered to be a bully if she/he knowingly commits unkind acts towards another individual.

Bullying may include:-

- Physical harm or threat of physical harm
- Destroying, damaging or hiding property
- Spreading rumours
- Name calling or teasing
- Deliberately excluding someone from an activity
- Using racist language of any kind

Any pupil or pupils who wilfully cause distress to other pupils will be accused of bullying. Racial, religious, cultural or sexual taunting referring to a person's disability or sexual orientation, taunting through social websites or other so called 'cyber networks' is deemed to be bullying.



### Introduction

Bullying is action taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting another child, either physically or emotionally, over a period of time. It may include: physical harm or threat of physical harm, destroying, damaging or removing property; spreading rumours; name-calling or teasing, deliberately excluding someone from an activity. This policy is informed by DFE Guidance 'Preventing and Tackling bullying'.

### Aims and objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all that we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety or discrimination and the school adheres to the 2011 Equality Duty legislation which is addressed in the Equal Opportunity Policy. The Anti-Bullying Policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying that may occur and, as far as possible, to prevent it. We make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school. Through our PSHE lessons, assemblies and school council this anti-bullying stance is constantly being reinforced.

Bullying is the willful, conscious desire on the part of an individual or group to hurt, threaten or frighten someone through sustained and continued intimidation. It can also be a child protection concern in severe cases in which social services may need to be involved.

### Bullying can be:

*Physical* - hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings;

*Verbal* – name calling, teasing, insulting or writing unkind notes;

*Physiological/medical* – being unpleasant to those with a disability or medical condition;

*Emotional* – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours or giving nasty or threatening looks, unkindly commenting upon learning development need or because a child is adopted or is a carer;

*Religious* – being intolerant towards others because of their chosen religion;

*Cultural* – being homophobic, racist or sexist.

Pupils with SEND or adopted children, due to their vulnerability, may also be a target for bullying.

- It may consist of a single incident or, more usually, may continue over a long period of time.
- It can be either direct or indirect: bullies may be either perpetrators or others who by their presence signal their support of the bully.
- Its seriousness is determined by investigation, the distress suffered by the victim and the intention of the bully.
- Bullying can cause serious psychological damage and even suicide.

Increasingly, bullying can manifest itself in so-called cyber-bullying. The school recognises the potentially corrosive effect of this and, as a result, pupils are not allowed to use unsuitable internet sites during the school day. These are kept under review and children are warned of potential danger to ensure they are safe.

Under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety and such actions will be fully investigated and dealt with by the school. Mobile Phones can also be a means for bullying which can include use of email, text messages and photographs. Only Year 6 pupils who come to school unaccompanied by an adult are allowed to use mobile phones for their journey to and from school and they must be handed to the school secretary on arrival. They may then be collected at the end of the day

### 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 spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- 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 poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences 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 teachers.

### Bullying Outside School Premises

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on, where appropriate. This includes cyber-bullying

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

### The role of the Governors

The Governors support the Headmistress in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the Governors do not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

## The role of Headmistress

Gatehouse has a Director of Pastoral Care. The Headmistress may at times delegate responsibility for dealing with incidents of bullying to her but has overall responsibility for dealing with any issues of bullying at Gatehouse School.

It is the responsibility of the Headmistress to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headmistress reports to the Chair of Governors about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Headmistress ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Headmistress draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Headmistress may decide to use assembly as a forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong, and why a pupil is being punished. The form teachers will also include topics related to bullying in their PHSE sessions.

The Headmistress ensures that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying. This is done in staff meetings where individual children are discussed and any problems raised are dealt with especially if we feel children are being unkind or there is a suspicion of bullying taking place.

The Headmistress sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

## The role of the teacher

Teachers in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place.

If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then after consultation with the headmistress, the teacher informs the child's parents.

If teachers become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, they deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. They spend time talking to the child who has bullied; they explain why the action of the child was wrong, and they endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, they inform the Headmistress and the Director of Pastoral Care. They then invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective and it becomes a child protection issue, the Headmistress may contact external support agencies such as social services.

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

## The role of parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying should contact their child's class teacher immediately. The child should be encouraged to talk to his / her form teacher as well.

If there is a case of bullying identified in school (this is rare), the parents of both the victim and the bully (or more, if there are more involved) will be invited into school to meet with the Headmistress or Director of Pastoral Care to discuss the context and content of the bullying and how the school, the parents and the pupils involved can work together to move forward and stop the bullying from happening. There may be multiple meetings, depending on the nature of the bullying and how easily and quickly it can be resolved.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

## Cyber-bullying – Preventative Measures

All pupils receive advice on how to use the internet safely, as part of ICT lessons. This is reinforced by presentations to parents.

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Gatehouse School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet during and outside formal lessons. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Adheres to the guidance regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in PSHE
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not allow mobile phones in School and requires them to be handed into the School Office on arrival at School.

## Monitoring the Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Procedures

In order to ensure that anti-bullying procedures are effective we seek feedback from pupils. This includes monitoring instances of bullying and discussing how effectively incidents of bullying are dealt with. Children are also asked to comment upon how confident they feel when reporting bullying, with the aim of reinforcing the message, 'We are a telling school'.

## Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Bullying

All suspicions of bullying will be reported to the Headmistress and the Director of Pastoral Care.

Any pupil accused of bullying will be confronted.

Support and reassurance will be given to any pupil thought to be the victim.

Occasionally, an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be

considered in cases of sexist, racist or homophobic bullying, or when children or adults with disabilities are involved.

If a sexist, racist or homophobic comment is knowingly made (by knowingly, the school means that the pupil who says the words knows what they are saying and the implication behind them) and reported, this will be immediately investigated. Both the pupil who has said the comment and the pupil who has heard the comment will be spoken with and a decision on an appropriate sanction will be decided upon, using the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

If a comment that has been said by the pupil is repeated at any time during their time at Gatehouse, the Headmistress and the Director of Pastoral Care will consider permanent exclusion.

Pupils and parents at Gatehouse are made aware that instances of racist and homophobic bullying could be considered as a hate crime.

Guidance for the identifying and reporting of hate crimes is as follows (taken from the Metropolitan Police Website):

*A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of your disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or any other perceived difference. It doesn't always include physical violence. Someone using offensive language towards you or harassing you because of who you are, or who they think you are, is also a crime. The same goes for someone posting abusive or offensive messages about you online.*

The school will, in accordance with this policy and the Behaviour Management Policy, investigate all possible hate crimes as such.

Due to the school's zero tolerance approach to sexist, racist or homophobic bullying, the school will plan series of assemblies or workshops from time to time for relevant pupils or year groups.

The school will support all pupils affected by any form of bullying. Support may include, but will not be limited to: counselling; assemblies; one to one conversations; visits and workshop from external organisations; bespoke PHSE lessons.

### Bullying / Exclusions

If exclusion is deemed necessary, the procedures are dealt within the Exclusion Section of the Behaviour Management Policy.

It is VITAL that all adult members of our school should be constantly vigilant to ensure that any situations where bullying is taking place are quickly perceived, and then dealt with, with thoroughness and with sensitivity.

The Elton Report stresses that it is important for all to recognise that bullying need not be confined purely to physical maltreatment; mental bullying found such activities as racism, taunting, constant name calling, sexual discrimination, being cruel to each other etc., can be equally damaging.

Bullying behaviour should be seen and dealt with in the context of our overall School Behaviour Policy document. Any such behaviour which betrays the quality of the relationships in our school must be seen for what it is: destructive and totally unacceptable.

The Headmistress should be informed at all times when it is considered appropriate for the parents of the children to be involved.

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