

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Definitions**
- 3. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 4. Prevention**
- 5. Incidents of Bullying**
- 6. Training**
- 7. Complaints**

### **1.1 Introduction: Statement**

At Courtlands we are clear that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, whether it is in the school, online, or in off-site activities. If bullying or harassment does occur, all pupils should be able to inform an adult in the school and know with confidence that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that it is also an expectation of anyone who suspects or knows that where bullying, including all forms of harassment such as sexual and gender-based incidents is happening, that they can tell a member of the staff team, and for that person will ensure it is recorded and properly and effectively acted upon.

Our main concern, always, is the welfare and safety of all our community

The importance of educating to address and decrease bullying

To prevent and eliminate bullying in our community, we must educate everyone on what bullying is and focus on building strong and meaningful relationships with each other. Educating everyone on the impact of their behaviour towards other and creating safe spaces for people to share and talk means concerns, fears and experience can be shared and acted upon. This will enable thoughts and feelings, which may have otherwise manifested in bullying behaviours, to be addressed with a preventative and caring response and brings hope for lasting transformation.

For our pupils this will come as part of the curriculum and shared experiences. For our staff, this will come through training and carrying out their duties to supervise effectively, communicate and record concerns, and to safeguard.

### **1.2 Introduction: Statutory requirements**

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying. The following underpin this policy:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

### **1.3 Introduction: Scope of this policy**

This policy relates to all members of our community and to all incidents of bullying whether they occur within or outside the settings including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory. If there are concerns about pupils being bullied by visitors, carers, or contractors, these will be addressed through the Whistleblowing / Safeguarding Policies.

### **1.4 Intention**

**Through this policy we intend that:**

- It is clear to all that bullying will not be tolerated.
- Everybody understand what bullying is and how to recognise and report it.
- There is a clear, consistent, and effective process to manage bullying incidents.
- We have a culture which actively prevents bullying through early recognition, openness, education and training, high quality observation and supervision, and raising awareness events,
- We support those who are being bullied, whilst at the same time educating, advising, guiding, and managing those who bully.
- We have community that feels listened to and able to speak out about bullying in the knowledge that they will be supported and protected, and that action will be quick and effective.

### **2.1 Definitions: The definition of bullying**

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm and is often based around hate or prejudice-based attitudes. For example, against groups on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs, and disability

It can involve an individual or a group and be aimed towards one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online as Cyberbullying via various digital platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, through shared photos, text messages, emails, or documents, using a range of devices including mobile phone, laptops, personal computers, or tablets, and it can be obvious or hidden. Bullying behaviour can occur as a single incident or be repeated over time.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour and can have a profound long term emotional and psychological impact on people. This means that bullying can quickly become a safeguarding concern and so incident may quickly be dealt with as a Safeguarding concern.

Bullying around gender and LGBTQ+ issues is often referred to as Homophobia, Bi-phobia, or Transphobia but are not actually phobias, because they are not based on fears. Instead, they should be viewed as forms of discrimination or hate towards LGBTQ+ people or those perceived to be LGBTQ+ and as such must not be tolerated.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour could be determined as a criminal offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. Where we believe this might be the case, we will seek the advice of the Police.

## **2.2 Definitions: What bullying is not**

- A single episode of social rejection or dislike
- A single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- A random act of aggression or intimidation between two “equally matched” individuals
- Mutual arguments, disagreements, or fights.

Although these actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and they’re not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

## **2.3 Definitions: Bullying can be**

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **LGBTQ+** - because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality. including : Gay, Trans or Bi-phobic - bullying based on prejudice or negative attitudes, views, or beliefs about LGBTQ+ or trans people
- **Gender** - bullying because of their gender or gender identity or because they may not be perceived to conform to typical gender norms
- **Faith** - because of their religion
- **Social class** – because of their background or social class
- **Ability** - because of or focusing on learning and/ or physical disabilities.
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of appearance etc. Also include repeated derogatory or offensive language.
- **Cyber** - all areas of internet use, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging, including aggravated sexting & calls, misuse of associated technology.

## **2.4 Definitions: Bullying can take many forms including:**

- Name-calling, taunting or mocking
- Making offensive comments about individuals and/or their families
- Gossiping or spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours, or producing offensive pictures or comments about a person to others via texts or emails
- An invasion of privacy
- Kicking, hitting, pushing, fighting
- Taking, hiding, or intentionally destroying belongings
- Intimidation by looks or gestures or threats of violence.
- Inappropriate touching
- Deliberate Ignoring or leaving someone out of groups - physically or online.

- Being pressured to do something against a persons will.
- Being made to lie for others.

## **2.5 Definitions: Signs of bullying**

The signs and behaviours set out below could obviously be linked to other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

- Being frightened of walking to or from school.
- An unwillingness to go to school by public/school transport.
- Insists on being driven to school.
- Is unwilling to go to school after previously enjoying being part of the school community.
- An unwillingness to go into certain areas of the school
- An unwillingness to go to breaks or areas where there are large number of pupils
- An unwillingness to be involved in joint working/playing with others
- Changes their usual routine.
- Begins to truant.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence whereas this had not been previously evident
- Struggles to communicate in usual ways
- Attempts or threatens self-harm or to run away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Feels ill in the morning.
- A downturn in academic performance.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions which are damaged or unexpectedly go missing.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money - to pay bully.
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost".
- Comes home hungry because money / lunch has been taken.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable.
- Is bullying/ harassing other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

## **2.6 Definitions: Prejudice-based incidents**

A prejudice-based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group.

It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted.

All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded in the anti-bullying log and then monitored by the DSL to ensure that it does not escalate or continue.

## **2.7 Definitions: Roles in bullying**

Bullying is a complicated web of misunderstandings, anxieties, insecurities and needs. However, different roles have been identified:

- **The Ringleader** - the person who through their social power or influence can direct bullying activity.
- **Assistants/associates** - who actively join in the bullying - sometimes because they are afraid of the ringleader.
- **Reinforcers** - who give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- **Outsiders/bystanders** - who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour.
- **Defenders** - who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort children who experience bullying.

Having defined these roles, it is possible that an individual can assume a different role whenever the bully is not around. For example, a Reinforcer may become a Defender when the ringleader is not around.

## **2.8 Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:**

- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved.
- Establishing the wrong-doing and the need for change.
- Informing parents to help change the attitude of the pupil.
- Involving other agencies if necessary - including Police and Children's Services, to support a change in behaviour.
- Referral to a counsellor if necessary.
- Attend a mediation - restorative justice meeting with the effected pupil to resolve issues and prevent recurrence where this is deemed appropriate and does not place undue stress on the victim.

Care must be promoted for the victim and the bully, not just one. Sanctions may be applied where bullying is identified. The level of response will be determined by the success of the restorative process and at the discretion of the person carrying out the investigation in consultation with a member of the SLT. Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school.

### **3.1 Roles and Responsibilities: Headteacher**

Headteacher has a legal duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies and reviewing them on a regular basis.
- Determine the strategies and procedures and ensure a regular review is undertaken.
- Discuss development of the strategies with the DSL, SLT, the Governors.
- Ensure appropriate training is available.
- Ensure that a system for recording bullying incidents is in place
- Ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents, and pupils on a regular basis in a clear manner.
- Ensure that sanctions imposed for bullying reflect the serious nature of the incident
- Report at least termly to the Governors.

### **3.2 Roles and Responsibilities: The Designated Safeguarding will:**

- Maintain, coordinate, and report on the Anti-Bullying log.
- Be responsible for liaising with the appropriate member of staff over all incidents involving pupils in their form.
- Ensure that all incidents of bullying are reported to the responsible senior member of staff.
- Be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution.
- Take part in the anti-bullying programme in the PSHE and Citizenship course.
- Know the policy and procedures.
- Be observant and ask pupils what is happening to them.
- Never let any incidences of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activities

### **3.3 Roles and Responsibilities: All staff**

- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems.
- Ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both those being bullied and the bullies.
- Actively maintain high levels of supervision and early intervention at all times to decrease the possibility of bullying.
- Help maintain the schools record of incidents of bullying as required.
- Keep the Headteacher and school DSL informed of incidents.
- Take part in relevant staff training
- Determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems.
- Promote a culture of anti-bullying/harassment.
- Be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice
- Know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.

### **3.4 Roles and Responsibilities: Pupils**

If a pupil witnesses or thinks they are being bullied, they must:

- Tell an adult, parent, a member of staff, form tutor, therapist, or the schools DSL.
- Alternatively, they use the pupil share boxes located around the school,
- Or even write out their concern and pass it to any member of staff as a note or email.
- Or call Child Line to speak with someone in confidence on 0800 1111

If after the initial disclosure a pupil finds difficult to express their concerns because of its sensitive nature, we will identify a member the pupils feel comfortable with to be the single point of contact for support.

Pupils should be assured that every referral will be investigated quickly and that they will be supported throughout the process.

### **3.5 Roles and Responsibilities: Parent and Carers**

If parents or carers suspect their child or another child at the school is being bullied, they should contact the school immediately to share their concerns.

Naturally parents and carers are free to speak to any member of staff, but initially it may be preferable for them to begin by talking to the pupil's tutor, a member of the SLT / Headteacher, or the schools DSL.

Parents or carers should be prepared to talk about the signs and symptoms and any suspicions they have regarding those carrying out the bullying / harassment and must leave the initial investigation to staff in the school. Any attempt to resolve the issue themselves is likely to make the matter worse.

Parents or carers should encourage their child to talk to an appropriate member of staff in the first instance.

The school will investigate the situation thoroughly and follow this up with a clear and timely response, and where appropriate the school will then work with the pupils and families involved to resolve the situation and put in clear preventative measures to support everyone involved.

### **4.1 Prevention: Special Education Needs & Bullying**

Courtlands understands that instances of bullying are high amongst pupils with special educational needs, particularly in mainstream education. As a result, students may have had negative experiences of bullying and peer interactions before attending Courtlands.

Courtlands understands that our pupils may have specific difficulties around interpreting social interaction and will require explicit teaching and opportunities to practice and explore elements of social interaction.

Courtlands understands that students who struggle with communication and who have a background of trauma may find it difficult to recognise, report and respond to bullying.

Alongside a robust response to instances of bullying, the school will educate students to:

- Improve their social communication skills with peers and adults
- Improve their awareness and understanding of their emotions and triggers
- Improve their understanding and ability to think critically about social interactions
- Improve their tolerance of others
- Improve their ability to communicate concerns

#### **4.2 Prevention: education**

Courtlands uses the structure and language of Emotion Coaching to support students in understanding and responding effectively to emotional incidents.

Courtlands treats difficulties and disputes as opportunities for learning and understanding. Education staff will intervene and scaffold small disputes or disagreements, using them as an opportunity to build communication skills.

Courtlands uses tutor time, PSHE and assemblies to explicitly explore issues around bullying. We use a variety of teaching approaches to support pupils in understanding the impact of their social interactions and bullying. These approaches include, but are not limited to:

- Role playing
- Comic Strip Conversations
- Social Use of Language Programme
- Emotion Coaching
- Curious Questioning
- Story based enquiry

#### **4.3 Prevention: community**

It is the responsibility of all community members to prevent bullying and to be alert and aware to warning signs. It is essential that every community member feels safe and secure at Courtlands.

Students will be supported to take responsibility for the wellbeing of their whole community through:

- Peer mentoring
- Buddy system for new pupils
- Scaffolded social time where appropriate
- Assemblies that teach the importance of community
- Drama and role play activities that explore the difficulties of working and living in community and society with others
- Student leadership team
- Conversation bench

Students will be supervised at all times.

#### **4.4 Prevention: Anti-bullying initiatives**

At Courtlands we will use a range of measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- A child friendly anti-bullying policy to ensure that all pupils understand and uphold the anti-bullying policy.





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- Creation of a safe space for pupils to visit.
- All entries into the anti-bullying log will be discussed at weekly SLT meeting to ensure early intervention is considered and implemented in every suspected case of bullying.
- The PSHE/Life programme of study includes opportunities for pupils to understand about different types of bullying and what they can do to respond and prevent bullying.
- Tutor time provides regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for form tutors to target specific interventions.
- Whole-school and year group assemblies help raise pupils' awareness of bullying and derogatory language.
- Difference and diversity are celebrated across the site through diverse displays, books and images. The whole site participates in events including Anti-bullying week, Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month.
- The site values of equality and respect are embedded across the curriculum to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible.
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and pupils across the site.
- Restorative Approach principles are used to provide support the targets of bullying and those who show bullying behaviour.
- Therapist may work alongside staff to develop and support the school in workshops based on friendships, assertiveness, and peer on peer activities.
- Pupils are continually involved in developing school-wide anti-bullying initiatives through consultation with the School Council and through the anti-bullying survey that they complete termly, and the results analysed to ensure continual review based on the pupil's voices.
- Working with parents and carers who are surveyed termly on bullying to seek their feedback and to tackle bullying where appropriate.
- Creation of an Anti-Bullying Leaflet that is illustrated using anti-bullying competition posters that the pupils designed.
- School approach towards achieving a nationally recognised award with ABQM-UK that challenges our school to demonstrate effectiveness in anti-bullying.
- School Councils work on creating an Anti-Bullying Charter having collated pupils wishes in Form time

## **5.1 Incidents of Bullying: Process**

Courtlands acknowledges that students will not always behave as we wish. We will remain vigilant to instances of bullying and respond swiftly to reports of bullying from all stakeholders.

The below process must be followed anytime there is a report of bullying.

## **5.2 Incidents of Bullying: Recording**

A log of any instances of bullying or allegations of bullying will be recorded on CPOMS under 'bullying'.

If a child comes to a member of staff to report concerns around bullying, this must be recorded in line with good practice for safeguarding concerns. This includes:

- Listening to the child
- Recording as much of their voice as possible
- Using any communication aides or supports (e.g. comic strip conversations) and uploading them

It is the responsibility of the member of staff to whom the bullying was reported to make the initial report. The member of staff should refer this to the teacher straight away for investigation.

### **5.3 Incidents of Bullying: Investigation**

The Headteacher / DSL will be alerted to the bullying incident via CPOMS. If required, the teacher should seek the support of Headteacher/DSL immediately, but this may not be necessary. The teacher must use their professional judgement to investigate the bullying concern.

The bullying investigation must ensure that voices are adequately heard and their point of view recorded on a Statement. This statement may include visual depictions and should be recorded by a member of staff if the child has difficulty with written communication.

All statements must include times, dates and be uploaded onto the CPOMS record as actions.

### **5.4 Incidents of Bullying: Response**

If the teacher feels that the incident is a miscommunication or does not meet the threshold for bullying, reflection and restoration with both parties must be undertaken as soon as possible. Details must still be recorded on CPOMS. Parents should be alerted where appropriate.

If a teacher feels that the incident is more serious and meets the threshold for bullying, they should alert the Headteacher/DSL for a discussion immediately. The Headteacher / DSL will then become responsible for assigning actions and identifying an appropriate follow up, in discussion with key adults.

The Head Teacher will ensure that the schools SLT understands the range of sanctions that can be considered in instances of bullying but will always include a meeting with parents/carers so that they are aware.

Sanctions for bullying will always have a restorative element, but appropriate sanctions must also be used to communicate that bullying is taken extremely seriously by the school and is unacceptable. In some incidents, bullying may result in exclusion or suspension.

Using the restorative practices in line with the ethos and culture of the school, a plan will be implemented to identify the steps that need to be taken to change the behaviour in the future and support the pupil in being able to do this.

### **6.1 Training**

The schools SLT/DSL will provide at least annual training for staff regarding anti-bullying through INSET days, and provide support and guidance as requested by any member of staff



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Independent Special School

## **7.1 Complaints**

If a parent or carer is dissatisfied with the response made by the school following a reported incident of bullying, he/she may make a complaint in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy